

*The following reports, speeches and articles by Georgi Dimitrov, general secretary of the Communist International, cover all important international developments from 1935. The collection opens with his political report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August 1935, and runs through the following two years to the end of 1937. Taken together, these papers represent the development of the political line of the Communist International over that period.*

## I

### **The fascist offensive and the tasks of the Communist International**

#### **1. FASCISM AND THE WORKING CLASS**

COMRADES, as early as its Sixth Congress [1928], the Communist International warned the world proletariat that a new fascist offensive was in preparation and called for a struggle against it. The Congress pointed out that “in a more or less developed form, fascist tendencies and the germs of a fascist movement are to be found almost everywhere.”

With the development of the present very deep economic crisis, with the general crisis of capitalism becoming sharply marked and the mass of working people becoming revolutionised, fascism has embarked upon a wide offensive. The ruling bourgeoisie more and more seeks salvation in fascism, with the object of taking exceptional predatory measures against the toilers, preparing for an imperialist war of plunder, attacking the Soviet Union, enslaving and partitioning China, and by all these means preventing revolution.

Imperialist circles are trying to put the *whole* burden of the crisis on the backs of the toilers. *That is why they need fascism.*

They are trying to solve the problem of markets by enslaving the weak nations, by intensifying colonial oppression and repartitioning the world anew by means of war. *That is why they need fascism.*

They are striving to *forestall* the growth of the forces of revolution by smashing the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants and by undertaking a military attack against the Soviet Union—the bulwark of the world proletariat. *That is why they need fascism.*

In a number of countries, Germany in particular, these imperialist circles have succeeded, *before* the masses have decisively turned towards revolution, in inflicting defeat on the proletariat and establishing a fascist dictatorship.

But it is characteristic of the victory of fascism that this victory, on the one hand, bears witness to the weakness of the proletariat, disorganised and paralysed by the disruptive social-democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other, expresses the weakness of the bourgeoisie itself, afraid of the realisation of a united struggle of the working class, afraid of revolution, and no longer in a position to maintain its dictatorship over the masses by the old methods of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism.

The victory of fascism in Germany, Comrade Stalin said at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [January–February 1934]:

must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and as a result of the betrayal of the working class by social-democracy, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be

regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, as a symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is already unable to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of administration—it must be taken as a symptom of the fact that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, as a consequence of which it is compelled to resort to a policy of war.

### THE CLASS CHARACTER OF FASCISM

Comrades, fascism in power was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International as *the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital*.

The most reactionary variety of fascism is the *German type* of fascism. It has the effrontery to call itself National-Socialism, though it has nothing in common with socialism. Hitler fascism is not only bourgeois nationalism, it is bestial chauvinism. It is a government system of political gangsterism, a system of provocation and torture practised upon the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. It is mediaeval barbarity and bestiality, it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations and countries.

German fascism is acting as *the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief instigator of imperialist war, as the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the toilers of the whole world*.

Fascism is not a form of state power “standing above both classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie,” as Otto Bauer, for instance, has asserted. It is not “the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the machinery of the state,” as the British socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not super-class government, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpenproletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organisation of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its crudest form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations.

This, the true character of fascism, must be particularly stressed; because in a number of countries, under cover of social demagoguery, fascism has managed to gain the following of the mass of the petty bourgeoisie that has been driven out of its course by the crisis, and even of certain sections of the most backward strata of the proletariat. These would never have supported fascism if they had understood its real class character and its true nature.

The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume *different forms* in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism has no extensive mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is fairly acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic Parties, to retain a certain degree of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an *early* outbreak of revolution, fascism establishes its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all competing parties and groups. This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes *particularly* acute, from trying to extend its basis and, without altering its class

nature, trying to *combine* open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism.

The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—by another form—open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake which would prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilising the widest strata of the working people of town and country for the struggle against the menace of the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is a mistake, no less serious and dangerous, to *underrate* the importance, in establishing the fascist dictatorship, of the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie which are at present increasingly developing in bourgeois-democratic countries—measures which suppress the democratic liberties of the working people, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement.

Comrades, the accession to power of fascism must not be conceived of in so simplified and smooth a form, as though some committee or other of finance capital decided on a certain date to set up a fascist dictatorship. In reality, fascism usually comes to power in the course of a mutual, and at times severe, struggle against the old bourgeois parties, or a definite section of these parties, in the course of a struggle even within the fascist camp itself—a struggle which at times leads to armed clashes, as we have witnessed in the case of Germany, Austria and other countries. All this, however, does not make less important the fact that, before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism at these preparatory stages *is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.*

The social-democratic leaders glossed over and concealed from the masses the true class nature of fascism, and did not call them to the struggle against the increasingly reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie. They bear great *historical responsibility* for the fact that, at the decisive moment of the fascist offensive, a large section of the working people of Germany and of a number of other fascist countries failed to recognise in fascism the most bloodthirsty monster of finance, their most vicious enemy, and that these masses were not prepared to resist it.

What is the source of the influence of fascism over the masses? Fascism is able to attract the masses because it demagogically appeals to their *most urgent needs and demands*. Fascism not only inflames prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the masses, but also plays on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice, and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions. Why do the German fascists, those lackeys of the big bourgeoisie and mortal enemies of socialism, represent themselves to the masses as “socialists,” and depict their accession to power as a “revolution”? Because they try to exploit the faith in revolution and urge towards socialism that lives in the hearts of the mass of working people in Germany.

Fascism acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists, but it presents itself to the masses in the guise of champion of an ill-treated nation, and appeals to outraged national sentiments, as German fascism did, for instance, when it won the support of the masses by the slogan “Against the Versailles Treaty!”

Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses, but it approaches them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagogy, taking advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the plundering bourgeoisie, the banks, trusts and financial magnates, and advancing those slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses. In Germany—"The general welfare is higher than the welfare of the individual"; in Italy—"Our state is not a capitalist, but a corporate state; in Japan—"For Japan, without exploitation"; in the United States—"Share the wealth," and so forth.

Fascism delivers up the people to be devoured by the most corrupt and venal elements, but comes before them with the demand for "an honest and incorruptible government." Speculating on the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption (for instance, the Barmat and Sklarek affairs in Germany, the Stavisky affair in France, and numerous others).

It is in the interests of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie that fascism intercepts the disappointed masses who desert the old bourgeois parties. But it impresses these masses by the *severity of its attacks* on the bourgeois governments and its irreconcilable attitude to the old bourgeois parties.

Surpassing in its cynicism and hypocrisy all other varieties of bourgeois reaction, fascism adapts its demagogy to the national peculiarities of each country, and even to the peculiarities of the various social strata in one and the same country. And the mass of the petty-bourgeoisie and even a section of the workers, reduced to despair by want, unemployment and the insecurity of their existence, fall victim to the social and chauvinist demagogy of fascism.

Fascism comes to power as a *party of attack* on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, on the mass of the people who are in a state of unrest; yet it stages its accession to power as a "revolutionary" movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of "the whole nation" and for the "salvation" of the nation. (One recalls Mussolini's "march" on Rome, Pilsudski's "march" on Warsaw, Hitler's National-Socialist "revolution" in Germany, and so forth.)

But whatever the masks which fascism adopts, whatever the forms in which it presents itself, whatever the ways by which it comes to power—

*Fascism is a most ferocious attack by capital on the mass of the working people ;*

*Fascism is unbridled chauvinism and annexationist war ;*

*Fascism is rabid reaction and counter-revolution ;*

*Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and of all working people!*

#### **WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF VICTORIOUS FASCISM FOR THE MASSES?**

Fascism promised the workers "a fair wage," but actually it has brought them an even lower, a pauper standard of living. It promised work for the unemployed, but actually it has brought them even more painful torments of starvation and forced servile labour. In practice it converts the workers and unemployed into pariahs of capitalist society stripped of rights; destroys their trade unions; deprives them of the right to strike and to have their working class press, forces them into fascist organisations, plunders their social insurance funds and transforms the mills and factories into barracks where the unbridled arbitrary rule of the capitalist reigns.

Fascism promised the working *youth* a broad highway to a brilliant future. But actually it has brought wholesale dismissals of young workers, labour camps and incessant military drilling for a war of conquest.

Fascism promised to guarantee *office workers, petty officials and intellectuals* security of existence, to destroy the omnipotence of the trusts and wipe out profiteering by bank capital. But actually it has brought them an ever greater degree of despair and uncertainty as to the morrow; it is subjecting them to a new bureaucracy made up of the most submissive of its followers, it is setting up an intolerable dictatorship of the trusts and spreading corruption and degeneration to an unprecedented extent.

Fascism promised the ruined and impoverished *peasants* to put an end to debt bondage, to abolish rent and even to expropriate the landed estates without compensation, in the interests of the landless and ruined peasants. But actually it is placing the toiling peasants in a state of unprecedented servitude to the trusts and the fascist state apparatus, and pushes to the utmost limit the exploitation of the great mass of the peasantry by the big landowners, the banks and the usurers.

“Germany will be a peasant country, or will not be at all,” Hitler solemnly declared. And what did the peasants of Germany get under Hitler? The moratorium, which has already been cancelled? Or the law on the inheritance of peasant property, which leads to millions of sons and daughters of peasants being squeezed out of the villages and reduced to paupers? Farm labourers have been transformed into semi-serfs, deprived even of the elementary right of free movement. The working peasants have been deprived of the opportunity of selling the produce of their farms in the market.

And in Poland?

The Polish peasant—says the Polish newspaper *Czas*—employs methods and means which were used perhaps only in the Middle Ages; he nurses the fire in his stove and lends it to his neighbour; he splits matches into several parts; he lends dirty soap-water to others; he boils herring barrels in order to obtain salt water. This is not a fable, but the actual state of affairs in the countryside, of the truth of which anybody may convince himself.

And it is not communists who write this, comrades, but a Polish reactionary newspaper!

But this is by no means all.

Every day, in the concentration camps of fascist Germany, in the cellars of the Gestapo, in the torture chambers of Poland, in the cells of the Bulgarian and Finnish secret police, in the “Glavnyacha” in Belgrade, in the Romanian “Siguranza” and on the Italian islands, some of the best sons of the working class, revolutionary peasants, fighters for the splendid future of mankind, are being subjected to revolting tortures and indignities, before which pale the most abominable acts of the tsarist secret police. The blackguardly German fascists beat husbands to a bloody pulp in the presence of their wives, and send the ashes of murdered sons by parcel post to their mothers. Sterilisation has been made a method of political warfare. In the torture chambers, imprisoned anti-fascists are given injections of poison, their arms are broken, their eyes gouged out; they are strung up and have water pumped into them; the fascist swastika is carved in their living flesh.

I have before me a statistical summary drawn up by the International Red Aid—the international organisation for aid to revolutionary fighters regarding the number of killed, wounded, arrested, maimed and tortured to death in Germany, Poland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. In Germany alone, since the National-Socialists came to power, over 4,200 anti-fascist workers, peasants,

employees, intellectuals—communists, social-democrats and members of opposition Christian organisations—have been murdered, 317,800 arrested, 218,600 injured and subjected to torture. In Austria, since the battles of February last year, the “Christian” fascist government has murdered 1,900 revolutionary workers, maimed and injured 10,000 and arrested 40,000. And this summary, comrades, is far from complete.

Words fail me in describing the indignation which seizes us at the thought of the torments which the working people are now undergoing in a number of fascist countries. The facts and figures we quote *do not reflect one-hundredth part of the true picture* of the exploitation and tortures inflicted by the White terror and forming part of the daily life of the working class in many capitalist countries. Volumes cannot give a just picture of the countless brutalities inflicted by fascism on the working people.

With feelings of profound emotion and hatred for the fascist butchers, we dip the banners of the Communist International before the unforgettable memory of John Scheer, Fiete Schulz and Luttgens in Germany, Koloman Wallisch and Munichreiter in Austria, Sallai and Furst in Hungary, Kofardzhiev, Lutbrisky and Voikov in Bulgaria—before the memory of thousands and thousands of communists, social-democrats and no-party workers, peasants and representatives of the progressive intelligentsia who have laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism.

From this platform we greet the leader of the German proletariat and the honorary chairman of our Congress—Comrade Thälmann. We greet Comrades Rákosi, Gramsci, Antikainen and Yonko Panov. We greet the leader of the Spanish socialists, Caballero, imprisoned by the counter-revolutionaries; Tom Mooney, who has been languishing in prison for eighteen years, and the thousands of other prisoners of capitalism and fascism and we say to them: “Brothers in the fight, brothers in arms, you are not forgotten. We are with you. We shall give every hour of our lives, every drop of our blood, for your liberation, and for the liberation of all toilers from the shameful regime of fascism.”

Comrades, it was Lenin who warned us that the bourgeoisie may succeed in overwhelming the toilers by savage terror, in checking the growing forces of revolution for brief periods of time, but that, nevertheless, this would not save it from its doom.

Life will assert itself [Lenin wrote].—Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, overdo things, commit stupidities, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance and endeavour to kill off (in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) hundreds, thousands and hundreds of thousands more of yesterday’s and tomorrow’s Bolsheviks. Acting thus, the bourgeoisie acts as all classes doomed by history have acted. Communists should know that the future, at any rate, belongs to them; therefore, we can, and must, combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle with the coolest and most sober evaluation of the mad ravings of the bourgeoisie.

Aye, if we and the proletariat of the whole world firmly follow the path indicated by Lenin and Stalin, the bourgeoisie will perish in spite of everything.

### IS THE VICTORY OF FASCISM INEVITABLE?

Why was it that fascism could triumph, and how?

Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and working people. Fascism is the enemy of nine-tenths of the German people, nine-tenths of the Austrian people, nine-tenths of the other people in fascist countries. How, in what way, could this vicious enemy triumph?

Fascism was able to come to power *primarily* because the working class, owing to the policy of class

collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the social-democratic leaders, *proved to be split, politically and organisationally disarmed*, in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the Communist Parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the social-democrats, *were not strong enough* to rouse the masses and to lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism.

And, indeed, let the millions of social-democratic workers, who together with their communist brothers are now experiencing the horrors of fascist barbarism, seriously reflect on this. If, in 1918, when revolution broke out in Germany and Austria, the Austrian and German proletariat had not followed the social-democratic leadership of Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler and Karl Renner in Austria and Ebert and Scheidemann in Germany, but had followed the road of the Russian Bolsheviks, the road of Lenin and Stalin, there would now be no fascism in Austria or Germany, in Italy or Hungary, in Poland or in the Balkans. Not the bourgeoisie, but the working class would long ago have been the master of the situation in Europe.

Take, for example, the *Austrian* Social-Democratic Party. The revolution of 1918 raised it to a tremendous height. It held the power in its hands, it held strong positions in the army and in the state apparatus. Relying on these positions, it could have nipped fascism in the bud. But it surrendered one position of the working class after another without resistance. It allowed the bourgeoisie to strengthen its power, annul the constitution, purge the state apparatus, army and police force of social-democratic functionaries and take the arsenals away from the workers. It allowed the fascist bandits to murder social-democratic workers with impunity and accepted the terms of the Hüttenberg pact, which gave the fascist elements entry to the factories. At the same time the social-democratic leaders fooled the workers with the Linz programme, which contained the alternative possibility of using armed force against the bourgeoisie and establishing the proletarian dictatorship, assuring them that in the event of the ruling class using force against the working class, the party would reply by a call for a general strike and for armed struggle. As though the whole policy of preparation for a fascist attack on the working class were not one chain of acts of violence against the working class masked by constitutional forms! Even on the eve and in the course of the February battles the Austrian social-democratic leaders left the heroically fighting Schutzbund isolated from the masses, and doomed the Austrian proletariat to defeat.

Was the victory of fascism inevitable in *Germany*? No, the German working class could have prevented it.

But in order to do so, it should have achieved a united anti-fascist proletarian front, and forced the social-democratic leaders to put a stop to their campaign against the communists and to accept the repeated proposals of the Communist Party for united action against fascism.

When fascism was on the offensive and the bourgeois democratic liberties were being progressively abolished by the bourgeoisie, it should not have contented itself with the verbal resolutions of the social-democrats, but should have replied by a genuine mass struggle, which would have made the fulfilment of the fascist plans of the German bourgeoisie more difficult.

It should not have allowed the prohibition of the League of Red Front Fighters by the government of Braun and Severing, and should have established fighting contact between the League and the *Reichsbanner* ["Flag of the Realm," a social-democratic semi-military mass organisation], with its nearly one million members, and have compelled Braun and Severing to arm both these organisations

in order to resist and smash the fascist bands.

It should have compelled the social-democratic leaders who headed the Prussian government to adopt measures of defence against fascism, arrest the fascist leaders, close down their press, confiscate their material resources and the resources of the capitalists who were financing the fascist movement, dissolve the fascist organisations, deprive them of their weapons and so forth.

Furthermore, it should have secured the re-establishment and extension of all forms of social assistance and the introduction of a moratorium and crisis benefits for the peasants—who were being ruined under the influence of crises—by taxing the banks and the trusts, in this way securing for itself the support of the working peasants. It was the fault of the social-democrats of Germany that this was not done, and that is why fascism was able to triumph.

Was it inevitable that the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy should have triumphed in *Spain*, a country where the forces of proletarian revolt are so advantageously combined with a peasant war?

The Spanish socialists were in the government from the first days of the revolution. Did they establish fighting contact between the working class organisations of every political opinion, including the communists and the anarchists, and did they weld the working class into a united trade union organisation? Did they demand the confiscation of all lands of the landlords, the church and the monasteries in favour of the peasants in order to win over the latter to the side of the revolution? Did they attempt to fight for national self-determination for the Catalonians and the Basques, and for the liberation of Morocco? Did they purge the army of monarchist and fascist elements and prepare it for passing over to the side of the workers and peasants? Did they dissolve the Civil Guard, so detested by the people, the executioner of every movement of the people? Did they strike at the fascist party of Gil Robles and at the might of the Catholic church? No, they did none of these things. They rejected the frequent proposals of the communists for united action against the offensive of the bourgeois-landlord reaction and fascism; they passed election laws which enabled the reactionaries to gain a majority in the Cortes (parliament), laws which penalised popular movements, laws under which the heroic miners of Asturias are now being tried. They had peasants who were fighting for land shot by the Civil Guard, and so on.

This is the way in which the social-democrats, by disorganising and splitting the ranks of the working class, cleared the path to power for fascism in Germany, Austria and Spain.

Comrades, fascism also triumphed for the reason that the proletariat found itself isolated from its natural allies. Fascism triumphed because it was able to win over *large masses of the peasantry*, owing to the fact that the social-democrats, in the name of the working class, pursued what was in fact an anti-peasant policy. The peasant saw in power a number of social-democratic governments, which in his eyes were an embodiment of the power of the working class, but not one of them put an end to peasant want, none of them gave land to the peasantry. In Germany, the social-democrats did not touch the landlords; they combated the strikes of the agricultural workers, with the result that long before Hitler came to power the agricultural workers of Germany were deserting the reformist trade unions and in the majority of cases were going over to the Stahlhelm and to the National-Socialists.

Fascism also triumphed for the reason that it was able to penetrate the ranks of the *youth*, whereas the social-democrats diverted the working class youth from the class struggle, while the revolutionary proletariat did not develop the necessary educational work among the youth and did not pay enough

attention to the struggle for its specific interests and demands. Fascism grasped the very acute need of the youth for militant activity, and enticed a considerable section of the youth into its fighting detachments. The new generation of young men and women has not experienced the horrors of war. They have felt the full weight of the economic crisis, unemployment and the disintegration of bourgeois democracy. But, seeing no prospects for the future, large sections of the youth proved to be particularly receptive to fascist demagogy, which depicted for them an alluring future should fascism succeed.

In this connection, we cannot avoid referring also to a number of *mistakes committed by the Communist Parties*, mistakes that hampered our struggle against fascism.

In our ranks there was an impermissible underestimation of the fascist danger, a tendency which to this day has not everywhere been overcome. Of this nature was the opinion formerly to be met with in our parties to the effect that "Germany is not Italy," meaning that fascism may have succeeded in Italy, but that its success in Germany was out of the question, because the latter is an industrially and culturally highly developed country, with forty years of traditions of the working class movement, in which fascism was impossible. Or the kind of opinion which is to be met with nowadays, to the effect that in countries of "classical" bourgeois democracy the soil for fascism does not exist. Such opinions have served and may serve to relax vigilance towards the fascist danger, and to render the mobilisation of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism more difficult.

One might also cite not a few instances where communists were taken unawares by the fascist *coup*. Remember Bulgaria, where the leadership of our party took up a "neutral," but in fact opportunist, position with regard to the *coup d'état* of June 9, 1923; Poland, where, in May, 1926, the leadership of the Communist Party, making a wrong estimate of the motive forces of the Polish revolution, did not realise the fascist nature of Pilsudski's *coup*, and trailed in the rear of events; Finland, where our party based itself on a false conception of slow and gradual fascistisation and overlooked the fascist *coup* which was being prepared by the leading group of the bourgeoisie and which took the party and the working class unawares.

When National-Socialism had already become a menacing mass movement in Germany, there were comrades who regarded the Brüning government as already a government of fascist dictatorship, and who boastfully declared: "If Hitler's Third Reich ever comes about, it will be six feet underground, and above it will be the victorious power of the workers."

Our comrades in Germany for a long time failed to reckon with the wounded national sentiments and the indignation of the masses against the Versailles Treaty; they treated as of little account the waverings of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie; they were late in drawing up their programme of social and national emancipation, and when they did put it forward they were unable to adapt it to the concrete demands of the level of the masses. They were even unable to popularise it widely among the masses.

In a number of countries the necessary development of a mass fight against fascism was replaced by barren hair-splitting as to the nature of fascism "in general" and by a *narrow sectarian attitude* in formulating and solving the immediate political tasks of the party.

Comrades, it is not simply because we want to dig up the past that we speak of the causes of the victory of fascism, that we point to the historical responsibility of the social-democrats for the defeat of the working class, and that we also point out our own mistakes in the fight against fascism. We are not

historians divorced from living reality; we, active fighters of the working class, are obliged to answer the question that is tormenting millions of workers: *Can the victory of fascism be prevented, and how?* And we reply to these millions of workers: Yes, comrades, the road in the way of fascism can be blocked. It is quite possible. It depends on ourselves on the workers, the peasants and all working people!

Whether the victory of fascism can be prevented depends *first and foremost* on the militant activity of the working class itself, on whether its forces are welded into a single militant army combating the offensive of capitalism and fascism. By establishing its fighting unity, the proletariat would paralyse the influence of fascism over the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the towns, the youth and the intelligentsia, and would be able to neutralise one section of them and win over another section.

*Second*, it depends on the existence of a strong revolutionary party, correctly leading the struggle of the working people against fascism. A party which systematically calls on the workers to retreat in the face of fascism and permits the fascist bourgeoisie to strengthen its positions will inevitably lead the workers to defeat.

*Third*, it depends on a correct policy of the working class towards the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois masses of the towns. These masses must be taken as they are, and not as we should like to have them. It is only in the process of the struggle that they will overcome their doubts and waverings. It is only by a patient attitude towards their inevitable waverings, it is only by the political help of the proletariat, that they will be able to rise to a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and activity.

*Fourth*, it depends on the vigilance and timely action of the revolutionary proletariat. The latter must not allow fascism to take it unawares, it must not surrender the initiative to fascism, but must inflict decisive blows on it before it can gather its forces, it must not allow fascism to consolidate its position, it must repel fascism wherever and whenever it rears its head, it must not allow fascism to gain new positions. This is what the French proletariat is so successfully trying to do.

These are the main conditions for preventing the growth of fascism and its accession to power.

### **FASCISM—A FEROCIOUS BUT UNSTABLE POWER**

The fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is a ferocious power, but an unstable one.

What are the chief causes of the instability of the fascist dictatorship?

Fascism undertakes to overcome the disharmonies and antagonisms within the bourgeois camp, but it makes these antagonisms even more acute. Fascism tries to establish its political monopoly by violently destroying other political parties. But the existence of the capitalist system, the existence of various classes and the accentuation of class contradictions inevitably tend to undermine and explode the political monopoly of fascism. This is not the case of a Soviet country, where the dictatorship of the proletariat is also realised by a party with a political monopoly, but where this political monopoly accords with the interests of millions of working people and is increasingly being based on the construction of a classless society. In a fascist country the party of the fascists cannot preserve its monopoly for long, because it cannot set itself the aim of abolishing classes and class contradictions. It puts an end to the legal existence of bourgeois parties. But a number of them continue to maintain an illegal existence, while the Communist Party even in conditions of illegality continues to make progress, becomes steeled and tempered and leads the struggle of the proletariat against the fascist

dictatorship. Hence, under the blows of class contradictions, the political monopoly of fascism is bound to explode.

Another reason for the instability of the fascist dictatorship is that the contrast between the anti-capitalist demagogy of fascism and its policy of enriching the monopolist bourgeoisie in the most piratical fashion makes it easier to expose the class nature of fascism and tends to shake and narrow its mass basis.

Furthermore, the victory of fascism arouses the deep hatred and indignation of the masses, helps to revolutionise them, and provides a powerful stimulus for a united front of the proletariat against fascism.

By conducting a policy of economic nationalism (autarchy) and by seizing the greater part of the national income for the purpose of preparing for war, fascism undermines the whole economic life of the country and accentuates the economic war between the capitalist states. To the conflicts that arise among the bourgeoisie it lends the character of sharp and at times bloody collisions that undermine the stability of the fascist state power in the eyes of the people. A government which murders its own followers, as happened in Germany on June 30 of last year, a fascist government against which another section of the fascist bourgeoisie is conducting an armed fight (the National-Socialist *putsch* in Austria and the violent attacks of individual fascist groups on the fascist governments in Poland, Bulgaria, Finland and other countries)—a government of this character cannot for long maintain its authority in the eyes of the broad mass of the petty bourgeoisie.

The working class must be able to take advantage of the antagonisms and conflicts within the bourgeois camp, but it must not cherish the illusion that fascism will exhaust itself of its own accord. Fascism will not collapse automatically. It is only the revolutionary activity of the working class which can help to take advantage of the conflicts which inevitably arise within the bourgeois camp in order to undermine the fascist dictatorship and to overthrow it.

By destroying the relics of bourgeois democracy, by elevating open violence to a system of government, fascism shakes democratic illusions and undermines the authority of the law in the eyes of the working people. This is particularly the case in countries such as Austria and Spain, where the workers have taken up arms against fascism. In Austria, the heroic struggle of the *Schutzbund* and the communists, in spite of their defeat, shook the stability of the fascist dictatorship from the very outset. In Spain, the bourgeoisie did not succeed in putting the fascist muzzle on the working people. The armed struggles in Austria and Spain have resulted in ever wider masses of the working class coming to realise the necessity for a revolutionary class struggle.

Only such monstrous philistines, such lackeys of the bourgeoisie, as the superannuated theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky, are capable of casting reproaches at the workers, to the effect that they should not have taken up arms in Austria and Spain. What would the working class movement in Austria and Spain look like today if the working class of these countries were guided by the treacherous counsels of the Kautskys? The working class would be experiencing profound demoralisation in its ranks.

The school of civil war—Lenin says—does not leave the people unaffected. It is a harsh school, and its complete curriculum inevitably includes the victories of the counter-revolution, the debaucheries of enraged reactionaries, savage punishments meted out by the old governments to the rebels, etc. But

only downright pedants and mentally decrepit mummies can grieve over the fact that nations are entering this painful school; this school teaches the oppressed classes how to conduct civil war; it teaches how to bring about a victorious revolution; it concentrates in the masses of present-day slaves that hatred which is always harboured by the downtrodden, dull, ignorant slaves, and which leads those slaves who have become conscious of the shame of their slavery to the greatest historic exploits.

The triumph of fascism in Germany has, as we know, been followed by a new wave of the fascist offensive, which, in Austria, led to the provocation by Dollfuss, in Spain to the new onslaughts of the counter-revolutionaries on the revolutionary conquests of the masses, in Poland to the fascist reform of the constitution, while in France it spurred the armed detachments of the fascists to attempt a *coup d'état* in February, 1934. But this victory, and the frenzy of the fascist dictatorship, called forth a counter-movement for a united proletarian front against fascism on an international scale.

The burning of the Reichstag, which served as a signal for the general attack of fascism on the working class, the seizure and spoliation of the trade unions and the other working class organisations, the groans of the tortured anti-fascists rising from the vaults of the fascist barracks and concentration camps, are making it clear to the masses what has been the outcome of the reactionary, disruptive role played by the German social-democratic leaders, who rejected the proposal made by the communists for a joint struggle against advancing fascism. These things are convincing the masses of the necessity of amalgamating all forces of the working class for the overthrow of fascism.

Hitler's victory also provided a decisive stimulus for the creation of a united front of the working class against fascism in France. Hitler's victory not only aroused in the workers a fear of the fate that befell the German workers, not only kindled hatred for the executioners of their German class brothers, but also strengthened in them the determination never in any circumstances to allow in their country what happened to the working class in Germany.

The powerful urge towards the united front in all the capitalist countries shows that the lessons of defeat have not been in vain. The working class is beginning to act in a *new way*. The initiative shown by the Communist Party in the organisation of the united front and the supreme self-sacrifice displayed by the communists, by the revolutionary workers in the struggle against fascism, have resulted in an unprecedented increase in the prestige of the Communist International. At the same time, a deep crisis is developing in the Second International, a crisis which is particularly noticeable and has particularly accentuated since the bankruptcy of German social-democracy.

With ever greater ease are the social-democratic workers able to convince themselves that fascist Germany, with all its horrors and barbarities, is in the final analysis *the result of* the social-democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. These masses are coming ever more clearly to realise that the path along which the German social-democratic leaders led the proletariat must not be traversed again. Never has there been such ideological dissension in the camp of the Second International as at the present time. A process of differentiation is taking place in all the Social-Democratic Parties. Within their ranks two principal camps are forming: side by side with the existing camp of reactionary elements, who are trying in every way to preserve the bloc between the social-democrats and the bourgeoisie, and who rabidly reject a united front with the communists, *there is beginning to form a camp of revolutionary elements who entertain doubts as to the correctness of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, who are in favour of the creation of a united front*

*with the communists, and who are increasingly coming to adopt the position of the revolutionary class struggle.*

Thus fascism, which appeared as the result of the decline of the capitalist system, in the long run acts as a factor of its further disintegration. Thus fascism, which has undertaken to bury Marxism, the revolutionary movement of the working class, is, as a result of the dialectics of life and the class struggle, itself leading to the further development of the forces that are bound to serve as its grave-diggers, the grave-diggers of capitalism.

## **2. UNITED FRONT OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST FASCISM**

Comrades, millions of workers and toilers of the capitalist countries ask the question: How can fascism be prevented from coming to power and how can fascism be overthrown after it has been victorious? To this the Communist International replies: *The first thing that must be done, the thing with which to begin, is to form a united front, to establish unity of action of the workers in every factory, in every district, in every region, in every country, all over the world. Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale is the mighty weapon which renders the working class capable not only of successful defence but also of successful counter-attack against fascism, against the class enemy.*

### **IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITED FRONT**

Is it not clear that joint action by the supporters of the parties and organisations of the two Internationals, the communist and the Second International, would make it easier for the masses to repulse the fascist onslaught, and would heighten the political importance of the working class?

Joint action by the parties of both Internationals against fascism, however, would not be confined in its effects to influencing their present adherents, the communists and social-democrats; it would also exert a powerful influence on the ranks of the *Catholic, anarchist and unorganised workers, even upon those who had temporarily become the victims of fascist demagogy.*

Moreover, a powerful united front of the proletariat would exert tremendous influence on *all other strata of the working people*, on the peasantry, on the urban petty bourgeoisie, on the intelligentsia. A united front would inspire the wavering groups with faith in the strength of the working class.

But even this is not all. The proletariat of the imperialist countries has possible allies not only in the toilers of its own countries but also in the *oppressed nations of the colonies and semi-colonies*. Inasmuch as the proletariat is split both nationally and internationally, inasmuch as one of its parts supports the policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie, in particular its system of oppression in the colonies and semi-colonies, a barrier is put between the working class and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, and the world anti-imperialist front is weakened. Every step on the road to unity of action in the direction of supporting the struggle for the liberation of the colonial peoples by the proletariat of the imperialist countries means transforming the colonies and semi-colonies into one of the most important reserves of the world proletariat.

If, finally, we bear in mind that international unity of action by the proletariat relies on the *steadily growing strength of the proletarian state, the land of socialism, the Soviet Union*, we see what broad perspectives are revealed by the realisation of proletarian unity of action on a national and international scale.

The establishment of unity of action by all sections of the working class, irrespective of the party or organisation to which they belong, is necessary *even before the majority of the working class is united in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of the proletarian revolution.*

Is it possible to realise this unity of action of the proletariat in the individual countries and throughout the whole world? Yes, it is. And it is possible at this very moment. The Communist International *puts no conditions for unity of action except one, and that an elementary condition acceptable for all workers, viz., that the unity of action be directed against fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of war, against the class enemy.* This is our condition.

### **THE CHIEF ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPONENTS OF THE UNITED FRONT**

What objections can the opponents of the united front have and how do they voice their objections?

Some say: "To the communists the slogan of the united front is merely a manoeuvre" But if it is a manoeuvre, we reply, why don't you expose the "communist manoeuvre" by your honest participation in the united front? We declare frankly: We want unity of action by the working class, so that the proletariat may grow strong in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, in order that while defending today its current interests against attacking capital, against fascism, the proletariat may reach a position tomorrow to create the preliminary conditions for its final emancipation.

"The communists attack us," say others. But listen, we have repeatedly declared: We shall not attack anyone, whether persons, organisations or parties, standing for the united front of the working class against the class enemy. But at the same time it is our duty, in the interests of the proletariat and its cause, to criticise those persons, organisations and parties that hinder unity of action by the workers.

"We cannot form a united front with the communists, since they have a different programme," says a third group. But you yourselves say that your programme differs from the programme of the bourgeois parties, and yet this did not and does not prevent you from entering into coalitions with these parties.

"The bourgeois-democratic parties are better allies against fascism than the communists," say the opponents of the united front and the advocates of coalition with the bourgeoisie. But what does Germany's experience teach? Did not the social-democrats form a bloc with those "better" allies? And what were the results?

"If we establish a united front with the communists, the petty bourgeoisie will take fright at the 'Red danger' and will desert to the fascists," we hear it said quite frequently. But does the united front represent a threat to the peasants, small traders, artisans, working intellectuals? No, the united front is a threat to the big bourgeoisie, the financial magnates, the *Junkers* and other exploiters, whose regime brings complete ruin to all these strata.

"Social-democracy is for democracy, the communists are for dictatorship; therefore we cannot form a united front with the communists," say some of the social-democratic leaders. But are we offering you now a united front for the purpose of proclaiming the dictatorship of the proletariat? We make no such proposal now.

"Let the communists recognise democracy, let them come out in its defence, then we shall be ready for a united front." To this we reply: We are adherents of Soviet democracy, the democracy of the toilers, the most consistent democracy in the world. But in the capitalist countries we defend and shall

continue to defend every inch of bourgeois-democratic liberties, which are being attacked by fascism and bourgeois reaction, because the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat so dictate.

“But the tiny Communist Parties do not add anything by participating in the united front brought about by the Labour Party,” say, for instance, the Labour leaders of Great Britain. Recall how the Austrian social-democratic leaders said the same things with reference to the small Austrian Communist Party. And what have events shown? It was not the Austrian Social-Democratic Party headed by Otto Bauer and Karl Renner that proved right, but the tiny Austrian Communist Party which at the right moment signalled the fascist danger in Austria and called upon the workers to struggle. The whole experience of the labour movement has shown that the communists, with all their relative insignificance in numbers, are the motive power of the militant activity of the proletariat. Besides this, it must not be forgotten that the Communist Parties of Austria or Great Britain are not only the tens of thousands of workers who are adherents of the party, but are *parts* of the world communist movement, are *sections of the Communist International*, the *leading* party of which is the party of a proletariat which has already achieved victory and rules over one-sixth of the globe.

“But the united front did not prevent fascism from being victorious in the Saar,” is another objection advanced by the opponents of the united front. Strange is the logic of these gentlemen! First they leave no stone unturned to ensure the victory of fascism and then they rejoice with malicious glee because the united front which they entered into only at the last moment did not lead to the victory of the workers.

“If we were to form a united front with the communists, we should have to withdraw from the coalition, and reactionary and fascist parties would enter the government,” say the social-democratic leaders holding cabinet posts in various countries. Very well. Was not the German Social-Democratic Party in a coalition government? It was. Was not the Austrian Social-Democratic Party in office? It was. Were not the Spanish socialists in the same government as the bourgeoisie? They were, too. Did the participation of the Social-Democratic Parties in the bourgeois coalition governments in these countries prevent fascism from attacking the proletariat? It did not. Consequently it is as clear as daylight that participation of social-democratic ministers in bourgeois governments is not a barrier to fascism.

“The communists act like dictators, they want to prescribe and dictate everything to us.” No. We prescribe nothing and dictate nothing. We only put forward our proposals, being convinced that if realised they will meet the interests of the working people. This is not only the right but the duty of all those acting in the name of the workers. You are afraid of the “dictatorship” of the communists? Let us jointly submit all proposals to the workers, both yours and ours, jointly discuss them together with all the workers, and choose those proposals which are most useful to the cause of the working class.

Thus all these arguments against the united front *will not stand the slightest criticism*. They are rather the flimsy excuses of the reactionary leaders of social-democracy, who prefer their united front with the bourgeoisie to the united front of the proletariat.

No. These excuses will not hold water. The international proletariat has experienced the suffering caused by the split in the working class, and becomes more and more convinced that *the united front, the unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale, is at once necessary and perfectly possible*.

## CONTENT AND FORMS OF THE UNITED FRONT

What is and ought to be the basic content of the united front at the present stage? The defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, the defence of the working class against fascism, must form the *starting point* and *main content* of the united front in all capitalist countries.

We must not confine ourselves to bare appeals to struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. We must also find and advance those slogans and forms of struggle which arise from the vital needs of the masses, from the level of their fighting capacity at the present stage of development.

We must point out to the masses what they must do *today* to defend themselves against capitalist spoliation and fascist barbarity.

We must strive to establish the widest united front with the aid of joint action by workers' organisations of different trends for the defence of the vital interests of the toiling masses. This means:

*First*, joint struggle really to shift the burden of the consequences of the crisis onto the shoulders of the ruling classes, the shoulders of the capitalists, landlords—in a word, to the shoulders of the rich.

*Second*, joint struggle against all forms of the fascist offensive, in defence of the gains and the rights of the toilers, against the destruction of bourgeois-democratic liberties.

*Third*, joint struggle against the approaching danger of imperialist war, a struggle that will make the preparation of such a war more difficult.

We must tirelessly prepare the working class for a *rapid change in forms and methods of struggle* when there is a change in the situation. As the movement grows and the unity of the working class strengthens, we must go further, and prepare the transition *from the defensive to the offensive against capital*, steering towards the *organisation of a mass political, strike*. It must be an absolute condition of such a strike to draw into it the main trade unions of the countries concerned.

Communists, of course, cannot and must not for a moment abandon their own *independent work* of communist education, organisation and mobilisation of the masses. However, to ensure that the workers find the road of unity of action, it is necessary to strive at the same time both for short-term and for long-term agreements that provide for *joint action with Social-Democratic Parties, reformist trade unions and other organisations of the toilers* against the class enemies of the proletariat. The chief stress in all this must be laid on developing mass action locally, *to be carried out by the local organisations* through local agreements.

While loyally carrying out the conditions of all agreements made with them, we shall mercilessly expose all sabotage of joint action on the part of persons and organisations participating in the united front. To any attempt to wreck the agreements—and such attempts may possibly be made—we shall reply by appealing to the masses while continuing untiringly to struggle for restoration of the broken unity of action.

It goes without saying that the practical realisation of the united front will take *various* forms in various countries, depending upon the condition and character of the workers' organisations and their political level, upon the situation in the particular country, upon the changes in progress in the international labour movement, etc.

These forms may include, for instance: coordinated joint action of the workers to be agreed upon *from case to case* on definite occasions, on individual demands or on the basis of a common platform;

coordinated actions in *individual enterprises* or by *whole industries* ; coordinated actions on a *local, regional, national or international scale* ; coordinated actions for the organisation of the *economic struggle* of the workers, carrying out of mass *political* actions, for the organisation of joint *self-defence* against fascist attacks; coordinated action in rendering aid to *political prisoners and their families*, in the field of struggle against *social reaction*; joint actions in the defence of the *interests of the youth and women*, in the field of the *cooperative movement, cultural activity, sport, etc.*

It would be insufficient to rest content with the conclusion of a pact providing for joint action and the formation of contact committees from the parties and organisations participating in the united front, like those we have in France, for instance. That is only the first step. The pact is an auxiliary means for obtaining joint action, but by itself it does not constitute a united front. A contact commission between the leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties is necessary to facilitate the carrying out of joint action, but by itself it is far from adequate for a real development of the united front, for drawing the widest masses into the struggle against fascism.

The communists and all revolutionary workers must strive for the formation of elected (and in the countries of fascist dictatorship—selected from the most authoritative participants in the united front movement) *class bodies of the united front chosen irrespective of party, at the factories, among the unemployed, in the working class districts, among the small townsmen and in the villages.* Only such bodies will be able to include also in the united front movement the vast masses of unorganised toilers, and will be able to assist in developing mass initiative in the struggle against the capitalist offensive of fascism and reaction, and on this basis create the necessary *broad active rank and file of the united front* and train hundreds and thousands of non-party Bolsheviks in the capitalist countries.

Joint action of the *organised* workers is the beginning, the foundation. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the unorganised masses constitute the vast majority of workers. Thus, in *France* the number of organised workers—communists, socialists, trade union members of various trends—is altogether *about one million*, while the total number of workers is *eleven million*. In *Great Britain* there are approximately *five million* members of trade unions and parties of various trades. At the same time the total number of workers is *fourteen million*. In the *United States of America* about *five million workers* are organised, while altogether there are *thirty-eight million* workers in that country. About the same ratio holds good for a number of other countries. In “normal” times this mass in the main does not participate in political life. But now this gigantic mass is getting into motion more and more, is being brought into political life, comes out in the political arena.

The creation of non-partisan class bodies is the *best form* for carrying out, extending and strengthening the united front among the rank and file of the masses. These bodies will likewise be the best bulwark against any attempt of the opponents of the united front to disrupt the established unity of action of the working class.

### **THE ANTI-FASCIST PEOPLE'S FRONT**

In mobilising the mass of working people for the struggle against fascism, the formation of a *wide, popular anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front* is a particularly important task. The success of the whole struggle of the proletariat is closely bound up with establishing a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand, and the toiling peasantry and basic mass of the urban

petty bourgeoisie, who together form the majority of the population even in industrially developed countries, on the other.

In its agitation, fascism, desirous of winning these masses to its own side, tries to set the mass of working people in town and countryside against the revolutionary proletariat, frightening the petty bourgeoisie with the bogey of the "Red peril." We must *turn this weapon against those who wield it* and show the working peasants, artisans and intellectuals whence the real danger threatens. We must *show concretely* who it is that piles the burden of taxes and imposts on to the peasant and squeezes usurious interest out of him; who it is that, while owning the best land and every form of wealth, drives the peasant and his family from his plot of land and dooms him to unemployment and poverty. We must explain concretely, patiently and persistently who it is that ruins the artisans and handicraftsmen with taxes, imposts, high rents and competition impossible for them to withstand; who it is that throws into the street and deprives of employment the wide masses of the working intelligentsia.

But this is *not enough*.

The fundamental, the most decisive thing in establishing the anti-fascist People's Front is *resolute action of the revolutionary proletariat* in defence of the demands of these sections of the people, particularly the working peasantry—demands in line with the basic interests of the proletariat—and in the process of struggle combining the demands of the working class with these demands.

In forming the anti-fascist People's Front, a correct approach to those organisations and parties which have in them a considerable number of the working peasantry and the mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie is of great importance.

In the capitalist countries the majority of these parties and organisations, political as well as economic, are still under the influence of the bourgeoisie and follow it. The social composition of these parties and organisations is heterogeneous. They include big kulaks (rich peasants) side by side with landless peasants, big business men alongside of petty shopkeepers; but control is in the hands of the former, the agents of big capital. This obliges us to *approach the different organisations in different ways*, taking into consideration that not infrequently the bulk of the membership does not know anything about the real political character of its leadership. Under certain conditions, we can and must try to draw these parties and organisations or certain sections of them to the side of the anti-fascist People's Front, despite their bourgeois leadership. Such, for instance, is today the situation in France with the Radical Party, in the United States with various farmers' organisations, in Poland with the "Stronnictwo Ludowe," in Yugoslavia with the Croatian Peasants' Party, in Bulgaria with the Agrarian League, in Greece with the Agrarians, etc. But regardless of whether or not there is any chance of attracting these parties and organisations as a whole to the People's Front, our tactics must *under all circumstances* be directed towards drawing the small peasants, artisans, handicraftsmen, etc., among their members into the anti-fascist People's Front.

Hence, you see that in this field we must all along the line put an end to what frequently occurs in our practical work—neglect or contempt of the various organisations and parties of the peasants, artisans and the mass of petty bourgeoisie in the towns.

## KEY QUESTIONS OF THE UNITED FRONT IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

There are in every country certain *key questions* which at the present stage are agitating vast masses of the population and around which the struggle for the establishment of the united front must be developed. If these key points, or key questions, are properly grasped, it will ensure and accelerate the establishment of the united front.

### A. *The United States of America*

Let us take, for example, so important a country in the capitalist world as the United States of America. There millions of people have been set into motion by the crisis. The programme for the recovery of capitalism has collapsed. Vast masses are beginning to abandon the bourgeois parties and are at present at the crossroads.

Embryo American fascism is trying to direct the disillusionment and discontent of these masses into reactionary fascist channels. It is a peculiarity of the development of American fascism that at the present stage this fascism comes forward principally in the guise of an opposition to fascism, which it accuses of being an "un-American" tendency imported from abroad. In contradistinction to German fascism, which acts under anti-constitutional slogans, American fascism tries to portray itself as the custodian of the Constitution and "American democracy." It does not yet represent a directly menacing force. But if it succeeds in penetrating to the wide masses who have become disillusioned with the old bourgeois parties it may become a serious menace in the very near future.

And what would the success of fascism in the United States involve? For the mass of working people it would, of course, involve the unrestrained strengthening of the regime of exploitation and the destruction of the working-class movement. And what would be the international significance of this success of fascism? As we know, the United States is not Hungary, or Finland, or Bulgaria, or Latvia. The success of fascism in the United States would vitally change the whole international situation.

Under these circumstances, can the American proletariat content itself with organising only its class-conscious vanguard, which is prepared to follow the revolutionary path? No.

It is perfectly obvious that the interests of the American proletariat demand that all its forces dissociate themselves from the capitalist parties without delay. It must find in good time ways and suitable forms to prevent fascism from winning over the wide mass of discontented working people. And here it must be said that under American conditions the creation of a mass party of working people, a "*Workers' and Farmers' Party*," might serve as such a suitable form. *Such a party would be a specific form of the mass People's Front in America* and should be put in opposition to the parties of the trusts and the banks, and likewise to growing fascism. Such a party, of course, will be *neither* socialist *nor* communist. But it *must be* an anti-fascist party and *must not be* an anti-communist party. The programme of this party must be directed against the banks, trusts and monopolies, against the principal enemies of the people, who are gambling on the woes of the latter. Such a party will correspond to its name only if it defends the urgent demands of the working class, only if it fights for genuine social legislation, for unemployment insurance; only if it fights for land for the white and black sharecroppers and for their liberation from debt burdens; only if it tries to secure the cancellation of the farmers' indebtedness; only if it fights for equal status for Negroes; only if it defends the demands of the war veterans and the interests of members of the liberal professions, small businessmen and artisans. And so on.

It goes without saying that such a party will fight for the election of its own candidates to local government, to the state legislatures, to the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Our comrades in the United States acted rightly in taking the initiative for the creation of such a party. But they still have to take effective measures in order to make the creation of such a party the cause of the masses themselves. The question of forming a “Workers’ and Farmers’ Party,” and its programme, should be discussed at mass meetings of the people. We should develop the most widespread movement for the creation of such a party, and take the lead in it. In no case must the initiative of organising the party be allowed to pass to elements desirous of utilising the discontent of the millions who have become disillusioned in both the bourgeois parties, Democratic and Republican, in order to create a “third party” in the United States, as an anti-communist party, a party directed against the revolutionary movement.

### ***B. Great Britain***

In Great Britain, as a result of the mass action of the British workers, Mosley’s fascist organisation has for the time being been pushed into the background. But we must not close our eyes to the fact that the so-called “National Government” is passing a number of reactionary measures directed against the working class, as a result of which conditions are being created in Great Britain, too, which will make it easier for the bourgeoisie, if necessary, to pass to a fascist regime. At the present stage, fighting the fascist danger in Great Britain means primarily fighting the “National Government” and its reactionary measures, fighting the offensive of capital, fighting for the demands of the unemployed, fighting against wage reductions and for the repeal of all those laws with the help of which the British bourgeoisie is lowering the standard of living of the masses.

But the growing hatred of the working class for the “National Government” is uniting increasingly large numbers under the slogan of the formation of a *new Labour government* in Great Britain. Can the communists ignore this frame of mind of the masses, who still retain faith in a Labour government? No, comrades. We must find a way of approaching these masses. We tell them openly, as did the Thirteenth Congress of the British Communist Party, that we communists are in favour of a Soviet government as the only form of government capable of emancipating the workers from the yoke of capital. But you want a Labour government? Very well. We have been and are fighting hand in hand with you for the defeat of the “National Government.” We are prepared to support your fight for the formation of a new Labour government, in spite of the fact that both the previous Labour governments failed to fulfil the promises made to the working class by the Labour Party. We do not expect this government to carry out socialist measures. But *we shall present it with the demand*, in the name of millions of workers, that it defend the most essential economic and political interests of the working class and of all working people. Let us jointly discuss a common programme of such demands, and let us achieve that unity of action which the proletariat requires in order to repel the reactionary offensive of the “National Government,” the attack of capital and fascism and the preparations for a new war. On this basis, the British comrades are prepared at the forthcoming parliamentary elections to cooperate with branches of the Labour Party against the “National Government,” and also against Lloyd George, who is trying in his own way in the interests of the British bourgeoisie to lure the masses into following him against the cause of the working class.

This position of the British communists is a correct one. It will help them to set up a militant united front with the millions of members of the British trade unions and Labour Party.

While always remaining in the front ranks of the fighting proletariat, and pointing out to the masses the only right path—the path of struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a Soviet government—the communists, in defining their immediate political aims, must not attempt to leap over those necessary stages of the mass movement in the course of which the working class by its own experience outlives its illusions and passes over to communism.

### *C. France*

France, as we know, is a country in which the working class is setting an example to the whole international proletariat of how to fight fascism. The French Communist Party is setting an example to all the sections of the Comintern of how the tactics of the united front should be applied; the socialist workers are setting an example of what the social-democratic workers of other capitalist countries should now be doing in the fight against fascism. The significance of the anti-fascist demonstration attended by half a million people in Paris on July 14 of this year, and of the numerous demonstrations in other French cities, is tremendous. This is not merely a movement of a united working class front; it is the beginning of a wide general front of the people against fascism in France.

This united front movement enhances the confidence of the working class in its own forces; it strengthens its consciousness of the leading role it is playing in relation to the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the towns and the intelligentsia; it extends the influence of the Communist Party among the mass of the working class and therefore makes the proletariat stronger in the fight against fascism. It is arousing in good time the vigilance of the masses in regard to the fascist danger. And it will serve as an infectious example for the development of the anti-fascist struggle in other capitalist countries, and will exercise a heartening influence on the proletarians of Germany, pressed down by the fascist dictatorship.

The victory, needless to say, is a big one, but still it does not decide the issue of the anti-fascist struggle. The overwhelming majority of the French people are undoubtedly opposed to fascism. But the bourgeoisie is able by armed force to violate the popular will. The fascist movement is continuing to develop absolutely freely, with the active support of monopoly capital, the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie, the general staff of the French army and the reactionary leaders of the Catholic church—that stronghold of all reaction. The most powerful fascist organisation, the Croix de Feu, now commands 300,000 armed men, the backbone of which consists of 60,000 officers of the reserve. It holds strong positions in the police, the gendarmerie, the army, the air force and in all government offices. The recent municipal elections have shown that in France it is not only the revolutionary forces that are growing, but also the forces of fascism. If fascism succeeds in penetrating widely among the peasantry, and in securing the support of one section of the army, while the other section remains neutral, the masses of the French working people will not be able to prevent the fascists from coming to power. Comrades, do not forget the organisational weakness of the French labour movement, which makes easier the success of the fascist attack. The working class and all anti-fascists in France have no grounds for resting content with the results already achieved.

What are the tasks facing the working class in France?

*First*, to establish the united front not only in the political sphere, but also in the economic sphere in order to organise the struggle against the capitalist offensive, and by its pressure to smash the resistance offered to the united front by the leaders of the reformist Confederation of Labour

*Second*, to achieve trade union unity in France—united trade unions based on the class struggle.

*Third*, to enlist in the anti-fascist movement the wide mass of the peasants and petty bourgeoisie, devoting special attention in the programme of the anti-fascist People's Front to their urgent demands.

*Fourth*, to strengthen organisationally and extend further the anti-fascist movement which has already developed, by the widespread creation of elected bodies of the anti-fascist People's Front, elected irrespective of parties and whose influence will extend to wider masses than those in the present parties and organisations of working people in France.

*Fifth*, to force the disbanding and disarming of the fascist organisations, as being organisations of conspirators against the republic and agents of Hitler in France.

*Sixth*, to secure that the state apparatus, army and police shall be purged of the conspirators who are preparing a fascist *coup*.

*Seventh*, to develop the struggle against the leaders of the reactionary cliques of the Catholic church, as one of the most important strongholds of French fascism.

*Eighth*, to link up the army with the anti-fascist movement by creating in its ranks committees for the defence of the republic and the constitution, directed against those who want to utilise the army for an anti-constitutional *coup d'état* ; not to allow the reactionary forces in France to wreck the Franco-Soviet pact, which defends the cause of peace against the aggression of German fascism.

And if in France the anti-fascist movement leads to the formation of a government which will carry on a real struggle against French fascism—not in words but in deeds—and which will carry out the programme of demands of the anti-fascist People's Front, the communists, *while remaining* the irreconcilable foes of every bourgeois government and supporters of a Soviet government, will, nevertheless, in face of the growing fascist danger, *be prepared to support such a government*.

### **THE UNITED FRONT AND THE FASCIST MASS ORGANISATIONS**

Comrades, the fight for the establishment of the united front in countries where the fascists are in power is perhaps the most important problem facing us. In such countries, of course, the fight is carried on under far more difficult conditions than in countries with legal labour movements. Nevertheless, all the conditions exist in fascist countries for the development of a real anti-fascist People's Front in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship, since the social-democratic, Catholic and other workers, in Germany, for instance, are able to realise more directly the need for a joint struggle with the communists against the fascist dictatorship. Wide strata of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, having already tasted the bitter fruits of fascist rule, are growing increasingly discontented and disillusioned, which makes it easier to enlist them in the anti-fascist People's Front.

But the principal task in fascist countries, particularly in Germany and Italy, where fascism has managed to gain a mass basis and has forced the workers and other toilers into its organisations, consists in skilfully combining the fight against the fascist dictatorship from without with its undermining from within, inside the fascist mass organisations and bodies. Special methods and means of approach, suited to the concrete conditions prevailing in these countries must be learned, mastered

and applied, so as to facilitate the rapid disintegration of the mass basis of fascism and to prepare the way for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship. We must learn, master and apply this, and not only shout "Down with Hitler!" and "Down with Mussolini!" Yes, learn, master and apply.

This is a difficult and complex task. It is all the more difficult because our experience in successfully combating fascist dictatorship is extremely limited. Our Italian comrades, for instance, have already been fighting under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship for about thirteen years. Nevertheless, they have not yet succeeded in developing a real mass struggle against fascism, and therefore they have unfortunately been little able in this respect to help the Communist Parties in other fascist countries by their positive experience.

The German and Italian communists, and the communists in other fascist countries, as well as the communist youth, have displayed prodigious valour; they have made and are daily making tremendous sacrifices. We all bow our heads in honour of such heroism and sacrifices. But heroism alone is not enough. Heroism must be combined with day-to-day work among the masses, with concrete struggle against fascism, so as to achieve the most tangible results in this sphere. In our struggle against fascist dictatorship it is particularly dangerous to confuse the wish with the fact. We must base ourselves on the facts, on the actual concrete situation.

What is now the actual situation in Germany, for instance?

The masses are becoming increasingly discontented and disillusioned with the policy of the fascist dictatorship, and this even assumes the form of partial strikes and other actions. In spite of all its efforts, fascism has failed to win over politically the basic masses of the workers; it is losing even its former supporters, and will lose them more and more in the future. Nevertheless, we must realise that the workers who are convinced of the *possibility* of overthrowing the fascist dictatorship, and who are already prepared to fight for it actively, are still in the minority—they consist of us, the communists, and the revolutionary section of the social-democratic workers. But the majority of the toilers have not yet become aware of the real, concrete possibilities and methods of overthrowing this dictatorship and still have a waiting attitude. This we must bear in mind when we outline our tasks in the struggle against fascism in Germany, and when we seek, study and apply special methods of approach for the undermining and overthrow of the fascist dictatorship in Germany.

In order to be able to strike a telling blow at the fascist dictatorship, we must first find out what is its most vulnerable point. What is the Achilles heel of the fascist dictatorship? Its social basis. The latter is extremely heterogeneous. It is made up of various classes and various strata of society. Fascism has proclaimed itself the sole representative of all classes and strata of the population: the manufacturer and the worker, the millionaire and the unemployed, the Junker and the small peasant, the big capitalist and the artisan. It pretends to defend the interests of *all* these strata, the interests of the nation, But since it is a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, fascism must inevitably come into conflict with its mass social basis, all the more since, under the fascist dictatorship, the class contradictions between the pack of financial magnates and the overwhelming majority of the people are brought out in greatest relief.

We can lead the masses to a decisive struggle for the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship only by getting the workers who have been forced into the fascist organisations, or have joined them through ignorance, to take part in the *most elementary movements* for the defence of their economic, political

and cultural interests. It is for this reason that the communists must work in these organisations, as the best champions of the day-to-day interests of the mass of members, bearing in mind that as the workers belonging to these organisations begin more and more frequently to demand their rights and defend their interests, they inevitably come into conflict with the fascist dictatorship.

In defending the urgent and, at first, the most elementary interests of the working people in town and countryside, it is comparatively easier to find a common language not only with the conscious anti-fascists, but also with those of the working people who are still supporters of fascism, but are disillusioned and dissatisfied with its policy, and are grumbling and seeking an occasion for expressing their discontent. In general we must realise that all our tactics in countries with a fascist dictatorship must be of such a character as not to repulse the rank-and-file supporters of fascism, not to throw them once more into the arms of fascism, but to deepen the gulf between the fascist leaders and the mass of disillusioned rank-and-file followers of fascism drawn from the working sections of society.

We need not be dismayed, comrades, if the people mobilised around these day-to-day interests consider themselves either indifferent to politics or even followers of fascism. The important thing for us is to draw them into the movement, which, although it may not at first proceed openly under the slogans of the struggle against fascism, is already objectively an anti-fascist movement putting these masses into opposition to the fascist dictatorship.

Experience teaches us that the view that it is *generally impossible*, in countries with a fascist dictatorship, to come out legally or semi-legally, is harmful and incorrect. To insist on this point of view means to fall into passivity, and to renounce real mass work altogether. True, under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship, to find forms and methods of legal or semi-legal action is a difficult and complex problem. But, as in many other questions, the path is indicated by life itself and by the initiative of the masses themselves, which have already provided us with a number of examples that must be generalised and applied in an organised and effective manner.

We must very resolutely put an end to the tendency to underestimate work in the fascist mass organisations. In Italy, in Germany and in a number of other fascist countries, our comrades concealed their passivity, and frequently even their direct refusal to work in the fascist mass organisations, by putting forward work in the factories as against work in the fascist mass organisations. In reality, however, it was just this mechanical distinction which led to work being conducted very feebly, and sometimes not at all, both in the fascist mass organisations and in the factories.

Yet it is particularly important that communists in the fascist countries should be wherever the masses are to be found. Fascism has deprived the workers of their own legal organisations. It has forced the fascist organisations upon them, and it is *there that the masses are*—by compulsion, or to some extent voluntarily. These mass fascist organisations can and must be made our legal or semi-legal field of action, where we can meet the masses. They can and must be made our legal or semi-legal starting point for the defence of the day-to-day interests of the masses. To utilise these possibilities, communists must win elected positions in the fascist mass organisations, for contact with the masses, and must rid themselves once and for all of the prejudice that such activity is unseemly and unworthy of a revolutionary worker.

In Germany, for instance, there is a system of so-called “shop delegates.” But where is it stated that we must leave the fascists a monopoly in these organisations? Cannot we try to unite the communist,

social-democratic, Catholic and other anti-fascist workers in the factories so that when the list of “shop delegates” is voted upon, the known agents of the employers may be struck off and other candidates, enjoying the confidence of the workers, inserted in their stead? Practice has already shown that this is possible.

And does not practice also go to show that it is possible, jointly with the social-democratic and other discontented workers, to demand that the “shop delegates” really defend the interests of the workers?

Take the “Labour Front” in Germany, or the fascist trade unions in Italy. Is it not possible to demand that the functionaries of the “Labour Front” be elected, and not appointed; to insist that the leading bodies of the local groups report to meetings of the members of the organisations; to address these demands, following a decision by the group, to the employer, to the “guardian of labour,” to higher bodies of the “Labour Front”? This is possible, provided the revolutionary workers actually work within the “Labour Front” and try to obtain posts in it.

Similar methods of work are possible and essential in other mass fascist organisations also—in the Hitler Youth Leagues, in the sports organisations, in the Kraft durch Freude organisations, in the Doppo Lavoro in Italy, in the cooperatives and so forth.

Comrades, you remember the ancient tale of the capture of Troy. Troy was inaccessible to the armies attacking her, thanks to her impregnable walls. And the attacking army, after suffering many sacrifices, was unable to achieve victory until with the aid of the famous Trojan horse it managed to penetrate to the very heart of the enemy’s camp.

We revolutionary workers, it appears to me, should not be shy about using the same tactics with regard to our fascist foe, who is defending himself against the people with the help of a living wall of his cut-throats

He who fails to understand the necessity of using such tactics in the case of fascism, he who regards such an approach as “humiliating,” may be a most excellent comrade, but if you will allow me to say so, he is a windbag and not a revolutionary, he will be unable to lead the masses to the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship.

The mass movement for a united front, starting with defence of the most elementary needs, and changing its forms and watchwords of the struggle as the latter extends and grows, is growing up *outside and inside* the fascist organisations in Germany, Italy and the other countries in which fascism possesses a mass basis. It will be the *battering ram* which will shatter the fortress of the fascist dictatorship that at present seems impregnable to many.

#### **THE UNITED FRONT IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS ARE IN OFFICE**

The struggle for the establishment of the united front raises also another very important problem, the problem of the united front in countries where social-democratic governments, or coalition governments in which socialists participate, are in power, as, for instance, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Belgium.

Our attitude of absolute opposition to social-democratic governments, which are governments of compromise with the bourgeoisie, is well known. But this notwithstanding, we do not regard the existence of a *social-democratic government* or a coalition government formed by a Social-Democratic

Party with bourgeois parties as an *insurmountable* obstacle for establishing a united front with the social-democrats on definite issues. We believe that in such a case too a united front for the defence of the vital interests of the toiling people and in the struggle against fascism is quite *possible* and *necessary*. It stands to reason that in countries where representatives of Social-Democratic Parties take part in the government, the social-democratic leadership offers the strongest *resistance* to the proletarian united front. This is quite comprehensible. After all, they want to show the bourgeoisie that they, better and more skilfully than anyone else, can keep the discontented working masses under control and prevent them from falling under the influence of communism. The fact, however, that social-democratic ministers are opposed to the proletarian united front can by no means justify a situation in which *the communists do nothing to establish a united front with the proletariat*.

Our comrades in the Scandinavian countries often follow the line of least resistance, *confining themselves to propaganda exposing the social-democratic governments*. This is a mistake. In Denmark, for example, the social-democratic leaders have been in the government for the past ten years, and for ten years day in and day out the communists have been reiterating that it is a bourgeois capitalist government. We have to assume that the Danish workers are acquainted with this propaganda. The fact that a considerable majority nevertheless vote for the social-democratic government party only goes to show that the communists' exposure of the government by means of propaganda *is insufficient*. It does not prove, however, that these hundreds of thousands of workers are satisfied with all the government measures of the social-democratic ministers. No, they are *not satisfied* with the fact that by its so-called crisis "agreement" the social-democratic government assists the *big capitalists and landlords* and not the workers and poor peasants. They are not satisfied with the decree issued by the government in January, 1933, which deprived the workers of the *right to strike*. They are not satisfied with the project of the social-democratic leadership for a dangerous *anti-democratic electoral reform* (which would considerably reduce the number of deputies). I shall hardly be in error, comrades, if I state that 99 per cent of the Danish workers *do not approve* of these political steps taken by the social-democratic leaders and ministers.

Is it not possible for the communists to call upon the trade unions and social-democratic organisations of Denmark to discuss some of these burning issues, to express their opinions on them and jointly come out for a proletarian united front with the object of obtaining the workers' demands? In October of last year, when our Danish comrades appealed to the trade unions to act against the reduction of unemployment relief and for the democratic rights of the trade unions, about 100 local trade union organisations joined the united front.

In Sweden a social-democratic government is in power for the third time, but the Swedish communists have for a long time refused to apply the united front tactics in practice. Why? Was it because they were opposed to the united front? Not, in principle, of course; they were for united front, for a united front in general, but they failed to understand in what circumstances, on what questions, in defence of what demands a proletarian united front could be successfully established, where and how to "hook on." A few months before the formation of the social-democratic government, the Social-Democratic Party advanced during the elections a platform containing a number of demands which would have been the very thing to include in the platform of the proletarian united front. For example, the slogans "*Against customs duties*," "*Against militarisation*," "Put an end to the policy of delay in the

question of *unemployment insurance*,” “Grant *adequate old age pensions*,” “Prohibit organisations like the ‘*Munch*’ corps” (a fascist organisation), “Down with *class legislation against the unions* demanded by the bourgeois parties.”

Over a million of the working people of Sweden voted in 1932 for these demands advanced by the social-democrats, and welcomed in 1933 the formation of a social-democratic government in the hope that now these demands would be realised. What could have been more natural in such a situation and what would have better suited the mass of the workers than an appeal of the Communist Party to all social-democratic and trade union organisations to take joint action to secure these demands advanced by the Social-Democratic Party?

If we had succeeded in really mobilising wide masses and in welding the social-democratic and communist workers’ organisations into a united front to secure these demands of the social-democrats themselves, there is no doubt that the *working class of Sweden* would have gained thereby. The social-democratic ministers of Sweden, of course, would not have been very happy over it, for in that case the government would have been compelled to meet at least some of these demands. At any rate, what has happened now, when the government instead of abolishing has *raised* some of the duties, instead of restricting militarism has enlarged the military budget, and instead of rejecting any legislation directed against the trade unions has itself introduced such a bill in Parliament, would not have happened. True, on the last issue the Communist Party of Sweden carried through a good mass campaign in the spirit of the proletarian united front with the result that in the end even the social-democratic parliamentary fraction felt constrained to vote against the government bill, and for the time it has fallen through.

The Norwegian communists were right in calling upon the organisations of the Labour Party to organise joint May Day demonstrations and in putting forward a number of demands which in the main coincide with the demands contained in the election platform of the Norwegian Labour Party. Although this step in favour of a united front was poorly prepared and the leadership of the Norwegian Labour Party opposed it, *united front demonstrations took place in thirty localities*.

Formerly many communists used to be afraid that it would be opportunism on their part if they did not counter every partial demand of the social-democrats by demands of their own which were twice as radical. That was a naïve mistake. If social-democrats, for instance, demanded the dissolution of the fascist organisations, there was no reason why we should add: “and the disbanding of the state police” (a demand which would be expedient under different circumstances). We should rather tell the social-democratic workers: We are ready to accept these demands of your party as demands of the proletarian united front and are ready to fight to the end for their realisation. Let us join hands for the battle.

In Czechoslovakia also certain demands advanced by the Czech and German social-democrats, and by the reformist trade unions, can and should be utilised for establishing a united front of the working class. When the social-democrats, for instance, demand work for the unemployed, or the abolition of the laws restricting municipal self-government, as they have done ever since 1927, these demands should be made concrete in each locality, in each district, and a fight should be carried on hand in hand with the social-democratic organisations for their actual realisation. Or, when the Social-Democratic Parties thunder “in general terms” against the agents of fascism in the state apparatus, the proper thing to do is in each particular district to drag into the light of day the particular local fascist spokesmen, and together with the social-democratic workers demand their removal from government employ.

In Belgium the leaders of the Socialist Party, with Emile Vandervelde at their head, have entered a coalition government. This “success” they have achieved thanks to their lengthy and extensive campaigns for two main demands: (1) *the abolition of the emergency decree*, and (2) *the realisation of the de Man plan*. The first issue is very important. The preceding government issued 150 reactionary emergency decrees, which are an extremely heavy burden on the working people. It was proposed to repeal them at once. Such was the demand of the Socialist Party. But have many of these emergency decrees been repealed by the new government? It has not rescinded a single one. It has only mollified somewhat a few of the emergency decrees in order to make a sort of “token payment” in settlement of the generous promises of the Belgian socialist leaders (like that “token dollar” which some European powers proffered the USA in payment of the millions due as war debts).

As regards the realisation of the widely advertised de Man plan, the matter has taken a turn quite unexpected by the social-democratic masses. The socialist ministers announced that the *economic crisis must be overcome first*, and only those provisions of the de Man plan should be carried into effect which improve the position of the industrial capitalists and the banks; only thereafter would it be possible to adopt measures to improve the conditions of the workers. But *how long* must the workers wait for *their* share in the “benefits” promised them in the de Man plan? The Belgian *bankers* have already had their veritable *shower of gold*. The Belgian franc has been devalued 28 per cent; by this manipulation the bankers were able to pocket 4,500,000,000 francs as their spoils at the expense of the wage earners and the savings of the small depositors. But how does this tally with the contents of the de Man plan? Why, if we are to believe the letter of the plan, it promises to “*prosecute monopolist abuses and speculative manipulations.*”

On the basis of the de Man plan, the government has appointed a commission to supervise the banks. But the commission *consists of bankers* who can now gaily and light-heartedly supervise themselves.

The de Man plan also promises a number of other good things, such as a “*shortening of the working day,*” “*standardisation of wages,*” “*a minimum wage,*” “*organisation of an all-embracing system of social insurance,*” “*greater convenience in living conditions through new housing construction*” and so forth. These are all demands which we communists can support. We should go to the labour organisations of Belgium and say to them: The capitalists have already received enough and even too much. Let us demand that the social-democratic ministers now carry out the promises they made to the workers. Let us get together in a *united front* for the *successful defence* of our interests. Minister Vandervelde, we support the demands on behalf of the workers contained in *your* platform; but we tell you frankly that we take these demands *seriously*, that we want action and not empty words, and therefore are uniting hundreds of thousands of workers to *struggle* for these demands!

Thus, in countries having social-democratic governments, the communists, by utilising suitable individual demands taken from the platforms of the Social-Democratic Parties themselves and from the election promises of the social-democratic ministers as the starting point for achieving joint action with the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations, can afterwards more easily develop a campaign for the establishment of a united front on the basis of other mass demands in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and the threat of war.

It must further be borne in mind that in general joint action with the Social-Democratic Parties and

organisations requires from communists serious and substantiated criticism of social-democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and untiring, comradely explanation for the social-democratic workers of the programme and slogans of communism. In countries having social-democratic governments this task is of particular importance in the struggle for the united front.

### **THE STRUGGLE FOR TRADE UNION UNITY**

Comrades, a most important stage in the consolidation of the united front must be the establishment of national and international trade union unity.

As you know, the splitting tactics of the reformist leaders were applied most virulently in the trade unions. The reason for this is clear. Here their policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie found its practical culmination directly in the factories, to the detriment of the vital interests of the working class. This, of course, gave rise to sharp criticism and resistance on the part of the revolutionary workers under the leadership of the communists. That is why the struggle between communism and reformism raged most fiercely in the trade unions.

The more difficult and complicated the situation became for capitalism, the more reactionary was the policy of the leaders of the Amsterdam unions [International Federation of Trade Unions] and the more aggressive their measures against all opposition elements within the trade unions. Even the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany and the intensified capitalist offensive in all capitalist countries failed to diminish this aggressiveness. Is it not a characteristic fact that in 1933 alone, most disgraceful circulars were issued in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium and Sweden, for the expulsion of communists and revolutionary workers from the trade unions?

In Great Britain in 1933 a circular was issued prohibiting the local branches of the trade unions from joining the anti-war or other revolutionary organisations. That was a prelude to the notorious "Black Circular" of the Trade Union Congress General Council, which outlawed any Trades Council admitting delegates "directly or indirectly associated with communist organisations." What is there left to be said of the leadership of the German trade unions, which applied unprecedented repressive measures against the revolutionary elements in the trade unions?

Yet we must base our tactics, not on the behaviour of individual leaders of the Amsterdam unions, no matter what difficulties their behaviour may cause the class struggle, but primarily on the question of *where the masses of workers are to be found*. And here we must openly declare that work in the trade unions is the weakest spot in the work of all Communist Parties. We must bring about a real change for the better in trade union work and make the question of struggle for trade union unity the central issue.

"What constitutes the strength of social-democracy in the West?" asked Comrade Stalin ten years ago. Answering this question, he said:

The fact that it has its support in the trade unions.

What constitutes the weakness of our Communist Parties in the West?

The fact that they are not yet linked with the trade unions, and that certain elements within the Communist Parties do not wish to be linked with them.

Hence, the main task of the Communist Parties of the West at the present time is to develop the campaign for unity in the trade union movement and to bring it to its consummation; to see to it that all communists, without exception, join the trade unions, there to work systematically and patiently to

strengthen the solidarity of the working class in its fight against capital, and thus attain the conditions that will enable the Communist Parties to rely upon the trade unions.

Has this precept of Comrade Stalin's been followed? No, comrades, it has not.

Ignoring the urge of the workers to join the trade unions, and faced with the difficulties of working within the Amsterdam unions, many of our comrades decided to pass by this complicated task. They invariably spoke of an organisational crisis in the Amsterdam unions, of the workers deserting the unions, but failed to notice that after some decline at the beginning of the world economic crisis, these unions later began to grow again. The peculiarity of the trade union movement has been precisely the fact that the attacks of the bourgeoisie on trade union rights, the attempts in a number of countries to unify the trade unions (Poland, Hungary, etc.), the curtailment of social insurance and the cutting of wages, forced the workers, notwithstanding the lack of resistance displayed by the reformist trade union leaders, to rally still more closely around these unions, because the workers wanted and still want to see in the trade unions the militant champions of their vital class interests. This explains the fact that most of the Amsterdam unions in France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, etc., have grown in membership during the last few years. The American Federation of Labour has also considerably increased its membership in the past two years.

Had the German comrades better understood the problem of trade union work of which Comrade *Thälmann* spoke on many occasions, there would undoubtedly have been a better situation in the trade unions than was the case at the time the fascist dictatorship was established. At the end of 1932 only about *ten per cent* of the party members belonged to the free trade unions. This in spite of the fact that after the Sixth Congress of the Comintern the communists took the lead in quite a number of strikes. Our comrades used to write in the press of the need to assign 90 per cent of our forces to work in the trade unions, but in reality activity was concentrated exclusively around the revolutionary trade union opposition which actually sought to replace the trade unions. And how about the period after Hitler's seizure of power? For two years many of our comrades stubbornly and systematically opposed the correct slogan of fighting for the re-establishment of the free unions.

I could cite similar examples about almost every other capitalist country.

But we already have the first serious achievements to our credit in the struggle for trade union unity in European countries. I have in mind little Austria, where on the initiative of the Communist Party a basis has been created for an illegal trade union movement. After the February battles the social-democrats, with Otto Bauer at the head, threw out the watch word: "The free unions can be re-established only after the downfall of fascism." The communists applied themselves to the *task of re-establishing the trade unions*. Each phase of that work was a bit of the living united front of the Austrian proletariat. The successful re-establishment of the free trade unions in underground conditions was a serious blow to fascism. The social-democrats were at the parting of the ways. Some of them tried to negotiate with the government. Others, seeing our successes, created their own parallel illegal trade unions. But there could be only one road: *either capitulation to fascism, or towards trade union unity through joint struggle against fascism*. Under mass pressure, the wavering leadership of the parallel unions created by the former trade union leaders decided to agree to amalgamation. The basis of this amalgamation is irreconcilable struggle against the offensive of capitalism and fascism and the guarantee of trade union democracy. We welcome this fact of the amalgamation of the trade unions,

which is the first of its kind since the formal split of the trade unions after the war and is therefore of *international importance*.

In France the united front has unquestionably served as a mighty impetus for achieving trade union unity. The leaders of the General Confederation of Labour have hampered and still hamper in every way the realisation of unity, countering the main issue of the class policy of the trade unions by raising issues of a subordinate and secondary or formal character. An unquestionable success in the struggle for trade union unity has been the establishment of *single unions* on a local scale, embracing, in the case of the railroad workers, for instance, approximately three-quarters of the membership of both trade unions.

We are definitely for the re-establishment of *trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry.*

*We are for one federation of trade unions in each country. We are for one international federation of trade unions organised according to industries.*

*We stand for one international of trade unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capital and fascism. Our only condition for uniting the trade unions is: Struggle against capital, against fascism and for internal trade union democracy.*

Time does not stand still. To us the question of trade union unity on a national as well as international scale is a question of the great task of uniting our class in mighty, single trade union organisations against the class enemy.

We welcome the fact that on the eve of the First of May this year the Red International of Labour Unions addressed the Amsterdam International with the proposal to consider jointly the question of the terms, methods and forms of uniting the world trade union movement. The leaders of the Amsterdam International rejected that proposal, using the outworn pretext that unity in the trade union movement is possible only within the Amsterdam International, which, by the way, includes almost none but trade unions in a number of European countries.

But the communists working in the trade unions must continue to struggle tirelessly for the unity of the trade union movement. The task of the Red trade unions and the RILU is to do all in their power to hasten the achievement of a joint struggle of all trade unions against the offensive of capital and fascism, and to bring about unity in the trade union movement, despite the stubborn resistance of the reactionary leaders of the Amsterdam International. The Red trade unions and the RILU must receive our unstinted support along this line.

In countries where small Red trade unions exist, we recommend working for their inclusion in the big reformist unions, but demanding the right to defend their views and the reinstatement of expelled members. But in countries where big Red trade unions exist parallel with big reformist trade unions, we must work for the convening of *unity congresses* on the basis of a platform of struggle against the capitalist offensive and the guarantee of *trade union democracy*.

It should be stated categorically that any communist worker, any revolutionary worker who does not belong to the mass trade union of his industry, who does not fight to transform the reformist trade union into a real class trade union organisation, who does not fight for trade union unity on the basis of the class struggle, such a communist worker, such a revolutionary worker, does not discharge his elementary proletarian duty.

## THE UNITED FRONT AND THE YOUTH

I have already pointed out the role which the drawing of the youth into the fascist organisations played in the victory of fascism. In speaking of the youth, we must state frankly that we have neglected our task of drawing the masses of the working youth into the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the danger of war; we have neglected this task in a number of countries. We have underestimated the enormous importance of the youth in the fight against fascism. We have not always taken into account the special economic, political and cultural interests of the youth. We have likewise not paid proper attention to revolutionary education of the youth.

All this has been utilised very cleverly by fascism, which in some countries, particularly in Germany, has inveigled large sections of the youth onto the anti-proletarian road. It should be borne in mind that it is not only by the glamour of militarism that fascism entices the youth. It feeds and clothes some of them in its detachments, gives work to others, and even sets up so-called cultural institutions for the youth, trying in this way to imbue them with the idea that it really can and wants to feed, clothe, teach and provide work for the mass of working youth.

In a number of capitalist countries, our Young Communist Leagues are still mainly sectarian organisations divorced from the masses. Their fundamental weakness is that they still try to copy the Communist Parties, to copy their forms and methods of work, forgetting that the YCL is *not a Communist Party of the youth*. They do not take sufficient account of the fact that it is an organisation with its own special tasks. Its methods and forms of work, education and struggle, must be adapted to the actual level and needs of the youth.

Our Young Communists have shown memorable examples of heroism in the fight against fascist violence and bourgeois reaction. But they still lack the ability to win the masses of the youth away from hostile influences by dint of stubborn, concrete work, as is evident from the fact that they have not yet overcome their opposition to work in the fascist mass organisations, and that their approach to the socialist youth and other non-communist youth is not always correct.

A great part of the responsibility for all this must be borne, of course, by the Communist Parties as well, for they ought to lead and support the YCL in its work. For the problem of the youth is not only a YCL problem. *It is a problem for the whole communist movement*. In the struggle for the youth, the Communist Parties and the YCL organisations must actually effect a decisive change. The main task of the communist youth movement in capitalist countries is to advance boldly in the direction of bringing about the *united front*, along the path of organising and uniting the young generation of working people. The tremendous influence that even the first steps taken in this direction exert on the revolutionary movement of the youth is shown by the examples of *France* and the *United States* during the recent past. It was sufficient in these countries to proceed to apply the united front for considerable successes to be immediately achieved. In the sphere of the international united front, the successful initiative of the committee against war and fascism in Paris in bringing about the international cooperation of all *non-fascist* youth organisations is also worthy of note in this connection.

These recent successful steps in the united front movement of the youth also show that the forms which the united front of the youth should assume must not be stereotyped, nor necessarily be the same as those met with in the practice of the Communist Parties. The Young Communist Leagues must strive in every way to unite the forces of all non-fascist mass organisations of the youth, including

the formation of various kinds of common organisations for the struggle against fascism, against the unprecedented manner in which the youth is being stripped of every right, against the militarisation of the youth and for the economic and cultural rights of the young generation, in order to draw these young workers over to the side of the anti-fascist front, no matter where they may be—in the factories, the forced labour camps, the labour exchanges, the army barracks and the fleet, the schools or in the various sport, cultural or other organisations.

In developing and strengthening the YCL, our YCL members must work for the formation of anti-fascist associations of the Communist and Socialist Youth Leagues on a platform of class struggle.

### **WOMEN AND THE UNITED FRONT**

Nor has work among toiling women—among women workers, unemployed women, peasant women and housewives—been underestimated any less than work among the youth. While fascism exacts most of all from youth, it enslaves women with particular ruthlessness and cynicism, playing on the most painful feelings of the mother, the housewife, the single working woman, uncertain of the morrow. Fascism, posing as a benefactor, throws the starving family a few beggarly scraps, trying in this way to stifle the bitterness aroused, particularly among the toiling women, by the unprecedented slavery which fascism brings them. It drives working women out of industry, forcibly sends needy girls into the country, dooming them to the position of unpaid servants of rich farmers and landlords. While promising women a happy home and family life, it drives women to prostitution more than any other capitalist regime.

Communists, above all our women communists, must remember that there cannot be a successful fight against fascism and war unless the wide masses of women are drawn into the struggle. Agitation alone will not accomplish this. Taking into account the concrete situation in each instance, we must find a way of mobilising the mass of women by work around their vital interests and demands—in a fight for their demands against high prices, for higher wages on the basis of the principle of equal pay for equal work, against mass dismissals, against every manifestation of inequality in the status of women and against fascist enslavement.

In endeavouring to draw women who work into the revolutionary movement, we must not be afraid of forming separate women's organisations for this purpose, wherever necessary. The preconceived notion that the women's organisations under Communist Party leadership in the capitalist countries must be liquidated, as part of the struggle against "women's separatism" in the labour movement, has often done great harm.

It is necessary to seek out the simplest and most flexible forms, in order to establish contact and bring about cooperation in struggle between the revolutionary, social-democratic and progressive anti-war and anti-fascist women's organisations. We must spare no pains to see that the women workers and toilers fight shoulder to shoulder with their class brothers in the ranks of the united working class front and the anti-fascist People's Front.

### **THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITED FRONT**

The changed international and internal situation gives exceptional importance to the question of the *anti-imperialist* united front in all colonial and semi-colonial countries.

In forming a wide anti-imperialist united front of struggle in the colonies and semi-colonies, it is necessary above all to recognise the variety of conditions in which the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses is proceeding, the varying degree of maturity of the national liberation movement, the role of the proletariat within it and the influence of the Communist Party over the masses.

In Brazil the problem differs from that in India, China, etc.

In Brazil the Communist Party, having laid a correct foundation for the development of the united anti-imperialist front by the establishment of the National Liberation Alliance, has to make every effort to extend this front by drawing into it first and foremost the many millions of the peasantry, leading up to the formation of units of a people's revolutionary army, completely devoted to the revolution and to the establishment of the rule of the National Liberation Alliance.

In India the communists have to support, extend and participate in all anti-imperialist mass activities, not excluding those which are under national reformist leadership. While maintaining their political and organisational independence, they must carry on active work inside the organisations which take part in the Indian National Congress, facilitating the process of crystallisation of a national revolutionary wing among them, for the purpose of further developing the national liberation movement of the Indian peoples against British imperialism.

In China, where the people's movement has already led to the formation of Soviet districts over a considerable territory of the country and to the organisation of a powerful Red Army, the predatory attack of Japanese imperialism and the treason of the Nanking government have brought into jeopardy the national existence of the great Chinese people. Only the Chinese Soviets can act as a unifying centre in the struggle against the enslavement and partition of China by the imperialists, as a unifying centre which will rally all anti-imperialist forces for the national defence of the Chinese people.

We therefore approve the initiative taken by our courageous brother party of China in the creation of a most extensive anti-imperialist united front against Japanese imperialism and its Chinese agents, jointly with all those organised forces existing on the territory of China which are ready to wage a real struggle for the salvation of their country and their people. I am sure that I express the sentiments and thoughts of our entire Congress in saying that we send our warmest fraternal greetings, in the name of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world, to all the Soviets of China, to the Chinese revolutionary people. We send our ardent fraternal greetings to the heroic Red Army of China, tried in a thousand battles. And we assure the Chinese people of our firm resolve to support its struggle for its complete liberation from all imperialist robbers and their Chinese henchmen.

### **A UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT**

Comrades, we have taken a bold, resolute course towards the united front of the working class, and are ready to carry it out with full consistency.

If we communists are asked whether we advocate the united front *only* in the fight for partial demands, or whether we are prepared to share the responsibility even when it will be a question of forming a *government* on the basis of the united front, then we say with a full sense of our responsibility: Yes, we recognise that a situation may arise in which the formation of a *government of the proletarian united front*, or of an anti fascist People's Front, will become not only possible but necessary in the interests of the proletariat. And in that case we shall declare for the formation of such

a government without the slightest hesitation.

I am not speaking here of a government which may be formed *after* the victory of the proletarian revolution. It is not impossible, of course, that in some country, immediately after the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, there may be formed a Soviet government on the basis of a government *bloc* of the Communist Party with a definite party (or its left wing) participating in the revolution. After the October Revolution the victorious party of the Russian Bolsheviks, as we know, included representatives of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Soviet government. This was a specific feature of the first Soviet government after the victory of the October Revolution.

I am not speaking of such a case, but of the possible formation of a united front government on the eve of and before the victory of the Soviet revolution.

What kind of government is this? And in what situation could there be any question of such a government?

It is primarily a *government of struggle against fascism and reaction*. It must be a government arising as the result of the united front movement and in no way restricting the activity of the Communist Party and the mass organisations of the working class but, on the contrary, taking resolute measures against the counter-revolutionary financial magnates and their fascist agents.

At a suitable moment, relying on the growing united front movement, the Communist Party of a given country will declare for the formation of such a government on the basis of a definite anti-fascist platform.

Under what objective conditions will it be possible to form such a government? In the most general terms, one can reply to this question as follows: under conditions of *political crisis*, when the ruling classes are no longer able to cope with the powerful rise of the mass anti-fascist movement. But this is only a general perspective, without which it will scarcely be possible in practice to form a united front government. Only the existence of definite special *prerequisites* can put on the order of the day the question of forming such a government as a politically *essential* task. It seems to me that the following prerequisites deserve the greatest attention in this connection:

First, the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie must already be sufficiently *disorganised* and *paralysed*, so that the bourgeoisie cannot prevent the formation of a government of struggle against reaction and fascism;

Second, the widest masses of working people, particularly the mass trade unions, must be in a state of vehement revolt *against fascism and reaction, though not ready* to rise in insurrection so as to *fight under Communist Party leadership for the achievement of Soviet power*.

Third, the differentiation and leftward movement in the ranks of social-democracy and other parties participating in the united front must already have reached the point where a considerable proportion of them demand *ruthless measures against the fascists and other reactionaries*, struggle together with the communists against fascism, and openly come out against that reactionary section of their own party which is hostile to communism.

When and in what countries a situation will actually arise in which these prerequisites will be present in a sufficient degree, it is impossible to state in advance. But as such a possibility *is not to be ruled out in any of the capitalist countries* we must reckon with it, and not only orientate and prepare ourselves but also orientate the working class accordingly.

The fact that we are bringing up this question for discussion at all today is, of course, connected with our estimate of the situation and immediate prospects, as well as with the actual growth of the united front movement in a number of countries during the recent past. For more than ten years the situation in the capitalist countries was such that it was not necessary for the Communist International to discuss a question of this kind.

You remember, comrades, that at our Fourth Congress, in 1922, and again at the Fifth Congress, in 1924, the question of the slogan of a *workers'*, or a *workers' and peasants' government*, was under discussion. Originally the issue turned essentially upon a question which was almost comparable to the one we are discussing today. The debates that took place at that time in the Communist International around this question, and in particular the political *errors* which were committed in connection with it, have to this day retained their importance for *sharpening our vigilance against the danger of deviations to the right or "left" from the Bolshevik line on this question*. Therefore I shall briefly point to a few of these errors, in order to draw from them the lessons necessary for the present policy of our parties.

The *first* series of mistakes arose from the fact that the question of a workers' government was not clearly and firmly bound up with the existence of a political crisis. Owing to this the right opportunists were able to interpret matters as though we should strive for the formation of a workers' government, supported by the Communist Party, in any, so to speak, "normal" situation. The ultra-lefts, on the other hand, recognised only a workers' government formed by armed insurrection, *after* the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Both views were wrong. In order, therefore, to avoid a repetition of such mistakes, we now lay *great stress on the exact consideration* of the specific, concrete circumstances of the political crisis and the upsurge of the mass movement, in which the formation of a united front government may prove possible and politically necessary.

The *second* series of errors arose from the fact that the question of a workers' government was not bound up with the development of a militant mass *united front movement of the proletariat*. Thus the right opportunists were able to distort the question, reducing it to the unprincipled tactics of forming *blocs* with Social-Democratic Parties on the basis of purely parliamentary arrangements. The ultra-lefts, on the other hand, shouted: "No coalitions with the counter-revolutionary social-democrats!", regarding all social-democrats as counter-revolutionaries at bottom.

Both were wrong, and we now emphasise, on the one hand, that we are not in the least anxious for a "workers' government" that would be nothing more or less than an enlarged social-democratic government. We even prefer not to use the term "workers' governments," and *speak of a united front government*, which in political character is something absolutely different, *different in principle*, from all the social-democratic governments which usually call themselves "workers' (or labour) governments." While the social-democratic government is an instrument of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie in the interests of the preservation of the capitalist order, *a united front government* is an instrument of the collaboration of the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat with other anti-fascist parties, in the interests of the entire toiling population, a government of struggle against fascism and reaction. Obviously there is a *radical difference* between these two things.

On the other hand, we stress the need to see *the difference between the two different camps of social-democracy*. As I have already pointed out, there is a reactionary camp of social-democracy, but

alongside of it there exists and is growing the camp of the left social-democrats (without quotation marks), of workers who are becoming revolutionary. In practice the decisive difference between them consists in their attitude to the united front of the working class. The reactionary social-democrats are *against* the united front; they slander the united front movement, they sabotage and disintegrate it, as it undermines their policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The left social-democrats are *for the united front*; they defend, develop and strengthen the united front movement. Inasmuch as this united front movement is a militant movement against fascism and reaction, it will be a constant driving force, impelling the united front government to struggle against the reactionary bourgeoisie. The more powerful this mass movement develops, the greater the force which it can offer to the government to combat the reactionaries. And the better this mass movement will be organised *from below*, the wider the network of *non-partisan class organs of the united front in the factories*, among the *unemployed*, in the *workers' districts*, among the small people of *town and country*, the greater will be the guarantee against a possible degeneration of the policy of the united front government.

The *third* series of mistaken views which came to light during our former debates touched precisely on the *practical policy* of the "*workers' government*." The right opportunists considered that a "workers' government" ought to keep "within the framework of bourgeois democracy," and consequently ought not to take any steps going beyond this framework. The ultra-lefts, on the other hand, in practice refused to make any attempt to form a united front government.

In 1923 Saxony and Thuringia presented a clear picture of a right opportunist "workers' government" in action. The entry of the communists into the government of Saxony jointly with the left social-democrats (Zeigner group) was no mistake in itself; on the contrary, the revolutionary situation in Germany fully justified this step. But, in taking part in the government, the communists should have used their positions primarily *for the purpose of arming the proletariat*. This they did not do. They did not even requisition a single apartment of the rich, although the housing shortage among the workers was so great that many of them with their wives and children were still without a roof over their heads. They also did *nothing* to organise the revolutionary mass movement of the workers. They behaved in general like *ordinary* parliamentary ministers "within the framework of bourgeois democracy." As you know, this was the result of the opportunist policy of Brandler and his adherents. The result was such bankruptcy that to this day we have to refer to the government of Saxony as the classical example of how revolutionaries should *not* behave when in office.

Comrades, we demand an entirely different policy from any united front government. We demand that it should carry out definite and *fundamental revolutionary demands* required by the situation. For instance, control of production, control of the banks, disbanding of the police and its replacement by an armed workers' militia, etc.

Fifteen years ago Lenin called upon us to focus all our attention on "searching out forms of *transition or approach* to the proletarian revolution." It may be that in a number of countries the *united front government* will prove to be *one* of the most important transitional forms. "Left" doctrinaires always avoided this precept of Lenin's. Like the limited propagandists that they were, they spoke only of "aims," without ever worrying about "forms of transition." The right opportunists, on the other hand, tried to establish a special "democratic intermediate stage" lying between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the purpose of instilling into the workers

the illusion of a peaceful parliamentary passage from the one dictatorship to the other. This fictitious “intermediate stage” they also called “transitional form,” and even quoted Lenin’s words! But this piece of swindling was not difficult to expose: for Lenin spoke of the form of transition and approach to the “*proletarian revolution*,” *i.e.*, to the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship, and *not* of some transitional form *between* the bourgeois and the proletarian dictatorship.

Why did Lenin attach such exceptionally great importance to the form of transition to the proletarian revolution? Because he had in mind “*the fundamental law of all great revolutions*,” the law that for the masses propaganda and agitation alone cannot take the place of *their own political experience*, when it is a question of attracting really wide masses of the working people to the side of the revolutionary vanguard, without which a victorious struggle for power is impossible.

It is a common mistake of a leftist character to imagine that as soon as a political (or revolutionary) crisis arises, it is enough for the communist leaders to throw out the slogan of revolutionary insurrection, and the masses will follow them. No, even in such a crisis the masses are by no means always ready to do so. We saw this in the case of Spain. To help the *millions* to master as rapidly as possible, through their own experience, what they have to do, where to find a radical solution, and what party is worthy of their confidence these among others are the purposes for which both transitional slogans and special “forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution” are necessary. Otherwise the great mass of the people, a prey to petty-bourgeois democratic illusions and traditions, may waver even when there is a revolutionary situation, may procrastinate and stray, without finding the road to revolution—and then come under the axe of the fascist executioners.

That is why we indicate the possibility of forming an anti-fascist united front government in the conditions of a political crisis. In so far as such a government will really prosecute the struggle against the enemies of the people, and give a free hand to the working class and the Communist Party, we communists shall accord it our unstinted support, and as soldiers of the revolution shall take our place in the *first line of fire*. But we state frankly to the masses:

*Final salvation* this government *cannot bring*. It is not in a position to overthrow the class rule of the exploiters, and for this reason cannot finally remove the danger of fascist counter-revolution. Consequently it is necessary *to prepare for the socialist revolution!* Soviet power and *only* Soviet power can bring salvation!

In estimating the present development of the world situation, we see that a *political crisis* is maturing in quite a number of countries. This makes a firm decision by our Congress on the question of a united front government a matter of great urgency and importance.

If our parties are able to utilise in a Bolshevik fashion the opportunity of forming a united front government and of waging the struggle for formation and maintenance in power of such a government, *for the revolutionary training of the masses*, this will be *the best political justification* of our policy in favour of the formation of united front governments.

### THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM

One of the weakest aspects of the anti-fascist struggle of our parties is that they *react inadequately and too slowly to the demagogy of fascism*, and to this day continue to neglect the problems of the struggle against fascist ideology. Many comrades did not believe that so reactionary a variety of bourgeois

ideology as the ideology of fascism, which in its stupidity frequently reaches the point of lunacy, was capable of gaining a mass influence at all. This was a great mistake. The putrefaction of capitalism penetrates to the innermost core of its ideology and culture, while the desperate situation of wide masses of the people renders certain sections of them susceptible to infection from the ideological refuse of this putrefaction.

Under no circumstances may we underrate fascism's power of ideological infection. On the contrary, we for our part must develop an extensive ideological struggle based on clear, popular arguments and a correct, well thought out approach to the peculiarities of the national psychology of the masses of the people.

The fascists are rummaging through the entire history of every nation so as to be able to pose as the heirs and continuators of all that was exalted and heroic in its past, while all that was degrading or offensive to the national sentiments of the people they make use of as weapons against the enemies of fascism. Hundreds of books are being published in Germany with only one aim—to falsify the history of the German people and give it a fascist complexion.

The new-baked National-Socialist historians try to depict the history of Germany as if for the past two thousand years, by virtue of some historical law, a certain line of development had run through it like a red thread, leading to the appearance on the historical scene of a national "saviour," a "messiah," of the German people, a certain "corporal" of Austrian extraction! In these books the greatest figures of the German people of the past are represented as having been fascists, while the great peasant movements are set down as the direct precursors of the fascist movement.

Mussolini makes every effort to make capital for himself out of the heroic figure of Garibaldi. The French fascists bring to the fore as their heroine Joan of Arc. The American fascists appeal to the traditions of the American War of Independence, the traditions of Washington and Lincoln. The Bulgarian fascists make use of the national liberation movement of the 'seventies and its heroes beloved of the people, Vassil Levsky, Stephen Karaj and others.

Communists who suppose that all this has nothing to do with the cause of the working class, who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the past of their people, in an historically correct fashion, in a genuinely Marxist, a Leninist-Marxist, a Leninist-Stalinist spirit, who do nothing to *link up the present struggle with the people's revolutionary traditions and past*—voluntarily hand over to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, that the fascists may bamboozle the masses.

No, Comrades, *we are concerned with every important question, not only of the present and the future, but also of the past of our own peoples.* We communists do not pursue a narrow policy based on the craft interests of the workers. We are not narrow-minded trade union functionaries, or leaders of mediaeval guilds of handicraftsmen and journeymen. We are the representatives of the class interests of the most important, the greatest class of modern society—the working class, to whose destiny it falls to free mankind from the sufferings of the capitalist system, the class which in one-sixth of the world has already cast off the yoke of capitalism and constitutes the ruling class. We defend the vital interests of all the exploited, toiling strata, i.e. of the overwhelming majority in any capitalist country.

We communists are the *irreconcilable opponents, on principle*, of bourgeois nationalism in all its forms. But we *are not supporters of national nihilism*, and should never act as such. The task of

educating the workers and all working people in the spirit of proletarian internationalism is one of the fundamental tasks of every Communist Party. But anyone who thinks that this permits him, or even compels him, to sneer at all the national sentiments of the wide masses of working people is far from being a genuine Bolshevik, and has understood nothing of the teaching of Lenin and Stalin on the national question.

Lenin, who always fought bourgeois nationalism resolutely and consistently, gave us an example of the correct approach to the problem of national sentiments, in his article "On the national pride of the Great Russians," written in 1914. He wrote:

Are we enlightened Great-Russian proletarians impervious to the feeling of national pride? Certainly not! We love our language and our motherland; we, more than any other group, are working to raise its labouring masses (*i.e.*, nine-tenths of its population) to the level of intelligent democrats and socialists. We, more than anybody, are grieved to see and feel to what violence, oppression and mockery our beautiful motherland is being subjected by the tsarist hangmen, the nobles and the capitalists. We are proud of the fact that those acts of violence met with resistance in our midst, in the midst of the Great Russians; that we have given the world Radischev, the Decembrists, the déclassé revolutionaries of the seventies; that in 1905 the Great Russian working class created a powerful revolutionary party of the masses . . . We are filled with national pride because of the knowledge that the Great-Russian nation, *too*, has created a revolutionary class; that it, too, has proven capable of giving humanity great examples of struggle for freedom and for socialism; that its contribution is not confined solely to great pogroms, numerous scaffolds, torture chambers, great famines and great servility before the priests, the tsars, the landowners and the capitalists.

We are filled with national pride, and therefore we *particularly* hate *our* slavish past . . . and our slavish present, in which the same landowners, aided by the capitalists, lead us into war to stifle Poland and the Ukraine, to throttle the democratic movement in Persia and in China, to strengthen the gang of Romanovs, Dobrinskys, Purishkeviches that cover with shame our Great-Russian national dignity."

This is what Lenin wrote on national pride.

I think, comrades, that when the fascists, at the Leipzig trial, attempted to slander the Bulgarians as a barbarian people, I was not wrong in taking up the defence of the national honour of the toiling masses of the Bulgarian people, who are struggling heroically against the fascist usurpers, the real barbarians and savages, nor was I wrong in declaring that I had no cause to be ashamed of being a Bulgarian, but that, on the contrary, I was proud of being a son of the heroic Bulgarian working class.

Comrades, proletarian internationalism must, so to speak, "acclimatise itself" in each country in order to sink deep roots in its native land. *National forms* of the proletarian class struggle and of the labour movement in the individual countries are in no contradiction to proletarian internationalism; on the contrary, it is precisely in these forms that the *international interests* of the proletariat can be successfully defended.

It goes without saying that it is necessary *everywhere and on all occasions* to expose before the masses and prove to them concretely that the fascist bourgeoisie, on the pretext of defending general national interests, is conducting its egotistical policy of oppressing and exploiting its own people, as well as robbing and enslaving other nations. But we must not *confine ourselves* to this. We must at the same time prove by the very struggle of the working class and the actions of the Communist Parties that the proletariat, in rising against every manner of bondage and national oppression, is the *only* true fighter for national freedom and the independence of the people.

The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat against its native exploiters and oppressors are

not in contradiction to the interests of a free and happy future of the nation. On the contrary, the socialist revolution will signify the *salvation of the nation* and will open up to it the road to loftier heights.

By *the very fact* of building at the present time its class organisations and consolidating its positions, by the very fact of defending democratic rights and liberties against fascism, by the very fact of fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the working class is fighting for the future of the nation.

The revolutionary proletariat is fighting to save the culture of the people, to liberate it from the shackles of decaying monopoly capitalism, from barbarous fascism, which is laying violent hands on it. *Only* the proletarian revolution can avert the destruction of culture and raise it to its highest flowering as a truly national culture *national in form and socialist in content*—which, under *Stalin's* leadership, is being realised in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before our very eyes.

Proletarian internationalism not only is not in contradiction to this struggle of the working people of the individual countries for national, social and cultural freedom, but, thanks to international proletarian solidarity and fighting unity, assures the *support* that is necessary for victory in this struggle. The working class in the capitalist countries can triumph *only in closest alliance* with the victorious proletariat of the great Soviet Union. *Only* by struggling hand in hand with the proletariat of the imperialist countries can the colonial peoples and oppressed national minorities achieve their freedom. The sole road to victory for the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries lies through the revolutionary alliance of the working class of the imperialist countries with the national liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, because, as Marx taught us, “no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.”

Communists belonging to an oppressed, dependent nation cannot combat chauvinism successfully among the people of their own nation if they *do not at the same time show* in practice, in the mass movement, that they actually struggle for the liberation of their nation from the alien yoke. And again, on the other hand, the communists of an oppressing nation can not do what is necessary to educate the toiling masses of their nation in the spirit of internationalism *without waging* a resolute struggle against the oppressor policy of their “own” bourgeoisie, for the right of complete self-determination for the nations kept in bondage by it. If they do not do this, they likewise do not make it easier for the toilers of the oppressed nation to overcome their nationalist prejudices.

If we act in this spirit, if in all our mass work we prove convincingly that we are free of both national nihilism and bourgeois nationalism, then and only then shall we be able to wage a really successful struggle against the jingo demagogy of the fascists.

That is the reason why a correct and practical application of the Leninist-Stalinist national policy is of such paramount importance. It is *unquestionably an essential* preliminary condition for a successful struggle against chauvinism—this main instrument of ideological influence of the fascists upon the masses.

### 3. CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

#### AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL UNITY OF THE PROLETARIAT

Comrades, in the struggle to establish the united front the importance of the leading role of the Communist Party increases extraordinarily. Only the Communist Party is at bottom the initiator, the

organiser and the driving force of the united front of the working class.

The Communist Parties can ensure the mobilisation of the widest masses of working people for a united struggle against fascism and the offensive of capital *only if they strengthen their own ranks in every respect*, if they develop their initiative, pursue a Marxist-Leninist policy and apply correct, flexible tactics which take into account the actual situation and alignment of class forces.

### CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

In the period between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses, our parties in the capitalist countries have undoubtedly *grown in stature and have been considerably steeled*. But it would be a most dangerous mistake to rest content with this achievement. The more the united front of the working class extends, the more will new, complex problems rise before us and the more will it be necessary for us to work on the political and organisational consolidation of our parties. The united front of the proletariat brings to the fore an army of workers who will be able to carry out their mission if this army is headed by a leading force which will point out its aims and paths. This leading force can *only be a strong proletarian, revolutionary party*.

If we communists exert every effort to establish a united front, we do this not for the narrow purpose of recruiting new members for the Communist Parties. But we must strengthen the Communist Parties in every way and increase their membership *for the very reason* that we seriously want to strengthen the united front. The strengthening of the Communist Parties is not a narrow party concern but the concern of the entire working class.

*The unity, revolutionary solidarity and fighting preparedness of the Communist Parties* constitute most valuable capital which belongs not only to us but to the whole working class. We have combined and shall continue to combine our readiness to march jointly with the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations to the struggle against fascism with an irreconcilable struggle against social-democracy as the ideology and practice of compromise with the bourgeoisie, and consequently also against any *penetration* of this ideology into our own ranks.

In boldly and resolutely carrying out the policy of the united front, we meet in our own ranks with obstacles which we must remove at all costs in the shortest possible time.

After the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, a *successful struggle was waged* in all Communist Parties of the capitalist countries *against any tendency towards an opportunist adaptation to the conditions of capitalist stabilisation and against any infection with reformist and legalist illusions*. Our parties purged their ranks of various kinds of right opportunists, thus strengthening their Bolshevik unity and fighting capacity. Less successful, and frequently entirely lacking, was the fight against sectarianism. Sectarianism manifested itself no longer in primitive, open forms, as in the first years of the existence of the Communist International, but, under cover of a formal recognition of the Bolshevik theses, hindered the development of a Bolshevik mass policy. In our day this is often no longer an *"infantile disorder,"* as Lenin wrote, but a *deeply rooted vice*, which must be shaken off or it will be impossible to solve the problem of establishing the united front of the proletariat and of leading the masses from the positions of reformism to the side of revolution.

In the present situation sectarianism, *self-satisfied* sectarianism, as we designate it in the draft resolution, *more than anything else* impedes our struggle for the realisation of the united front:

sectarianism, satisfied with its *doctrinaire narrowness*, its divorce from the real life of the masses; satisfied with its *simplified methods* of solving the most complex problems of the working class movement on the basis of stereotyped schemes; sectarianism, which professes to know all and considers it superfluous to learn from the masses, from the lessons of the labour movement. In short, sectarianism, to which, as they say, mountains are mere stepping-stones.

Self-satisfied sectarianism *will not and cannot* understand that the leadership of the working class by the Communist Party does not come of itself. The leading role of the Communist Party in the struggles of the working class must be won. For this purpose it is necessary, not to rant about the leading role of the communists, but to *merit and win the confidence of the working masses* by everyday mass work and correct policy. This will be possible only if in our political work we communists seriously take into account the actual level of the class consciousness of the masses, the degree to which they have become revolutionised, if we soberly appraise the actual situation, not on the basis of our wishes but on the basis of the actual state of affairs. Patiently, step by step, we must make it easier for the broad masses to come over to the communist position. We ought never to forget the words of Lenin, who warns us as strongly as possible:

. . . this is the whole point—we must not regard that which is obsolete for us as obsolete for the class, as obsolete for the masses.

Is it not a fact, comrades, that there are still not a few such doctrinaire elements left in our ranks who at all times and places sense nothing but danger in the policy of the united front? For such comrades the whole united front is one unrelieved peril. But this sectarian “stickling for principle” is nothing but political helplessness in face of the difficulties of directly leading the struggle of the masses.

Sectarianism finds expression *particularly* in overestimating the revolutionisation of the masses, in overestimating the speed at which they are abandoning the positions of reformism, and in attempting to leap over difficult stages and the complicated tasks of the movement. In practice, methods of leading the masses have frequently been replaced by the methods of leading a narrow party group. The strength of the traditional connection between the masses and their organisations and leaders was underestimated, and when the masses did not break off these connections immediately, the attitude taken towards them was just as harsh as that adopted towards their reactionary leaders. Tactics and slogans have tended to become stereotyped for all countries, the special features of the actual situation in each individual country being left out of account. The necessity of stubborn struggle in the very midst of the masses themselves to win their confidence has been ignored, the struggle for the partial demands of the workers and work in the reformist trade unions and fascist mass organisations have been neglected. The policy of the united front has frequently been replaced by bare appeals and abstract propaganda.

In no less a degree have sectarian views hindered the correct selection of people, the training and developing of *cadres conted with the masses, enjoying the confidence* of the masses, cadres whose *revolutionary mettle* have been tried and tested in class battles, cadres capable of combining the *practical experience of mass work with the staunchness of principle of a Bolshevik*.

Thus sectarianism has to a considerable extent retarded the growth of the Communist Parties, made it difficult to carry out a real mass policy, prevented our taking advantage of the difficulties of the class enemy to strengthen the positions of the revolutionary movement, and hindered the winning over of

the wide mass of the proletariat to the side of the Communist Parties.

While fighting most resolutely to overcome and exterminate the last remnants of self-satisfied sectarianism, we must increase in every way our vigilance towards right opportunism and the struggle against it and against every one of its concrete manifestations, bearing in mind that the danger of right opportunism will increase in proportion as the wide united front develops. Already there are tendencies to reduce the role of the Communist Party in the ranks of the united front and to effect a reconciliation with social-democratic ideology. Nor must the fact be lost sight of that the tactics of the united front are a method of clearly convincing the social-democratic workers of the correctness of the communist policy and the incorrectness of the reformist policy, and *that they are not a reconciliation with social-democratic ideology and practice*. A successful struggle to establish the united front imperatively demands constant struggle in our ranks against tendencies to *depreciate the role of the party*, against *legalist illusions*, against reliance on *spontaneity and automatism*, both in liquidating fascism and in conducting the united front against the *slightest vacillation at the moment of decisive action*.

It is necessary [Stalin teaches us] that the party be able to combine in its work the greatest adhesion to principle (not to be confused with sectarianism!) with a maximum of contacts and connections with the masses (not to be confused with “tailism”!), without which it is not only impossible for the party to teach the masses but also to learn from them, not only to lead the masses and raise them to the level of the party, but to listen to the voice of the masses and divine their sorest needs.

### **POLITICAL UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS**

Comrades, the development of the united front of joint struggle of the communist and social-democratic workers against fascism and the offensive of capital likewise brings to the fore the question of *political unity, of a single political mass party of the working class*. The social-democratic workers are becoming more and more convinced by experience that the struggle against the class enemy demands unity of political leadership, inasmuch as *duality in leadership* impedes the further development and reinforcement of the joint struggle of the working class.

The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat and the success of the proletarian revolution make it imperative that there be a *single party of the proletariat* in each country. Of course, it is not so easy or simple to achieve this. It requires stubborn work and struggle and will of necessity be a more or less lengthy process. The Communist Parties, basing themselves on the growing urge of the workers for a unification of the Social-Democratic Parties or of individual organisations with the Communist Parties, must firmly and confidently take the initiative in this unification. The cause of amalgamating the forces of the working class in a single revolutionary proletarian party, at the time when the international labour movement is entering the period of closing the split in its ranks, is *our cause*, is the cause of the Communist International.

But while it is sufficient for the establishment of the united front of the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties to have an agreement to struggle against fascism, the offensive of capital and war, the achievement of political unity is possible only on the basis of a number of definite conditions involving principles.

This unification is possible only:

*First, on condition of complete independence from the bourgeoisie and complete rupture of the bloc of social-democracy with the bourgeoisie;*

*Second*, on condition that unity of action be first brought about;

*Third*, on condition that the necessity of the *revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie* and the establishment of the *dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognised* ;

*Fourth*, on condition that support of one's own bourgeoisie in *imperialist war* be rejected;

*Fifth*, on condition that the party be constructed on the basis of *democratic centralism*, which ensures unity of will and action, and which has been tested by *the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks*.

We must explain to the social-democratic workers, patiently and in comradely fashion, why political unity of the working class is impossible without these conditions. We must discuss together with them the sense and significance of these conditions.

Why is it necessary for the realisation of the political unity of the proletariat that there be complete independence of the bourgeoisie and a rupture of the *bloc* of social-democrats with the bourgeoisie?

Because the whole experience of the labour movement, particularly the experience of the fifteen years of coalition policy in Germany, has shown that the policy of class collaboration, the policy of dependence on the bourgeoisie, leads to the defeat of the working class and to the victory of fascism. And only the road of irreconcilable class struggle against the bourgeoisie, the road of the Bolsheviks, is the true road to victory.

Why must unity of action be first established as a preliminary condition of political unity?

Because unity of action to repel the offensive of capital and of fascism is possible and necessary even before the majority of the workers are united on a common political platform for the overthrow of capitalism, while the working out of unity of views on the main lines and aims of the struggle of the proletariat, without which a unification of the parties is impossible, requires a more or less extended period of time. And unity of views is worked out best of all in joint struggle against the class enemy *even today*. To propose to unite at once instead of forming a united front means to place the cart before the horse and to imagine that the cart will then move ahead. Precisely for the reason that for us the question of political unity is not a manoeuvre, as it is for many social-democratic leaders, we insist on the realisation of unity of action as one of the most important stages in the struggle for political unity.

Why is it necessary to recognise the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviet power?

Because the experience of the victory of the great October Revolution on the one hand, and, on the other, the bitter lessons learned in Germany, Austria and Spain during the entire post-war period, have confirmed once more that the victory of the proletariat is possible only by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and that the bourgeoisie would rather drown the labour movement in a sea of blood than allow the proletariat to establish socialism by peaceful means. The experience of the October Revolution has demonstrated patently that the basic content of the proletarian revolution is the question of the proletarian dictatorship, which is called upon to crush the resistance of the overthrown exploiters, to arm the revolution for the struggle against imperialism and to lead the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. To achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat as the dictatorship of the vast majority over an insignificant minority, over the exploiters—and only as such can it be brought about—for this *Soviets* are needed embracing all sections of the working class, the basic masses of the peasantry and the rest of the toilers, without whose awakening, without whose inclusion in the front of the revolutionary struggle, the victory of the proletariat cannot be consolidated.

Why is the refusal of support to the bourgeoisie in an imperialist war a condition of political unity?

Because the bourgeoisie wages imperialist war for its predatory purposes, against the interests of the vast majority of the peoples, under whatever guise this war may be waged. Because all imperialists combine their feverish preparations for war with extremely intensified exploitation and oppression of the working people in their own country. Support of the bourgeoisie in such a war means treason to the country and the international working class.

Why, finally, is the building of the party on the basis of democratic centralism a condition of unity?

Because only a party built on the basis of democratic centralism can ensure unity of will and action, can lead the proletariat to victory over the bourgeoisie, which has at its disposal so powerful a weapon as the centralised state apparatus. The application of the principle of democratic centralism has stood the splendid historical test of the experience of the Russian Bolshevik Party, the party of Lenin and Stalin.

Yes, we are for a single mass political party of the working class. But this party must be, in the words of Comrade Stalin,

. . . a militant party, a revolutionary party, bold enough to lead the proletarians to the struggle for power, with sufficient experience to be able to orientate itself in the complicated problems that arise in a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of any submerged rocks on the way to its goal.

This explains why it is necessary to strive for political unity on the basis of the conditions indicated.

We are for the political unity of the working class. Therefore we are ready to collaborate most closely with all social-democrats who are for the united front and sincerely support unity on the above-mentioned principles. But precisely because we are for unity, we shall struggle resolutely against all "left" demagogues who try to make use of the disillusionment of the social-democratic workers to create new Socialist Parties or Internationals directed against the communist movement, and thus keep deepening the split in the working class.

We welcome the growing efforts among social-democratic workers for a united front with the communists. In this fact we see a growth of their revolutionary consciousness and a beginning of the healing of the split in the working class. Being of the opinion that unity of action is a pressing necessity and the truest road to the establishment of the political unity of the proletariat as well, we declare that the Communist International and its sections are ready to enter into negotiations with the Second International and its sections for the establishment of the unity of the working class in the struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the menace of imperialist war.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Comrades, I am concluding my report. As you see, taking into account the change in the situation since the Sixth Congress and the lessons of our struggle, and relying on the degree of consolidation in our ranks already achieved, we are raising a number of questions today *in a new way*, primarily the question of the united front and of the approach to social-democracy, the reformist trade unions and other mass organisations.

There are wiseacres who will sense in all this a digression from our basic positions, some sort of turn to the right of the straight line of Bolshevism. Well, in my country, Bulgaria, they say that a hungry

chicken always dreams of millet. Let those political chickens think so.

This interests us little. For us it is important that our own parties and the wide masses throughout the world should correctly understand what we are striving for.

We would not be revolutionary Marxists, Leninists, worthy pupils of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, if we did not suitably *reconstruct* our policies and tactics in accordance with the changing situation and the changes occurring in the world labour movement.

We would not be real revolutionaries if we did not learn from our own experience and the experience of the masses.

We want our parties—in the capitalist countries to come out and act as *real political parties of the working class*, to become in actual fact *a political factor* in the life of their countries, to pursue at all times *an active Bolshevik mass policy and not confine themselves to propaganda and criticism, and bare appeals to struggle for proletarian dictatorship.*

*We are enemies of all cut-and-dried schemes.* We want to take into account the concrete situation at each moment, in each place, and not act *according to a fixed, stereotyped form* anywhere and everywhere; not to forget that in *varying* circumstances the position of the communists cannot be *identical.*

We want soberly to take into account *all stages* in the development of the class struggle and in the growth of the class-consciousness of the masses themselves, to be able to locate and solve at each stage the *concrete* problems of the revolutionary movement *corresponding* to this stage.

We want to find a *common language* with the broadest masses for the purpose of struggling against the class enemy, to find ways of finally overcoming the *isolation of the revolutionary vanguard* from the masses of the proletariat and all other toilers, as well as of overcoming the fatal *isolation of the working class itself* from its natural allies in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, against fascism.

We want to draw increasingly wide masses into the revolutionary class struggle and lead them to the proletarian revolution, *proceeding from their vital interests and needs as the starting point, and their own experience as the basis.*

Following the example of our glorious Russian Bolsheviks, the example of the leading party of the Communist International, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, we want to combine the *revolutionary heroism* of the German, the Spanish, the Austrian and other communists *with genuine revolutionary realism*, and put an end to the last remnants of scholastic tinkering with serious political questions.

We want to equip our parties from every angle for the solution of the highly complex political problems confronting them. For this purpose we want to raise ever higher their *theoretical level*, to train them in the spirit of living Marxism-Leninism and not dead doctrinairism.

We want to eradicate from our ranks all *self-satisfied sectarianism*, which above all blocks our road to the masses and impedes the carrying out of a truly Bolshevik mass policy. We want to intensify in every way the struggle against all concrete manifestations of right opportunism, realising that the danger from this side will increase precisely in the practice of carrying out our mass policy and struggle.

We want the communists of each country promptly to draw and apply *all the lessons* that can be drawn from their own experience as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. We want them *as*

*quickly as possible to learn how to sail on the turbulent waters of the class struggle, and not to remain on the shore as observers and registrars of the surging waves in the expectation of fine weather.*

This is what we want!

*And we want all this because only in this way will the working class at the head of all the toilers, welded into a million-strong revolutionary army, led by the Communist International and possessed of so great and wise a pilot as our leader Comrade Stalin, be able to fulfil its historical mission with certainty—to sweep fascism off the face of the earth and, together with it, capitalism!*

[Main report delivered at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, 2 August 1935.]

## II

### Unity of the working class against fascism

Comrades, the very full discussion on my report bears witness to the immense interest taken by the Congress in the fundamental tactical problems and tasks of the struggle of the working class against the offensive of capital and fascism, and against the threat of imperialist war.

Summing up the eight-day discussion, we can state that all the principal propositions contained in the report have met with the unanimous approval of the Congress. None of the speakers objected to the tactical line we have proposed or to the resolution which has been submitted.

I venture to say that at none of the previous Congresses of the Communist International has such ideological and political solidarity been revealed as at the present Congress. The complete unanimity displayed at the Congress indicates that the necessity of revising our policy and tactics in accordance with the changed conditions and on the basis of the extremely abundant and instructive experience of the past few years, has come to be fully recognised in our ranks.

This unanimity may undoubtedly be regarded as one of the most important conditions for success in solving the paramount immediate problem of the international proletarian movement, namely, *establishing unity of action of all sections of the working class in the struggle against fascism.*

The successful solution of this problem requires, first, that communists skilfully wield the weapon of *Marxist-Leninist analysis*, while carefully studying the actual situation and the alignment of class forces as these develop, and that they plan their activity and struggle accordingly. We must mercilessly root out the weakness, not infrequently observed in our comrades, for cut-and-dried schemes, lifeless formulas and ready made patterns. We must put an end to the state of affairs in which communists, when lacking the knowledge or ability for Marxist-Leninist analysis, substitute for it general phrases and slogans such as “the revolutionary way out of the crisis,” without making the slightest serious attempt to explain what must be the conditions, the relationship of class forces, the degree of revolutionary maturity of the proletariat and mass of working people, and the level of influence of the Communist Party for making possible such a revolutionary way out of the crisis. Without such an analysis all these catchwords become “dud” shells, empty phrases which only obscure our tasks of the day.

Without a concrete Marxist-Leninist analysis we shall never be able correctly to present and solve the problem of fascism, the problems of the proletarian front and the general People’s Front, the problem of our attitude towards bourgeois democracy, the problem of a united front government, the problem of the processes going on within the working class particularly among the social-democratic workers, or any of the numerous other new and complex problems with which life itself and the development of the class struggle confronts us now and will confront us in the future.

Second, we need *live people*—people who have grown up from the masses of the workers, have sprung from their every day struggle, people of militant action, whole-heartedly devoted to the cause of the proletariat, people whose brains and hands will give effect to the decisions of our Congress. Without Bolshevik, Leninist-Stalinist cadres we shall be unable to solve the enormous problems that confront the toilers in the fight against fascism.

Third, we need people equipped with the compass of *Marxist-Leninist theory*, for people who are unable to make skilful use of this instrument slip into narrow, makeshift politics, are unable to look ahead, take decisions only from case to case, and lose the broad perspective of the struggle which shows the masses where we are going and whither we are leading the toilers.

Fourth, we need the *organisation of the masses* in order to put our decisions into practice. Our ideological and political influence alone is not enough. We must put a stop to reliance on the hope that the movement will develop *of its own accord*, which is one of our fundamental weaknesses. We must remember that without persistent, prolonged, patient, and sometimes apparently thankless organisational work on our part, the masses will never make for the communist shore. In order to be able to organise the masses we must acquire Lenin's and Stalin's art of making our decisions the property not only of the communists but also of the widest masses of working people. We must learn to talk to the masses, not in the language of book formulas, but in the language of fighters for the cause of the masses, whose every word, whose every idea reflects the innermost thoughts and sentiments of millions.

It is primarily with these problems that I should like to deal in my closing speech.

Comrades, the Congress has welcomed the new tactical lines with great enthusiasm and unanimity. Enthusiasm and unanimity are excellent things of course; but it is still better when these are combined with a deeply considered and critical approach to the tasks that confront us, with a proper mastery of the decisions adopted and a real understanding of the means and methods by which these decisions are to be applied to the particular circumstances of each country.

After all, we have unanimously adopted good resolutions before now, but the trouble was that we not infrequently adopted these decisions in a formal manner and we at best made them the property of only the small vanguard of the working class. Our decisions did not become flesh and blood for the wide masses; they did not become a guide to the action of millions of people.

Can we assert that we have already finally abandoned this formal approach to adopted decisions? No. It must be said that even at this Congress the speeches of some of the comrades gave indication of remnants of formalism; a desire made itself felt at times to substitute for the concrete analysis of reality and living experience some sort of new scheme, some sort of new, over-simplified lifeless formula, to represent *as actually existing* what we *desire*, but does *not yet exist*.

### **THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM MUST BE CONCRETE**

No general characterisation of fascism, however correct in itself, can relieve us of the need to study and take into account the special features of the development of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in the individual countries and at its various stages. It is necessary in each country to investigate, study and ascertain the national peculiarities, the specific national features of fascism and map out accordingly effective methods and forms of struggle against fascism.

Lenin persistently warned us against "stereotyped methods and mechanical levelling, against rendering tactical rules, rules of struggle, identical." This warning is particularly to the point when it is a question of fighting an enemy who so subtly and Jesuitically exploits the national sentiments and prejudices of the masses and their anti-capitalist inclinations in the interests of big capital. *Such an enemy must be known to perfection, from every angle.* We must, without any delay what ever, react to

his various manoeuvres, discover his hidden moves, be prepared to repel him in any arena and at any moment. We must not hesitate even to *learn* from the enemy if that will help us more quickly and more effectively *to wring his neck*.

It would be a gross mistake to lay down any sort of universal scheme of the development of fascism, to cover all countries and all peoples. Such a scheme would not help but would hamper us in carrying on a real struggle. Apart from everything else, such a rule would result in indiscriminately thrusting into the camp of fascism those sections of the population which, if properly approached, could, at a certain stage of development, be brought into the struggle against fascism, or could at least be neutralised.

Let us take, for example, the development of fascism in France and in Germany. Some comrades believe that, generally speaking, fascism cannot develop as easily in France as in Germany. What is true and what is false in this contention? It is true that there were no such deep-seated democratic traditions in Germany as there are in France, which went through several revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is true that France is a country which won the war and imposed the Versailles system on other countries, that the national sentiments of the French people have not been hurt as they have been in Germany where this factor played such a great part. It is true that in France the basic masses of the peasantry are pro-republic and anti-fascist, especially in the south, in contrast with Germany, where even before fascism came to power a considerable section of the peasantry was under the influence of reactionary parties.

But, comrades, notwithstanding the existing differences in the development of the fascist movement in France and in Germany, notwithstanding the factors which impede the onslaught of fascism in France, it would be shortsighted not to notice the uninterrupted growth there of the fascist peril or to underestimate the possibility of a fascist *coup d'état*. Moreover, a number of factors in France favour the development of fascism. One must not forget that the economic crisis, which began later in France than in other capitalist countries, continues to become deeper and more acute and this greatly encourages the orgy of fascist demagoguery. French fascism holds strong positions in the army, among the officers, such as the Nationalist-Socialists did not have in the Reichswehr before their advent to power. Furthermore, in no other country, perhaps, has the parliamentary regime been corrupted to such an enormous extent and caused such indignation among the masses as in France. Nor must it be forgotten that the development of fascism is furthered by the French bourgeoisie's keen fear of losing its political and military hegemony in Europe.

Hence it follows that the successes scored by the anti-fascist movement in France, of which Comrades Thorez and Cachin have spoken here and over which we so heartily rejoice, are still far from indicating that the toiling masses have definitely succeeded in blocking the road to fascism. I must emphatically stress once more the full importance of the tasks of the French working class in the struggle against fascism, of which I already spoke in my report.

It would likewise be dangerous to cherish illusions regarding the weakness of fascism in other countries where it does not have a broad mass base. We have the example of such countries as Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Finland, where fascism, although it had no broad base, came to power, relying on the armed forces of the state, and then sought to broaden its base by making use of the state apparatus.

Comrade Dutt was right in his contention that there was a tendency among us to contemplate fascism in general, without taking into account the specific features of the fascist movement in the

various countries, erroneously classifying all reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie as fascism and going as far as calling the entire non-communist camp fascist. The struggle against fascism was not strengthened but rather weakened in consequence.

Even now we still have survivals of a stereotyped approach to the question of fascism. When some comrades assert that Roosevelt's "New Deal" represents an even clearer and more pronounced form of the development of the bourgeoisie towards fascism than the "National Government" in Great Britain, for example, is this not a manifestation of such a stereotyped approach to the question? One must be very partial to hackneyed schemes not to see that the most reactionary circles of American finance capital, which are attacking Roosevelt, are above all the very force which is stimulating and organising the fascist movement in the United States. Not to see the beginnings of real fascism in the United States behind the hypocritical outpourings of these circles "in defence of the democratic rights of the American citizen" is tantamount to misleading the working class in the struggle against its worst enemy.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries also, as was mentioned in the discussion, certain fascist groups are developing but, of course, there can be no question of the kind of fascism that we are accustomed to see in Germany, Italy and other capitalist countries. Here we must study and take into account the quite special economic, political and historical conditions, in accordance with which fascism is assuming, and will continue to assume, peculiar forms of its own.

Unable to approach the phenomena of real life concretely, some comrades who suffer from mental laziness substitute general, non-committal *formulas* for a careful and concrete study of the actual situation and the relationship of class forces. They remind us, not of sharpshooters who shoot with unerring aim, but of those "crack" riflemen who regularly and unfailingly miss the target, shooting either too high or too low, too near or too far. But we, comrades, as communists, active in the labour movement, as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, want to be sharpshooters who unfailingly hit the target.

#### **THE UNITED PROLETARIAN FRONT AND THE ANTI-FASCIST PEOPLE'S FRONT**

Some comrades are quite needlessly racking their brains over the problem of *what to begin with—the united proletarian front or the anti-fascist People's Front.*

Some say that we cannot start forming the anti-fascist People's Front until we have organised a solid united front of the proletariat.

Others argue that, since the establishment of the united proletarian front meets in a number of countries with the resistance of the reactionary part of social-democracy, it is better to start at once with building up the People's Front, and then develop the united working class front on this basis.

Evidently both groups fail to understand that the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front are connected by the *living dialectics of struggle*; that they are interwoven, the one passing into the other in the process of the practical struggle against fascism, and that there is certainly no Chinese wall to keep them apart.

For it cannot be seriously supposed that it is possible to establish a genuine anti-fascist People's Front without securing the unity of action of the working class itself, the *guiding force* of this anti-fascist People's Front. At the same time, the further development of the united proletarian front

depends, to a considerable degree, upon its transformation into a People's Front against fascism.

Comrades ! Just picture to yourselves a devotee of cut-and-dried theories of this kind, gazing upon our resolution and contriving his pet scheme with the zeal of a true pedant:

First, local united proletarian front from below;

Then, regional united front from below;

Thereafter, united front from above, passing through the same stages;

Then, unity in the trade union movement;

After that, the enlistment of other anti-fascist parties;

This to be followed by the extended People's Front, from above and from below;

After which the movement must be raised to a higher level, politicalised, revolutionised, and so on and so forth.

You will say, comrades, that this is sheer nonsense. I agree with you. But the unfortunate thing is that in some form or other this kind of sectarian nonsense is still to be found quite frequently in our ranks.

How does the matter really stand? Of course, we must strive everywhere for a wide People's Front of struggle against fascism. But in a number of countries we shall not get beyond general talk about the People's Front unless we succeed in mobilising the mass of the workers for the purpose of breaking down the resistance of the reactionary section of social-democracy to the proletarian united front of struggle. Above all, this is how the matter stands in Great Britain, where the working class comprises the majority of the population and where the bulk of the working class follows the lead of the trade unions and the Labour Party. That is how matters stand in Belgium and in the Scandinavian countries, where the numerically small Communist Parties must face strong mass trade unions and numerically large Social-Democratic Parties.

In these countries the communists would commit a very serious political mistake if they shirked the struggle to establish a united proletarian front, under cover of general talk about the People's Front, which cannot be formed without the participation of the mass working class organisations. In order to bring about a genuine People's Front in these countries, the communists must carry out an enormous amount of political and organisational work among the mass of the workers. They must overcome the preconceived ideas of these masses who regard their mass reformist organisations as already the embodiment of proletarian unity. They must convince these masses & the establishment of a united front with the communists mean a shift on the part of those masses to the position of the class struggle, and that this shift alone will guarantee success in the struggle against the offensive of capital and fascism. We shall not overcome our difficulties by setting ourselves much wider tasks here. On the contrary, in fighting to remove these difficulties we shall, in fact and not in words alone, prepare the ground for the creation of a genuine People's Front of battle against fascism, against the capitalist offensive and against the threat of imperialist war.

The problem is different in countries like Poland, where a strong peasant movement is developing alongside the labour movement, where the peasant masses have their own organisations which are becoming radicalised as a result of the agrarian crisis, and where national oppression evokes indignation among the national minorities. Here the development of the general People's Front of struggle will proceed parallel with the development of the united proletarian front, and at times in this

type of country the movement for a general People's Front may even outstrip the movement for a working class front.

Take a country like Spain, which is in the process of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Can it be said that, because the proletariat is split up into numerous small organisations, complete fighting unity of the working class must first be established here before a workers' and peasants' front against Lerroux and Gil Robles is created? By tackling the question in this way we would isolate the proletariat from the peasantry, we would in effect be withdrawing the slogan of the agrarian revolution, and we would make it easier for the enemies of the people to disunite the proletariat and the peasantry and set the peasantry in opposition to the working class. Yet this, comrades, as is well known, was one of the main reasons why the working class was defeated in the October events of 1934.

However, one thing must not be forgotten: in all countries where the proletariat is comparatively small in numbers, where the peasantry and the urban petty-bourgeois strata predominate, it is all the more necessary to make every effort to set up a firm united front of the working class itself, so that it may be able to take its place as the leading factor in relation to all the toilers.

Thus, comrades, in attacking the problem of the proletarian front and the People's Front, there can be no general panacea suitable for all cases, all countries, all peoples. In this matter universalism, the application of one and the same recipe to all countries, is equivalent, if you will allow me to say so, to ignorance; and ignorance should be flogged, even when it stalks about, nay, particularly when it stalks about, in the cloak of universal cut-and-dried schemes.

## **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE UNITED FRONT OF THE PROLETARIAT**

Comrades, in view of the tactical problems confronting us, it is very important to give a correct reply to the question of whether social-democracy at the present time is still the principal bulwark of the bourgeoisie, and if so, where?

Some of the comrades who participated in the discussion (Comrades Florin, Dutt) touched upon this question, but in view of its importance a fuller reply must be given to it, for it is a question which workers of all trends, particularly social-democratic workers, are asking and cannot help asking.

It must be borne in mind that in a number of countries the position of social-democracy in the bourgeois state, and its attitude towards the bourgeoisie, have been undergoing a change.

In the first place, the crisis has severely shaken the position of even the most secure sections of the working class, the so-called aristocracy of labour, which, as we know, is the main support of social-democracy. These sections, too, are beginning more and more to revise their views as to the expediency of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

Second, as I pointed out in my report, the bourgeoisie in a number of countries is itself compelled to abandon bourgeois democracy and resort to the terroristic form of dictatorship, depriving social-democracy not only of its previous position in the state system of finance capital, but also, under certain conditions, of its legal status, persecuting and even suppressing it.

Third, under the influence of the lessons learned from the defeat of the workers in Germany, Austria and Spain, a defeat which was largely the result of the social-democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and, on the other hand, under the influence of the victory of socialism in the

Soviet Union as a result of Bolshevik policy and the application of revolutionary Marxism, the social democratic workers are becoming revolutionised and are beginning to turn to the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The combined effect of all these things has been to make it increasingly difficult, and in some countries actually impossible, for social-democracy to preserve its former role of bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

Failure to understand this is particularly harmful in those countries in which the fascist dictatorship has deprived social-democracy of its legal status. From this point of view the self-criticism of those German comrades, who in their speeches mentioned the necessity of ceasing to cling to the letter of obsolete formulas and decisions concerning social-democracy, of ceasing to ignore the changes that have taken place in its position, was correct. It is clear that if we ignore these changes, it will lead to a distortion of our policy for bringing about the unity of the working class, and will make it easier for the reactionary elements of the Social-Democratic Parties to sabotage the united front.

The process of revolutionisation in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Parties, now going on in all countries, is developing unevenly. It must not be imagined that the social-democratic workers who are becoming revolutionised will *at once* and on a mass scale pass over to the position of consistent class struggle, and will *straight away* unite with the communists without any intermediate stages. In a number of countries this will be a more or less difficult, complicated and prolonged process, essentially dependent, at any rate, on the correctness of our policy and tactics. We must even reckon with the possibility that, in passing from the position of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie to the position of class struggle against the bourgeoisie, some Social-Democratic Parties and organisations will continue to exist for a time as independent organisations or parties. In such event there can, of course, be no thought of such social-democratic organisations or parties being regarded as a bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

It cannot be expected that those social-democratic workers who are under the influence of the ideology of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, which has been instilled in them for decades, will break with this ideology of their own accord, by the action of objective causes alone. No. It is our business, the business of communists, to help them free themselves from the hold of reformist ideology. The work of explaining the principles and programme of communism must be carried on patiently, in a comradely fashion, and must be adapted to the degree of development of the individual social-democratic workers. Our criticism of social-democracy must become more concrete and systematic, and must be based on the experience of the social-democratic masses themselves.

It must be borne in mind that primarily by utilising their experience in the joint struggle with the communists against the class enemy will it be possible and necessary to facilitate and accelerate the revolutionary development of the social-democratic workers. There is no more effective way for the social-democratic workers to outlive their doubts and hesitations than by participating in the proletarian united front.

We shall do all in our power to make it easier, not only for the social-democratic workers, but also for those leading members of the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations who sincerely desire to adopt the revolutionary class position, to work and fight with us against the class enemy. At the same time we declare that any social-democratic functionary, lower official or worker who continues to

uphold the disruptive tactics of the reactionary social-democratic leaders, who comes out against the united front and thus directly or indirectly aids the class enemy, will thereby incur at least equal guilt before the working class as those who are historically responsible for having supported the social-democratic policy of class collaboration, the policy which in a number of European countries doomed the revolution in 1918 and cleared the way for fascism.

The attitude to the united front marks the dividing line between the reactionary sections of social-democracy and the sections that are becoming revolutionary. Our assistance to the latter will be the more effective the more we intensify our fight against the reactionary camp of social-democracy that takes part in a bloc with the bourgeoisie. And within the left camp the self-determination of its various elements will take place the sooner, the more determinedly the communists fight for a united front with the Social-Democratic Parties. The experience of the class struggle and the participation of the social-democrats in the united front movement will show who in that camp will prove to be "left" in words and who is really left.

### THE UNITED FRONT GOVERNMENT

While the attitude of social-democracy towards the practical realisation of the proletarian united front is, generally speaking, the chief sign in every country of whether the previous role in the bourgeois state of the Social-Democratic Party or of its individual parts has changed, and if so, to what extent,—*the attitude of the social-democrats on the issue of a united front government* will be a particularly clear test.

When a situation arises in which the question of creating a united front government becomes an immediate practical problem, this issue will become a decisive test of the policy of social-democracy in the given country: either jointly with the bourgeoisie, that is moving towards fascism, against the working class; or jointly with the revolutionary proletariat against fascism and reaction, not merely in words but in deeds. That is how the question will inevitably present itself at the time the united front government is formed as well as while it is in power.

With regard to the character and conditions of formation of the united front government or anti-fascist People's Front government, I think that my report gave what was necessary for general tactical direction. To expect us over and above this to indicate all possible forms and all conditions under which such governments may be formed would mean to lose oneself in barren conjecture.

I would like to utter a note of warning against oversimplification or the application of cut-and-dried schemes in this question. Life is more complex than any scheme. For example, it would be wrong to imagine that the united front government is an *indispensable stage* on the road to the establishment of proletarian dictatorship. That is just as wrong as the former assertion that there will be *no intermediary stages* in the fascist countries and that fascist dictatorship is *certain to be immediately* superseded by proletarian dictatorship.

The whole question boils down to this: Will the proletariat itself be prepared at the decisive moment for the direct overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of its own power, and will it be able in that event to ensure the support of its allies? Or, will the movement of the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist People's Front at the particular stage be in a position only to suppress or overthrow fascism, without directly proceeding to abolish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? In the latter case it

would be an intolerable piece of political short-sightedness, and not serious revolutionary politics, on this ground alone to refuse to create and support a united front or a People's Front government.

It is likewise not difficult to understand that the establishment of a united front government in countries where fascism is not yet in power is something *different* from the creation of such a government in countries where the fascist dictatorship holds sway. In the latter countries a united front government can be created *only in the process of overthrowing fascist rule*. In countries where the *bourgeois-democratic revolution is developing*, a People's Front government may become the government of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry.

As I have already pointed out in my report, the communists will do all in their power to support a united front government to the extent that the latter will really fight against the enemies of the people and grant freedom of action to the Communist Party and to the working class. The question of whether communists will take part in the government will be determined entirely by the actual situation prevailing at the time. Such questions will be settled as they arise. No ready-made recipes can be prescribed in advance.

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

Here it was shown that "while mobilising the masses to repel the onslaught of fascism against the rights of the toilers, the Polish party at the same time had its misgivings about formulating positive democratic demands in order not to create democratic illusions among the masses." The Polish party is, of course, not the only one in which such fear of formulating positive democratic demands exists in one way or another.

Where does that fear come from, comrades? It comes from an incorrect, non-dialectical conception of our attitude towards bourgeois democracy. We communists are unswerving upholders of Soviet democracy, the great example of which is the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, where the introduction of equal suffrage, and the direct and secret ballot has been proclaimed by resolution of the Seventh Congress of Soviets, at the very time that the last relics of bourgeois democracy are being wiped out in the capitalist countries. This Soviet democracy presupposes the victory of the proletarian revolution, the conversion of private property in the means of production into public property, the adoption by the overwhelming majority of the people of the road to socialism. This democracy does not represent a final form; it develops and will continue to develop in proportion as further progress is made in socialist construction, in the creation of classless society and in the overcoming of the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the minds of the people.

But today the millions of toilers living under capitalism are faced with the necessity of deciding their attitude to *those forms* in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is clad in the various countries. We are not anarchists and it is not at all a matter of indifference to us what kind of political regime exists in any given country: whether a bourgeois dictatorship in the form of bourgeois democracy, even with democratic rights and liberties greatly curtailed, or a bourgeois dictatorship in its open, fascist form. While being upholders of Soviet democracy, *we shall defend every inch of the democratic gains which the working class has wrested in the course of years of stubborn struggle, and shall resolutely fight to extend these gains*.

How great were the sacrifices of the British working class before it secured the right to strike, a legal

status for its trade unions, the right of assembly and freedom of the press, extension of the franchise, and other rights! How many tens of thousands of workers gave their lives in the revolutionary battles fought in France in the nineteenth century to obtain the elementary rights and the lawful opportunity of organising their forces for the struggle against the exploiters! The proletariat of all countries has shed much of its blood to win bourgeois democratic liberties, and will naturally fight with all its strength to retain them.

Our attitude to bourgeois democracy is not the same under all conditions. For instance, at the time of the October Revolution, the Russian Bolsheviks engaged in a life-and-death struggle against all political parties which, under the slogan of the defence of bourgeois democracy, opposed the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship. The Bolsheviks fought these parties because the banner of bourgeois democracy had at that time become the standard around which all counter-revolutionary forces mobilised to challenge the victory of the proletariat. The situation is quite different in the capitalist countries at present. Now the fascist counter-revolution is attacking bourgeois democracy in an effort to establish the most barbaric regime of exploitation and suppression of the toiling masses. Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a *definite* choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism.

Besides, we have now a situation which differs from that which existed, for example, in the epoch of capitalist stabilisation. At that time the fascist danger was not as acute as it is today. At that time it was bourgeois dictatorship in the form of bourgeois democracy that the revolutionary workers were facing in a number of countries and it was against bourgeois democracy that they were concentrating their fire. In Germany, they fought against the Weimar Republic, not because it was a republic, but because it was a *bourgeois* republic that was engaged in crushing the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, especially in 1918–20 and in 1925.

But could the communists retain the same position also when the fascist movement began to raise its head, when, for instance, in 1932, the fascists in Germany were organising and arming hundreds of thousands of storm troopers against the working class? Of course not. It was the mistake of the communists in a number of countries, particularly in Germany, that they failed to take account of the changes that had taken place, but continued to repeat the slogans and maintain the tactical positions that had been correct a few years before, especially when the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship was an immediate issue, and when the entire German counter-revolution was rallying under the banner of the Weimar Republic, as it did in 1918–20.

And the circumstance that even today we must still make reference to fear, in our ranks, of launching positive democratic slogans indicates how little our comrades have mastered the Marxist-Leninist method of approaching such important problems of our tactics. Some say that the struggle for democratic rights may divert the workers from the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. It may not be amiss to recall what Lenin said on this question:

It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as socialism can not be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

These words should be firmly fixed in the memories of all our comrades, bearing in mind that in history great revolutions have grown out of small movements for the defence of the elementary rights of the working class. But in order to be able to link up the struggle for democratic rights with the struggle of the working class for socialism, it is necessary first and foremost to discard any cut-and-dried approach to the question of defence of bourgeois democracy.

### **A CORRECT LINE ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH**

Comrades, it is clear, of course, that for the Communist International and each of its sections, the fundamental thing is to work out a correct line. But a correct line alone is not enough for concrete leadership in the class struggle.

For that, a number of conditions must be fulfilled, above all the following:

First, *organisational guarantees* that adopted decisions will be carried out in practice and that all obstacles in the way will be resolutely overcome. What Comrade Stalin said at the Seventeenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union about the conditions necessary to carry out the line of the party can and should be applied also, in its entirety, to the decisions which our Congress adopts. Comrade Stalin said:

Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct party line, proclaim it from the housetops, enunciate it in the form of general theses and resolutions and carry them unanimously in order to make victory come of itself, automatically, so to speak. This, of course, is wrong. Those who think like that are greatly mistaken. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and office rats can think that. As a matter of fact, these successes and victories were obtained, not automatically, but as a result of a fierce struggle to carry out the party line. Victory never comes by itself—it has to be dragged by the hand. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line of the party are only a beginning; they merely express the desire to win, but it is not victory. After the correct line has been given, after a correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on the manner in which the work is organised, on the organisation of the struggle for the application of the line of the party, on the proper selection of workers, on supervising the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading organs. Without this the correct line of the party and the correct solutions are in danger of being severely damaged. More than that, after the correct political line has been given, the organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, *i.e.*, whether it is fulfilled or not.

It is hardly necessary to add anything to these striking words of Comrade Stalin, which must become a guiding principle in all the work of our parties.

Another condition is the *ability to convert decisions of the Communist International and its sections into decisions of the widest masses themselves*. This is all the more necessary now, when we are faced with the task of organising a united front of the proletariat and drawing very wide masses of the people into an anti-fascist People's Front. The political and tactical genius of Lenin and Stalin stands out most clearly and vividly in their masterly ability to get the masses to understand the correct line and the slogans of the party through their own experience. If we trace the history of Bolshevism, that greatest of treasure houses of the political strategy and tactics of the revolutionary labour movement, we can see for ourselves that the Bolsheviks never substituted methods of leading the party for methods of leading the masses.

Comrade Stalin pointed out that one of the peculiarities of the tactics of the Russian Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for the October Revolution consisted in their ability correctly to determine

the path and the turns which naturally lead the masses to the slogans of the party, to the very “threshold of the revolution,” helping them to sense, to test and to realise from their own experience the correctness of these slogans. They did not confuse leadership of the party with leadership of the masses, but clearly saw the difference between leadership of the first kind and leadership of the second kind. In this way they worked out tactics as the science not only of party leadership, but also of the leadership of the millions of toilers.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that *the masses cannot assimilate our decisions unless we learn to speak the language which the masses understand*. We do not always know how to speak simply, concretely, in images which are familiar and intelligible to the masses. We are still unable to refrain from abstract formulas which we have learnt by rote. As a matter of fact, if you look through our leaflets, newspapers, resolutions and theses, you will find that they are often written in a language and style so heavy that they are difficult for even our party functionaries to understand, let alone the rank-and-file workers.

If we reflect, comrades, that workers, especially in fascist countries, who distribute or only read these leaflets risk their very lives by doing so, we shall realise still more clearly the need of writing for the masses in a language which they understand, so that the sacrifices made shall not have been in vain.

The same applies in no less degree to our oral agitation and propaganda. We must admit quite frankly that in this respect the fascists have often proven more dexterous and flexible than many of our comrades.

I recall, for example, a meeting of unemployed in Berlin before Hitler’s accession to power. It was at the time of the trial of those notorious swindlers and speculators, the Sklarek brothers, which dragged on for several months. A National-Socialist speaker in addressing the meeting made demagogic use of that trial to further his own ends. He referred to the swindles, the bribery and other crimes committed by the Sklarek brothers, emphasised that the trial had been dragging for months and figured out how many hundreds of thousands of marks it had already cost the German people. To the accompaniment of loud applause the speaker declared that such bandits as the Sklarek brothers should have been shot without any ado, and the money wasted on the trial should have gone to the unemployed.

A communist rose and asked for the floor. The chairman at first refused but under the pressure of the audience which wanted to hear a communist he had to let him speak. When the communist got up on the platform, everybody awaited with tense expectation what the communist speaker would have to say. Well, what did he say?

“Comrades,” he began in a loud and strong voice, “the Plenum of the Communist International has just closed. It showed the way to the salvation of the working class. The chief task it puts before you, comrades, is ‘*to win the majority of the working classes . . .*’ The Plenum pointed out that the unemployed movement must be ‘politicalised.’ The Plenum calls on us to raise it *to a higher level*.” He went on in the same strain, evidently under the impression that he was “explaining” authentic decisions of the Plenum.

Could such a speech appeal to the unemployed? Could they find any satisfaction in the fact that first we intended to politicalise, then revolutionise, and finally mobilise them in order to raise their movement to a higher level?

Sitting in a corner of the hall, I observed with chagrin how the unemployed, who had been so eager to hear a communist in order to find out from him what to do concretely, began to yawn and display unmistakable signs of disappointment. And I was not at all surprised when towards the end the chairman rudely cut our speaker short without any protest from the meeting.

This, unfortunately, is not the only case of its kind in our agitational work. Nor were such cases confined to Germany. To agitate in such fashion means to agitate against one's own cause. It is high time to put an end once and for all to these, to say the least, childish methods of agitation.

During my report, the chairman, Comrade Kuusinen, received a characteristic letter from the floor of the Congress addressed to me. Let me read it:

In your speech at the Congress, please take up the following question, namely, that all resolutions and decisions adopted in the future by the Communist International be written so that not only trained communists can get the meaning, but that any working man reading the material of the Comintern might without any preliminary training be able to see at once what the communists want, and of what service communism is to mankind. Some party leaders forget this. They must be reminded of it and very strongly, too. Also that agitation for communism be conducted in understandable language.

I do not know exactly who is the author of this letter, but I have no doubt that this comrade voiced in his letter the opinion and desire of millions of workers. Many of our comrades think that the more high-sounding words, and the more formulas and theses unintelligible to the masses they use, the better their agitation and propaganda, forgetting that the greatest leaders and theoreticians of the working class of our epoch, Lenin and Stalin, have always spoken and written in highly popular language, readily understood by the masses.

Every one of us must make this a law, a Bolshevik law, an elementary rule:

*When writing or speaking always have in mind the rank and-file worker who must understand you, must believe in your appeal and be ready to follow you! You must have in mind those for whom you write, to whom you speak.*

## CADRES

Comrades, our best resolutions will remain scraps of paper if we lack the people who can put them into effect. Unfortunately, however, I must state that the problem of *cadres*, one of the most important questions facing us, received almost no attention at this Congress. The report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was discussed for seven days, there were many speakers from various countries, but only a few, and they only in passing, discussed this question, so extremely vital for the Communist Parties and the labour movement. In their practical work our parties have not yet realised by far that *people, cadres, decide everything*. They are unable to do what Comrade Stalin is teaching us to do, namely, to cultivate cadres "as a gardener cultivates his favourite fruit tree," "to appreciate people, to appreciate cadres, to appreciate every worker who can be of use to our common cause."

A negligent attitude to the problem of cadres is all the more impermissible for the reason that we are constantly losing some of the most valuable of our cadres in the struggle. For we are not a learned society but a militant movement which is constantly in the firing line. Our most energetic, most courageous and most class-conscious elements are in the front ranks. It is precisely these front-line

men that the enemy hunts down, murders, throws into jail, puts in the concentration camps and subjects to excruciating torture, particularly in fascist countries. This gives rise to the urgent necessity of constantly replenishing the ranks, cultivating and training new cadres as well as carefully preserving the existing cadres.

The problem of cadres is of particular urgency for the additional reason that under our influence the mass united front movement is gaining momentum and bringing forward many thousands of new working class militants. Moreover, it is not only young revolutionary elements, not only workers just becoming revolutionary, who have never before participated in a political movement, that stream into our ranks. Very often former members and militants of the Social-Democratic Parties also join us. These new cadres require special attention, particularly in the illegal Communist Parties, the more so because in their practical work these cadres with their poor theoretical training frequently come up against very serious political problems which they have to solve for themselves.

The problem of what shall be the *correct policy with regard to cadres* is a very serious one for our parties, as well as for the Young Communist Leagues and for all other mass organisations—for the entire revolutionary labour movement.

What does a correct policy with regard to cadres imply?

First, *knowing one's people*. As a rule there is no systematic study of cadres in our parties. Only recently have the Communist Parties of France and Poland and, in the East, the Communist Party of China, achieved certain successes in this direction. The Communist Party of Germany, before its underground period, had also undertaken a study of its cadres. The experience of these parties has shown that as soon as they began to study their people, party workers were discovered who had remained unnoticed before. On the other hand, the parties began to be purged of alien elements who were ideologically and politically harmful. It is sufficient to point to the example of Célor and Barbé in France who, when put under the Bolshevik microscope, turned out to be agents of the class enemy and were thrown out of the party. In Poland and in Hungary the verification of cadres made it easier to discover nests of provocateurs, agents of the enemy, who had sedulously concealed their identity.

Second, *proper promotion of cadres*. Promotion should not be something casual but one of the normal functions of the party. It is bad when promotion is made exclusively and on the basis of narrow party considerations, without regard to whether the communist promoted has contact with the masses or not. Promotion should take place on the basis of the ability of the various party workers to discharge particular functions, and of their popularity among the masses. We have examples in our parties of promotions which have produced excellent results. For instance, we have a Spanish woman communist, sitting in the Presidium of this Congress, Comrade Dolores. Two years ago she was still a rank-and-file party worker. But in the very first clashes with the class enemy she proved to be an excellent agitator and fighter. Subsequently promoted to the leading body of the party she has proved herself a most worthy member of that body.

I could point to a number of similar cases in several other countries, but in the majority of cases promotions are made in an unorganised and haphazard manner, and therefore are not always fortunate. Sometimes moralisers, phrasemongers and chatterboxes who actually harm the cause are promoted to leading positions.

Third, *the ability to use people to best advantage*. We must be able to ascertain and utilise the

valuable qualities of every single active member. There are no ideal people; we must take them as they are and correct their weaknesses and shortcomings. We know of glaring examples in our parties of the wrong utilisation of good, honest communists who might have been very useful had they been given work that they were better fit to do.

Fourth, *proper distribution of cadres*. First of all, we must see to it that the main links of the movement are in the charge of strong people who have contacts with the masses, have sprung from the very depths of the masses, who have initiative and are staunch. The more important districts should have an appropriate number of such militants. In capitalist countries it is not an easy matter to transfer cadres from one place to another. Such a task encounters a number of obstacles and difficulties, including lack of funds, family considerations, etc., difficulties which must be taken into account and properly overcome. But usually we neglect to do this altogether.

Fifth, *systematic assistance to cadres*. This assistance should take the form of careful instruction, comradely control, rectification of shortcomings and mistakes and concrete, everyday guidance.

Sixth, *proper care for the preservation of cadres*. We must learn promptly to withdraw party workers to the rear when ever circumstances so require, and replace them by others. We must demand that the party leadership, particularly in countries where the parties are illegal, assume paramount responsibility for the preservation of cadres. The proper preservation of cadres also pre-supposes highly efficient organisation of secrecy in the party. In certain of our parties many comrades think that the parties are already prepared for underground existence even though they have reorganised themselves only formally, according to readymade rules. We had to pay very dearly for having started the real work of reorganisation only after the party had gone underground, under the direct heavy blows of the enemy. Remember the severe losses the Communist Party of Germany suffered during its transition to underground conditions! Its experience should serve as a serious warning to those of our parties which today are still legal but may lose their legal status tomorrow.

Only a correct policy in regard to cadres will enable our parties to develop and utilise all available forces to the utmost, and obtain from the enormous reservoir of the mass movement ever fresh reinforcements of new and better active workers.

What should be our *main criteria* in selecting cadres?

First, *absolute devotion* to the cause of the working class, *loyalty to the party*, tested in face of the enemy—in battle, in prison, in court.

Second, the closest possible *contact with the masses*. The comrades concerned must be wholly absorbed in the interests of the masses, feel the life pulse of the masses, know their sentiments and requirements. The prestige of the leaders of our party organisation should be based, first of all, on the fact that the masses regard them as their leaders, and are convinced through their own experience of their ability as leaders, and of their determination and self-sacrifice in struggle.

Third, *ability independently to find one's bearings* and not to be afraid of *assuming responsibility in making decisions*. He who fears to take responsibility is not a leader. He who is unable to display initiative, who says: "I will do only what I am told," is not a Bolshevik. Only he is a real Bolshevik leader who does not lose his head at moments of defeat, who does not get a swelled head at moments of success, who displays indomitable firmness in carrying out decisions. Cadres develop and grow best when they are placed in the position of having to solve concrete problems of the struggle

independently, and are aware that they are fully responsible for their decisions.

Fourth, *discipline* and *Bolshevik* hardening in the struggle against the class enemy as well as in their irreconcilable opposition to all deviations from the Bolshevik line.

We must place all the more emphasis on these conditions which determine the correct selection of cadres, because in practice preference is very often given to a comrade who, for example, is able to write well and is a good speaker but is not a man or woman of action, and is not as suited for the struggle as some other comrade who perhaps may not be able to write or speak so well, but is a staunch comrade, possessing initiative and contacts with the masses, and is capable of going into battle and leading others into battle. Have there not been many cases of sectarians, doctrinaires or moralisers crowding out loyal mass workers, genuine working class leaders?

Our leading cadres should combine the knowledge of *what* they must do—with *Bolshevik stamina, revolutionary strength of character and the will power to carry it through.*

In connection with the question of cadres, permit me, comrades, to dwell also on the very great part which the International Labour Defence is called upon to play in relation to the cadres of the labour movement. The material and moral assistance which the ILD organisations render to our prisoners and their families, to political emigrants, to prosecuted revolutionaries and anti-fascists, has saved the lives and preserved the strength and fighting capacity of thousands upon thousands of most valuable fighters of the working class in many countries. Those of us who have been in jail have found out directly through our own experience the enormous significance of the activity of the ILD.

By its activity the ILD has won the affection, devotion and deep gratitude of hundreds of thousands of proletarians and of revolutionary elements among the peasantry and intellectuals.

Under present conditions, when bourgeois reaction is growing, when fascism is raging and the class struggle is becoming more acute, the role of the ILD is increasing immensely. The task now before the ILD is to become a genuine mass organisation of the toilers in all capitalist countries (particularly in fascist countries where it must adapt itself to the special conditions prevailing there). It must become, so to speak, a sort of “Red Cross” of the united front of the proletariat and the anti-fascist People’s Front, embracing millions of working people the “Red Cross” of the army of the toiling classes embattled against fascism, fighting for peace and socialism. If the ILD is to perform its part successfully, it must train thousands of its own active militants, a multitude of ILD workers of its own, answering in their character and capacity the *special purposes* of this extremely important organisation.

And here I must say as categorically and as sharply as possible that while a *bureaucratic* approach and a soulless attitude towards people is despicable in the labour movement taken in general, in the sphere of activity of the ILD such an attitude is an evil bordering on the *criminal*. The fighters of the working class, the victims of reaction and fascism who are suffering agony in torture chambers and concentration camps, political emigrants and their families, should all meet with the most sympathetic care and solicitude on the part of the organisations and functionaries of the ILD.

The ILD must still better appreciate and discharge its duty of assisting the fighters in the proletarian and anti-fascist movement, particularly in physically and morally preserving the cadres of the labour movement. The communists and revolutionary workers who are active in the ILD organisations must realise at every step the enormous responsibility they bear before the working class and the Communist International for the successful fulfilment of the role and tasks of the ILD.

Comrades, as you know, cadres receive their best training *in the process of struggle*, in surmounting difficulties and with standing tests, and also from *favourable* and *unfavourable* examples of conduct. We have hundreds of examples of splendid conduct in times of strikes, during demonstrations, in jail, in court. We have thousands of instances of heroism, but unfortunately also not a few cases of pigeon-heartedness, lack of firmness and even desertion. We often forget these examples, both good and bad. We do not teach people to benefit by these examples. We do not show them what should be emulated and *what* rejected. We must study the conduct of our comrades and militant workers during class conflicts, under police interrogation, in the jails and concentration camps, in court, etc. The good examples should be brought to light and held up as models to be followed, and all that is rotten, non-Bolshevik and philistine should be cast aside.

Since the Leipzig trial we have had quite a number of our comrades whose statements before bourgeois and fascist courts have shown that numerous cadres are growing up with an excellent understanding of what really constitutes Bolshevik conduct in court.

But how many even of you delegates to the Congress know the details of the trial of the railwaymen in Romania, know about the trial of Fiete Schulz who was subsequently beheaded by the fascists in Germany, the trial of our valiant Japanese comrade Itikawa, the trial of the Bulgarian revolutionary soldiers, and many other trials at which admirable examples of proletarian heroism were displayed?

Such worthy examples of proletarian heroism must be popularised, must be contrasted with the manifestations of faintheartedness, philistinism, and every kind of rottenness and frailty in our ranks and the ranks of the working class. These examples must be used most extensively in educating the cadres of the labour movement.

Comrades: Our party leaders often complain that *there are no people*; that they are short of people for agitational and propaganda work, for the newspapers, the trade unions, for work among the youth, among women. Not enough, not enough—that is the cry. We simply haven't got the people. To this we could reply in the old yet eternally new words of Lenin:

*There are no people—yet there are enormous numbers of people.* There are enormous numbers of people, because the working class and the most diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognised by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no political leaders, we have no talented organisers capable of organising extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all forces, even the most inconsiderable.

These words of Lenin must be thoroughly grasped by our parties and applied by them as a guide in their everyday work. There are plenty of people. They need only be discovered in our own organisations, during strikes and demonstrations, in various mass organisations of the workers, in united front bodies. They must be helped to grow in the course of their work and struggle; they must be put in a situation where they can really be useful to the workers' cause.

Comrades, we communists are people of action. Ours is the problem of practical struggle against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the threat of imperialist war, the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. It is precisely this *practical* task that obliges communist cadres to equip themselves *with revolutionary theory*. For, as Stalin, that greatest master of revolutionary action, has taught us, theory

gives those engaged in practical work the power of orientation, clarity of vision, assurance in work, belief in the triumph of our cause.

But real revolutionary theory is irreconcilably hostile to all emasculated theorising, all barren play with abstract definitions. *Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action*, Lenin used to say. It is such a theory that our cadres need, and they need it as badly as they need their daily bread, as they need air or water.

Whoever really wishes to rid our work of deadening, cut and-dried schemes, of pernicious scholasticism, must burn them out with a red-hot iron, both by *practical*, active struggle waged together with and at the head of the masses, and by *untiring effort* to master the mighty, fertile, all-powerful teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

In this connection I consider it particularly necessary to draw your attention to the work of our *party schools*. It is not pedants, moralisers or adepts at quoting that our schools must train. No! It is practical front-rank fighters in the cause of the working class that must leave their walls—people who are front-rank fighters not only because of their boldness and readiness for self-sacrifice, but also because they see further than rank-and-file workers and know better than they the path that leads to the emancipation of the toilers. All sections of the Communist International must without any dilly-dallying seriously take up the question of the proper organisation of party schools, in order to turn them into *smithies* where these fighting cadres are forged.

The principal task of our party schools, it seems to me, is to teach the party and Young Communist League members there how to apply the Marxist-Leninist method to the concrete situation in particular countries, to definite conditions, not to the struggle against an enemy “in general” but against a particular, definite enemy. This makes necessary a study of not merely the letter of Leninism, but its living, revolutionary spirit.

There are two ways of training cadres in our party schools:

First method: teaching people abstract theory, trying to give them the greatest possible dose of dry learning, coaching them how to write theses and resolutions in literary style, and only incidentally touching upon the problems of the particular country, of the particular labour movement, its history and traditions, and the experience of the Communist Party in question. Only incidentally!

Second method: theoretical training in which mastering the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism is based on a practical study by the student of the key problems of the struggle of the proletariat in his own country. On returning to his practical work, the student will then be able to find his bearings independently, and *become an independent practical organiser and leader capable of leading the masses in battle against the class enemy*.

Not all graduates of our party schools prove to be suitable. There is a great deal of phrases, abstractions, book knowledge and show of learning. But we need real, truly Bolshevik organisers and leaders of the masses. And we need them badly this very day. It does not matter if such students cannot write good theses (though we need that very much, too) but they must know how to organise and lead, undaunted by difficulties, capable of surmounting them.

Revolutionary theory is the generalised, *summarised experience* of the revolutionary movement. Communists must carefully utilise in their countries not only the experience of the past but also the experience of the present struggle of other detachments of the international labour movement.

However, correct utilisation of experience does not by any means denote *mechanical transposition* of readymade forms and methods of struggle from one set of conditions to another, from one country to another, as so often happens in our parties.

Bare imitation, simple copying of methods and forms of work, even of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in countries where capitalism is still supreme, may with the best of intentions result in harm rather than good, as has so often actually been the case. It is precisely from the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks that we must learn to apply effectually, to the specific conditions of life in each country, the *single international line* ; in the struggle against capitalism we must learn pitilessly to cast aside, pillory and hold up to general ridicule all *phrasemongering, use of hackneyed formulas, pedantry and doctrinairism*.

It is necessary to learn, comrades, to learn always, at every step, in the course of the struggle, at liberty and in jail. To learn and to fight, to fight and to learn. We must be able to combine the great teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin *with Stalinist firmness* at work and in struggle, *with Stalinist irreconcilability on matters of principle* towards the class enemy and deviators from the Bolshevik line, *with Stalinist fearlessness in face of difficulties, with Stalinist revolutionary realism*.

Comrades! Never has any international congress of communists aroused such keen interest on the part of world public opinion as we witness now in regard to our present Congress. We may say without fear of exaggeration that there is not a single serious newspaper, not a single political party, not a single more or less serious political or social leader that is not following the course of our Congress with the closest attention.

The eyes of millions of workers, peasants, small townspeople, office workers and intellectuals, of colonial peoples and oppressed nationalities are turned towards Moscow, the great capital of the *first* but not *last* state of the international proletariat. In this we see a confirmation of the enormous importance and urgency of the questions discussed at the Congress and of its decisions. The frenzied howling of the fascists of all countries, particularly of German fascism, foaming at the mouth, only confirms us in our belief that our decisions have indeed hit the mark.

In the dark night of bourgeois reaction and fascism, in which the class enemy is endeavouring to keep the toiling masses of the capitalist countries, the Communist International, the international party of the Bolsheviks, stands out like a beacon, showing all mankind the one way to emancipation from the yoke of capitalism, from fascist barbarity and the horrors of imperialist war.

The establishment of unity of action of the working class is a *decisive* stage on that road. Yes, unity of action by the organisations of the working class of every trend, the consolidation of its forces in all spheres of its activity and at all sectors of the class struggle.

The working class must achieve the *unity of its trade unions*. In vain do some reformist trade union leaders attempt to frighten the workers with the spectre of a trade union democracy destroyed by the interference of the Communist Parties in the affairs of the united trade unions, by the existence of communist fractions within the trade unions.

To depict us communists as opponents of trade union democracy is sheer nonsense. We advocate and consistently uphold the right of the trade unions to decide their problems for themselves. We are even prepared to forego the creation of communist fractions in the trade union if that is necessary in the interests of trade union unity. We are prepared to come to an agreement about the independence of

the united trade unions from all political parties. But we are decidedly opposed to any *dependence* of the trade unions on the bourgeoisie, and do not give up our basic point of view that it is impermissible for trade unions to adopt a neutral position in regard to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The working class must strive to secure the *union* of all forces of the working class youth and of all organisations of the anti-fascist youth, and win over that section of the working youth which has come under the demoralising influence of fascism and other enemies of the people.

The working class must and will achieve unity of action in all fields of the labour movement. This will come about the sooner, the more firmly and resolutely we communists and revolutionary workers of all capitalist countries apply in practice the new tactical line adopted by our Congress in relation to the most important urgent questions of the international labour movement.

We know that there are many difficulties ahead. Our path is not a smooth, asphalt road; our path is not strewn with roses. The working class will have to overcome many an obstacle, including obstacles in its own midst; it faces the task above all of rendering completely harmless the disruptive role of the reactionary elements of social-democracy. Many are the sacrifices that will be exacted under the hammer blows of bourgeois reaction and fascism. The revolutionary ship of the proletariat will have to navigate among a multitude of submerged rocks before reaching the haven of salvation.

But the working class in the capitalist countries is today no longer what it was in 1914, at the beginning of the imperialist war, nor what it was in 1918, at the end of the war. The working class has behind it twenty years of rich experience and revolutionary trials, bitter lessons of a number of defeats, especially in Germany, Austria and Spain.

The working class has before it the inspiring example of the Soviet Union, the country of socialism victorious, an example of how the class enemy can be defeated, how the working class can establish its own government and build socialist society.

The bourgeoisie no longer holds *undivided* dominion over the whole expanse of the world. Now *the victorious working class* rules over one-sixth of the globe, and Soviets control a vast stretch of territory in the great land of China.

The working class possesses a firm, well-knit revolutionary vanguard, the Communist International. It has a tried and recognised, a great and wise leader—Stalin.

The whole course of historical development, comrades, favours the cause of the working class. In vain are the efforts of the reactionaries, the fascists of every hue, the entire world bourgeoisie, to turn back the wheel of history. No, that wheel is turning forward and will continue to turn forward until a worldwide Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall have been established, until the final victory of socialism throughout the whole world.

*There is but one thing that the working class of the capitalist countries still lacks—unity in its own ranks.*

So let the clarion call of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the battle cry of the Communist International, ring out all the more loudly from this platform to the whole world:

*Workers of all countries, unite!*

[Speech in reply to the discussion on Dimitrov's report at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, 13 August 1935.]

### III

## **The present rulers of the capitalist countries are but temporary: the real master of the world is the proletariat**

Comrades, the work of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the Congress of the communists of all countries, of all continents of the world, is coming to a close.

What are the results of this Congress, what is its significance for our movement, for the working class of the world, for the working people of every country?

It has been the Congress of the *complete triumph of unity between the proletariat of the country of victorious socialism*, the Soviet Union and the proletariat of the capitalist countries which is still fighting for its liberation. The victory of socialism in the Soviet Union—a victory of world-historic significance—gives rise in all capitalist countries to a powerful movement towards socialism. This victory strengthens the cause of peace among peoples, enhancing as it does the international importance of the Soviet Union and its role as the mighty bulwark of the toilers in their struggle against capital, against reaction and fascism. It strengthens the Soviet Union as the base of the world proletarian revolution. It sets in motion throughout the whole world not only the workers, who are turning more and more to communism, but also millions of peasants and farmers, of hard-working small townfolk, a considerable proportion of the intellectuals and the enslaved peoples of the colonies. It inspires them to struggle, increases their devotion to the great fatherland of all the toilers and strengthens their determination to support and defend the proletarian state against all its enemies.

This victory of socialism increases the confidence of the international proletariat in its own forces and in the real possibility of its own victory, a confidence which is itself becoming a tremendously effective force against the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The union of forces of the proletariat of the Soviet Union and of the militant proletariat and masses of working people in the capitalist countries holds out the great perspective of the oncoming collapse of capitalism and the guarantee of the victory of socialism throughout the whole world.

Our Congress has *laid the foundations for such a wide mobilisation of the forces of all toilers against capitalism as has never before existed in the history of the working class struggle*.

Our Congress has set before the international proletariat, as its most important immediate task, that of consolidating its forces politically and organisationally, of putting an end to the isolation to which it had been reduced by the social-democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, of rallying the working people around the working class in a wide People's Front against the offensive of capital and reaction, against fascism and the threat of war in each individual country and in the international arena.

We have not invented this task. It has been prompted by the experience of the world labour movement itself, above all, the experience of the proletariat of France. The great merit of the French Communist Party is that it grasped the need of the hour, that it paid no heed to the sectarians who tried to hold back the party and hamper the realisation of the united front of struggle against fascism, but acted boldly and in a Bolshevik fashion, and, by its pact with the Socialist Party providing for joint action, prepared the united front of the proletariat as the basis for the anti-fascist People's Front now in

the making. By this action, which accords with the vital interests of all the working people, the French workers, both communists and socialists, have once more advanced the French labour movement to first place, to a *leading position* in capitalist Europe, and have shown that they are worthy successors of the Communards, worthy inheritors of the glorious legacy of the Paris Commune.

It is the great service of the French Communist Party and the French proletariat that by their fighting against fascism in a united proletarian front they helped to prepare the decisions of our Congress, which are of such tremendous importance for the workers of all countries.

But what has been done in France constitutes only initial steps. Our Congress, in mapping out the tactical line for the years immediately ahead, could not confine itself to merely recording this experience. It went further.

We communists are a class party, a proletarian party. But as the vanguard of the proletariat we are ready to organise joint actions between the proletariat and the other sections of the working people interested in the fight against fascism. We communists are a revolutionary party; but we are ready to undertake joint action with other parties fighting against fascism.

We communists have other ultimate aims than these classes and parties, but in struggling for our aims we are ready to fight jointly for any immediate tasks which when realised will weaken the position of fascism and strengthen the position of the proletariat.

We communists employ methods of struggle which differ from those of the other parties; but, while using our own methods in combating fascism, we communists will also support the methods of struggle used by other parties, however inadequate they may seem, if these methods are really directed against fascism.

We are ready to do all this because, in countries of bourgeois democracy, we want to block the way of reaction and the offensive of capital and fascism, prevent the abolition of bourgeois-democratic liberties, forestall fascism's terrorist vengeance upon the proletariat and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intellectuals, and save the young generation from physical and spiritual degeneracy.

We are ready to do all this because in the fascist countries we want to prepare and hasten the overthrow of fascist dictatorship.

We are ready to do all this *because we want to save the world from fascist barbarity and the horrors of imperialist war.*

Ours is a *Congress of struggle for the maintenance of peace, against the threat of imperialist war.*

We are raising now the issue of this struggle *in a new way.* Our Congress is decidedly opposed to the fatalistic outlook on the question of imperialist war emanating from old social-democratic notions.

It is true that imperialist wars are the product of capitalism, that only the overthrow of capitalism will put an end to all war; but it is likewise true that the masses of working people can hinder imperialist war by their militant action.

The world today is not what it was in 1914.

Today on one-sixth of the globe there exists a powerful proletarian state that relies on the material strength of victorious socialism. Guided by Stalin's wise peace policy, the Soviet Union has already more than once brought to naught the aggressive plans of the instigators of war.

Today the world proletariat, in its struggle against war, has at its disposal not only its weapon of mass action, as it did in 1914. Today the mass struggle of the international working class against war is

coupled with the influence of the Soviet Union as a state, of its powerful Red Army, the most important guardian of the peace.

Today the working class is not under the exclusive influence of social-democracy participating in a bloc with the bourgeoisie, as was the case in 1914. Today there is the world Communist Party, the Communist International. Today the bulk of the social-democratic workers are turning to the Soviet Union, to its policy of peace, to a united front with the communists. Today the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries do not regard their liberation as a hopeless cause. On the contrary, they are passing on more and more to determined struggle against the imperialist enslavers. The best evidence of this is the *Soviet revolution in China* and the heroic exploits of the *Red Army of the Chinese people*.

The peoples' hatred of war is constantly gaining in depth and intensity. In pushing the toilers into the abyss of imperialist wars, the bourgeoisie is staking its head. Today not only the working class, the peasantry and other working people champion the cause of the preservation of peace, but also the oppressed nations and the weak peoples whose independence is menaced by new wars. Even some of the big capitalist states, afraid of losing in a new redivision of the world, are *at the present stage* interested in avoiding war.

This gives rise to the possibility of forming a very wide front of the working class, all working people and whole nations against the threat of imperialist war. Relying on the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the will for peace of millions upon millions of working people, our Congress has opened up the perspective of developing a wide anti-war front not only for the communist vanguard but for the working class of the whole world, and for the peoples of every land. The extent to which this worldwide front is realised and comes into operation will determine whether the fascist and other imperialist instigators of war will be able in the near future to kindle a new imperialist war, or whether their fiendish hands will be hacked off by the axe of a powerful anti-war front.

Ours is the Congress of the *unity of the working class*, the Congress of struggle for a united proletarian front.

We entertain no illusions on the subject of the difficulties which the reactionary portion of the social-democratic leaders will place in the path of realising a united proletarian front. But we do not fear these difficulties. For we reflect the will of millions of workers; for we serve the interests of the proletariat best by fighting for a united front; for the united front is the surest road to the overthrow of fascism and the capitalist order of society, to the prevention of imperialist war.

At this Congress we have raised on high the banner of *trade union unity*. Communists do not insist on the independent existence of the Red trade unions at all costs. But communists want trade union unity based on the class struggle and on putting an end, once and for all, to a situation in which the most consistent and determined advocates of trade union unity and of the class struggle are expelled from the trade unions of the Amsterdam International.

We know that not all those working in the trade unions affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions have understood and assimilated this line of the Congress. Among these workers there are still remnants of secretarian self-satisfaction which must be overcome if the line of the Congress is to be carried out firmly. But we shall carry out this line whatever the cost, and shall find a common language with our class brothers, our comrades in the struggle, the workers at present affiliated to the Amsterdam International.

At this Congress we have adopted a course for the formation of *a single mass political party of the working class*, for putting an end to the political split in the ranks of the proletariat, a split caused by the class collaboration policy of the Social-Democratic Parties. For us the political unity of the working class is *not a manoeuvre* but a question of the future fate of the entire labour movement. Should there be any people in our midst who approach the question of the political unity of the working class as a manoeuvre, we shall fight them as people bringing harm to the working class. Precisely because our attitude on this question is one of absolute seriousness and sincerity, dictated by the interests of the proletariat, we lay down definite fundamental conditions to serve as the basis for such unity. We have not invented these fundamental conditions. They are the result of the experience gained from the sufferings of the proletariat in the course of its struggle; they are also in accordance with the will of millions of social-democratic workers, a will engendered by the lessons of the defeats suffered. These fundamental conditions have been tested by the experience of the entire revolutionary labour movement.

Since proletarian unity has been the keynote of our Congress, it has been not only a Congress of the communist vanguard, but a Congress of the entire international working class thirsting for militant trade union and political unity.

Though our Congress was not attended by delegates of the social-democratic workers nor by non-party delegates, and though the workers forced into the fascist organisations were not represented, the Congress has spoken not only for the communists but also for these millions of workers. It has expressed the thoughts and feelings of the overwhelming majority of the working class. If the labour organisations of various trends were to hold a really free discussion of our decisions among the workers of the whole world, there is no doubt in our minds but that they would support the decisions for which you, comrades, have voted with such unanimity.

So much the more is it our duty as communists to make the decisions of our Congress in actual fact the property of the whole working class. To have voted for these decisions is not enough. Nor is it enough to popularise them among the members of the Communist Parties. We want the workers belonging to the parties of the Second International and the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions as well as the workers belonging to organisations of other political trends to discuss these decisions jointly with us, to bring in their amendments and make practical proposals; we want them to deliberate jointly with us as to how decisions can best be carried into effect, how they, jointly with us, hand in hand, can best realise these decisions in practice.

Ours has been a Congress of a *new tactical orientation for the Communist International*.

Standing firmly on the impregnable position of Marxism-Leninism, which has been confirmed by the whole experience of the international labour movement, and above all by the victories of the great October Revolution, our Congress, acting in the spirit and guided by the method of *living Marxism-Leninism*, has reshaped the tactical lines of the Communist International to meet the changed world situation.

The Congress has taken a firm decision that the united front tactics must be applied *in a new way*. The Congress emphatically demands that communists shall not content themselves with propagating general slogans about proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power, but that they shall pursue a definite, active, Bolshevik policy on all internal and foreign political questions arising in their country, on all

urgent problems that affect the vital interests of the working class, their own nation and the international labour movement. The Congress insists most emphatically that all tactical steps taken by the Communist Parties be based on a sober analysis of actual conditions, on a consideration of the relation of class forces, and of the political level of the widest masses. The Congress demands that every relic of *sectarianism* be abolished from the practice of the communist movement, as this represents at present the greatest obstacle in the way of the Communist Parties carrying out a really mass, really Bolshevik policy.

While inspired by the determination to carry out this tactical line and by conviction that this road will lead our parties to big successes, the Congress has at the same time taken into account the possibility that the carrying out of this Bolshevik line may not always be smooth sailing, may not always proceed without mistakes, without deviations here and there to the right or to the "left"—deviations either in the direction of *adaptation and trailing behind events*, or in the direction of *sectarian self-isolation*. Which of these constitutes, "speaking generally," the main danger is a dispute in which only scholastics can engage. The greater and worse danger is that which at any given moment and in any given country represents the greater obstacle to the carrying out of the line of our Congress, to the development of the correct mass policy of the Communist Parties.

The cause of communism demands, not abstract, but *concrete struggle against deviations* ; prompt and determined rebuff to all harmful tendencies as they arise, and the timely rectification of mistakes. To replace the necessary concrete struggle against deviations by a peculiar *sport*—hunting imaginary deviations or deviators—is an intolerably harmful distortion. In our party practice every encouragement must be given to develop initiative in formulating new questions. We must assist in having the questions concerning the activity of the party discussed from every angle, and not hastily set down as some deviation every doubt or critical remark of a party member concerning the practical problems of the movement. A comrade who has committed an error must be given an opportunity to correct it in practice, and *only those who stubbornly persist in their mistakes and those who disorganise the party are to be flayed without mercy*.

Championing, as we do, working class unity, we shall with so much the more energy and irreconcilability fight for *unity within our parties*. There can be no room in our parties for factions, or for attempts at factionalism. Anyone who tries to break the iron unity of our ranks by any kind of factionalism will be made to feel what is meant by the Bolshevik discipline that Lenin and Stalin have always taught us. Let this be a warning to those few elements in individual parties who think that they can take advantage of the difficulties of their party, the wounds of defeat or the blows of the raging enemy, to carry out their factional plans, and to further their own group interests. *The party is above everything else! To guard the Bolshevik unity of the party as the apple of one's eye is the first and highest law of Bolshevism!*

Ours is a Congress of *Bolshevik self-criticism and of the strengthening of the leadership of the Communist International and its sections*.

We are not afraid of pointing out openly mistakes, weaknesses and shortcomings in our ranks, for we are a revolutionary party which knows that it can develop, grow and accomplish its tasks only if it discards everything hindering its development as a revolutionary party.

And the work which the Congress has accomplished by its merciless criticism of self-satisfied

sectarianism, cut-and-dried schemes and stereotyped practices, laziness of thought, substitution of the methods of leading a party for the methods of leading masses—all this work must be continued in an appropriate manner in all parties, locally, in all links of our movement, as this is one of the most essential preconditions for correctly carrying into life the decisions of the Congress.

In its resolution on the report of the Executive Committee, the Congress resolved to concentrate the *day-to-day leadership* of our movement in the sections themselves. This makes it our duty to intensify in every way the work of forming and training cadres and of reinforcing the Communist Parties with genuine Bolshevik leaders, so that at abrupt turns of events the parties can quickly and independently find correct solutions for the political and tactical problems of the communist movement, on the basis of the decisions of the Congresses of the Communist International and the Plenums of its Executive Committee. The Congress, when electing the leading bodies of the Communist International, strove to constitute its leadership of such people as accept the new lines and decisions of the Congress and are ready and able firmly to carry them into life, not from a sense of discipline, but out of deep conviction.

It is likewise necessary in each country to ensure the correct application of the decisions adopted by the Congress. This will depend primarily on appropriately testing, distributing and directing the cadres. We know that this is not an easy task. It must be borne in mind that some of our cadres did not go through the experience of Bolshevik mass policy, but were brought up largely along the lines of general propaganda. We must do everything to help our cadres reorganise, to be retrained in a new spirit, in the spirit of the decisions of this Congress. But where the *old bottles* prove unsuited for the *new wine*, the necessary conclusions must be drawn—not to spill the *new wine* or spoil it by pouring it into the *old bottles*, but to replace the *old bottles* by *new ones*.

We intentionally excluded from the reports as well as from the decisions of the Congress *high-sounding phrases* on the revolutionary perspective. We did this not because we have any ground for appraising the tempo of revolutionary development less optimistically than before, but because we want to rid our parties of any inclination to replace Bolshevik activity by revolutionary phrasemongering or barren disputes about the appraisal of the perspective. Waging a decisive struggle against any reliance on spontaneity, we take account of the process of development of the revolution not as passive observers, but as active participants in this process. As a party of revolutionary action—fulfilling at every stage of the movement the tasks that are in the interest of the revolution, the tasks that correspond to the specific conditions of the given stage, and soberly taking into consideration the political level of the wide mass of working people we accelerate, more than in any other way, the creation of the subjective preconditions necessary for the *victory of the proletarian revolution*.

Marx said:

*We must take things as we find them, that is, we must utilise revolutionary sentiments in a manner corresponding to the changed circumstances.*

This is the gist of the matter. This we must never forget.

Comrades: *The decisions of the World Congress must be brought home to the masses, must be explained to the masses, must be applied as a guide for the action of the masses, in short, must be made the flesh and blood of millions of toilers!*

It is necessary to encourage everywhere as much as possible *the initiative of the workers in their*

*respective localities*, the initiative displayed by the lower organisations of the Communist Parties and the labour movement in carrying out these decisions.

When leaving here, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat must bring to their respective countries the firm conviction that we communists bear responsibility for the fate of the working class, of the labour movement, responsibility for the fate of our own nation, for the fate of all toiling humanity.

To us, the workers, and not the social parasites and idlers, belongs the world—a world built by the hands of the workers. The present rulers of the capitalist world are but *temporary* rulers.

The proletariat is the *real master, tomorrow's master of the world*. And it must enter upon its historical rights, take into its hands the reins of government in every country all over the world.

*We are disciples of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin*. We should be worthy of our great leaders.

*With Stalin at their head the millions of our political army, overcoming all difficulties and courageously breaking through all barriers, must and will level to the ground the fortress of capitalism and achieve the victory of socialism throughout the whole world!*

*Long live the unity of the working class! Long live the Seventh Congress of the Communist International!*

[Speech delivered at the close of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, 20 August 201935.]

## IV

### United action of the proletariat

Comrades, you have come from capitalist countries to the land of the proletarian dictatorship—the Soviet Union—which is the first but not the last state of the world proletariat.

You have the opportunity, and you will continue to have this opportunity, to see with your own eyes the tremendous difference between the conditions of the working class there, where capital and fascism rule, and here, where the working class, having overthrown the bourgeoisie, is now victoriously building socialism under the leadership of the glorious Bolshevik Party, at the head of which stands *Comrade Stalin*, the great leader of the world proletariat.

The Red Flag of the proletarian revolution waves victoriously over one-sixth of the earth. Over one-sixth of the globe workers and peasants, and not capitalists and landlords, are in power. Millions of Soviet men and women, workers and collective farmers of this great and immense Soviet fatherland are transforming the old, dark, backward tsarist-landlord Russia into a land of the latest technique, mechanisation and industrialisation, into a land of socialism.

You see with your own eyes *what* the working class has been able to achieve once it has taken power. You saw in Red Square on the First of May the powerful armed forces of the Soviet Union our glorious Red Army—the strength of the working class, the strength of the land of the Soviets.

When you were with us on the Red Square and we watched the tanks filing past us, and the aeroplanes flying over us—we saw not only the armed power of the working class of the Soviet Union, but also the strength and power of the revolutionary proletariat throughout the world.

Comrades, the Soviet state is the state of the proletariat, and the Soviet state defends the interests of the workers, toilers and oppressed peoples of the whole world. The interests of the Soviet state are the interests of the world proletariat.

When our Russian brothers and sisters build socialism through socialist emulation and shock-work, through persistent, creative work, they are working and creating not only for their own country, but also for the world proletariat.

When they strengthen the fighting power of the Red Army, they strengthen not only the power of the Soviet Union, but also the power of the world proletariat.

The Soviet Union and its Red Army are strongholds for peace among the peoples. The Soviet Union is the citadel of the world proletarian revolution.

When the reactionary social-democratic leaders say and write: “We do not want to enter into a united front with the communists because we do not want to receive orders from Moscow,” they only prove that they are against the state of the proletariat. They prove thereby that they have connections with the bourgeoisie, that they support the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and that they are ready to aid the class enemy of the proletariat.

To every sincere worker in France or England, America or Australia, Germany or Spain, China or Japan, the Balkan countries or the Canary Islands—to every sincere worker, Moscow is *his own Moscow*. The Soviet Union is *his own state*. Our opponents very often set up a howl about “Orders from Moscow.” Moscow of course does not issue any orders. To receive “orders” from Moscow, *i.e.*, to follow

the example of the great Lenin and the great Stalin means salvation to the world proletariat.

If you, while you are here in our great fatherland, take a look at the world working class movement as a whole, you will see two basic and outstanding directions or currents in this world working class movement.

On the one hand, there is the revolutionary section of the proletariat which has already been established in its own state—the Soviet Union. The communists and the revolutionary workers of all countries feel themselves connected with the Soviet proletariat, with the Soviet state, by the ties of a united militant front throughout the world.

On the other hand, there is another direction, another current in the labour movement. This is the so-called reformist current, the direction which is still dominant in the Second International. There is no proletarian state, no Soviet power, no Red Army, no fighting power of the world proletariat there. But there, for example, Vandervelde and other leaders who collaborate with the capitalists sit in the governments together with the bourgeois parties. They are connected with their national bourgeoisie and support the policy of “their” bourgeoisie. In this camp there is no unity, no international discipline.

In the revolutionary section of the world proletariat a common international discipline prevails. The actions of the Bolshevik Party of the Soviet Union correspond to the interests of the toilers of France, as well as of Germany, America and the other countries. And what the French, English, American, Japanese or Chinese communists undertake to do is never in contradiction to the interests of the Soviet Union.

*Here*, in the revolutionary section of the world proletariat, leadership is in the hands of the Communist International, which unites the millions of proletarians of the whole world who are linked together by a powerful common idea, by a single will, by a common leadership, a common discipline.

*There*—you have a many-tongued babel of confusion.

But, comrades, a process of differentiation and revolutionisation of the working masses is going on in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Parties. The number of those who are for a united front with the communists is growing.

At the present time, when we are face to face with the menace of fascism and war, the basic task facing all toilers is to establish a united proletarian front, united action of the working class against their class enemy.

Comrades ! Remember how for three months during the Leipzig trial frame-up a struggle was waged between communism and fascism. A united front was created on a world-wide scale in connection with the Leipzig trial, in defence of the innocent communists, although formally no pact had been concluded. Communists, social-democrats, anarchists and non-party toilers came out against German fascism. Millions and millions of working men and working women followed the struggle at Leipzig day in and day out. Millions and millions of the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and intellectuals were on the side of the united anti-fascist front. Even the bourgeois newspapers, conservative hostile newspapers, did not dare to write against us and our speeches at the trial. At this time German fascism was isolated. Hitler, Göring and Goebbels could not find moral support in Germany or in any other country.

The united front movement has made further progress since the Leipzig trial. We now have a formal agreement between the French Communist Party and the French Socialist Party for united action, an agreement between the Italian communists and the Italian socialists, and agreements concluded by a

number of Communist Parties with socialist organisations, as well as with a number of anti-fascist organisations.

The united proletarian front is advancing, is gathering ever greater strength, but on its path it encounters tremendous difficulties and the resistance of its enemies. All who are connected with the bourgeoisie and do not want to give up these connections are enemies of the united front.

Comrades! As soon as the resistance of these reactionary social-democratic leaders has been broken, and the united front of the working class established, from that moment an indestructible barrier will have been created against the capitalist offensive, against the offensive of reaction and fascism.

The working class will be able to display all its strength only if it brings about unity of action.

The economic, social, cultural and political interests of the workers of all the various political tendencies—be they communist workers, social-democratic workers or anarchist workers—are the same. On this basis, therefore, it is necessary and possible to establish the united front.

Who is hindering this?

The united front of the proletariat is hindered by the reactionary leaders of social-democracy, by social-democratic ideology and the social-democratic policy of class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie. This stumbling-block must be eliminated. We communists know that this is a difficult task, that it is not so easy to do away with these obstacles. But we are convinced that by means of daily struggle and persistent work the united proletarian front, the unity of the class trade unions and the united revolutionary party of the proletariat will ultimately be created in all countries.

Comrades! When you, as the delegation of workers from capitalist countries, have been convinced, by what you have seen with your own eyes, of the correctness of the Leninist-Stalinist path, of the path followed by the Communist International, you will not fail to tell your brothers and sisters in the capitalist countries the whole truth about the Soviet Union, and to struggle persistently and continuously in defence of the proletarian fatherland and for the final establishment of the united proletarian front. Convey to the toilers of *your countries* our warm revolutionary, Bolshevik greetings, and tell all the social-democratic workers that anyone who does not support the united front now, who does not struggle for united action by the working class, who tolerates a campaign against the Soviet Union, against the fatherland of the world proletariat, anyone who supports the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie is an enemy of the interests of the working class, an accomplice of reaction and fascism and an assistant to the firebrands of imperialist war.

Let us all, communists, social-democrats and all other workers, in full harmony, hand in hand, struggle together against fascism, and for the liberation of the thousands and thousands of prisoners held by capital and fascism, for the liberation of Thälmann, Rákosi, Tom Mooney and of all revolutionary anti-fascists who are languishing in prisons and concentration camps in the capitalist countries.

Let us struggle together against the enemies of united action by the working class!

Let us struggle together for the final victory of socialism throughout the world!

Long live united action by the working class in every country and on an international scale!

Long live the victory of the world proletarian revolution!

[Abridged report of speech delivered in the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions, Moscow, to the May Day delegation of Foreign Workers, 1935.]

## V Youth against fascism

Comrades, I am bringing you warm greetings from the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

The remarkable words of the great leader and teacher of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world, Comrade *Stalin*, that "*internationalism is the fundamental idea that permeates the activity of the Young Communist League*," find their living embodiment in you.

No dangers that beset your long and arduous road, no fascist or police cordons were able to prevent you from gathering in the Red proletarian capital for the purpose of discussing, in a friendly and amicable way, like the international family that you are, the tasks of uniting the forces of the young generation of toilers.

You are a congress of the revolutionary youth, a congress of strength and courage. How many of the best and most exemplary fighters in the cause of the working youth have assembled at your congress!

It is with pride and affection that I welcome, through you, in the name of the older revolutionary generation, the glorious young guard of the working people of the whole world.

Comrades, a month ago the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International completed its work in this hall where you are assembled today.

The Congress of the Comintern, led by the brilliant teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, thoroughly discussed all the main problems of the international labour movement and mapped out the road that must be taken to overcome the split in this movement, and to weld together the forces of the toilers in the struggle against exploiters and oppressors, against fascism and war. The Congress of the Communist International paid particular attention to the youth movement as one of the principal problems of the international revolutionary movement, understanding full well that the victory of the class struggle of the working people depends upon the correct and successful development of the youth movement, upon its assuming a sweeping mass character.

Fascism has wreaked bestial vengeance upon the best fighters of the revolutionary youth. At the same time it is making every effort to adapt its putrid demagogy to the moods of the wide mass of the youth, and to take advantage of the growing militant activity of the youth for its own reactionary ends, in order to convert it into a prop of dying capitalism.

Depriving the young generation of working people of all rights, the fascist governments militarise the entire youth, and try to train from their ranks obedient slaves of finance capital in civil as well as imperialist war.

What can we place in opposition to fascism and the threat of imperialist war, which has become particularly acute in view of the preparations being made by Italian fascism to attack Ethiopia and the growing aggression of German fascism?

We can and must place in opposition to it the union of all anti-fascist forces and, first and foremost, the union of all the forces of the young generation of working people, at the same time enhancing a thousandfold the role and activity of the youth in the struggle of the working class for its own interests, for its own cause.

Let the entire activity of the Congress of the Young Communist International be devoted to the attainment of this immediate and principal goal.

On the basis of the experience you already have gained, and the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, we expect you to be able to find the proper ways and means of accomplishing the most important task of your movement, the task of uniting the forces of the entire non-fascist youth and, first and foremost, of the working-class youth, the task of achieving unity with the socialist youth.

This, however, cannot be achieved if the Young Communist Leagues keep on trying, as they have done hitherto, to construct their organisations as if they were Communist *Parties* of the youth; nor will this be possible if they are content, as heretofore, to lead the secluded life of sectarians, isolated from the masses.

The whole anti-fascist youth is interested in uniting and organising its forces. Therefore you, comrades, must find such ways, forms and methods of work as will assure the formation, in the capitalist countries, of a *new type* of mass youth organisations, to which no vital interest of the working youth will be alien, organisations which, without copying the party, will fight for *all* the interests of the youth and will bring up the youth in the spirit of the class struggle and proletarian internationalism, in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

This requires that the Congress should very seriously *check up* and *reappraise* the work of the Young Communist Leagues, for the purpose of *actually* achieving their reorganisation and the fearless removal of everything that obstructs the development of mass work and establishment of the united front and unity of the youth.

We expect the Young Communist International to build up its activity in such a manner as to weld and unite all trade union, cultural, educational and sports organisations of the working youth, all revolutionary, national-revolutionary, national-liberation and anti-fascist youth organisations, for the struggle against fascism and war, for the rights of the young generation.

We note with great pleasure that our young comrades in France and the United States have actively joined the mass movement for a united front of the youth which is so successfully developing, and have already achieved in this sphere successes which hold out great promises. All sections of the Young Communist International should profit by this experience of the French and American comrades.

In many countries the communist and socialist youth are coming closer and closer together. A striking example of this is the presence, at this Congress of the Young Communist International, of representatives of not only the communist but also the socialist youth of Spain.

Therefore, comrades, follow boldly the course of uniting with the socialist youth and of forming joint and united organisations with it. Follow boldly the course of uniting all forces of the anti-fascist youth!

The Executive Committee of the Communist International will encourage and support in every way your initiative and activity in the fight for unity and for all the vital interests of the working youth.

The millions of young men and women for whom capitalist society has created impossible conditions of existence, who are either outside any organisation at all or are in organisations led by the class enemy, are your brothers and sisters, whom you can and *must* win over to the side of socialism by your persistent work.

Don't wait until unity between the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties and other

organisations of the working class has been reached.

*Be bold, independent and full of initiative!*

You are the Congress of the most active, the most self-sacrificing section of the young generation of today. You cannot stand aside from the movement in favour of unity which is growing and strengthening in the ranks of the working class. You do not have to wait like the Socialist Youth International for permission "from above" before you can support the united front movement and the union of the toiling youth in one organisation.

In the name of the Executive Committee of the Communist International I declare that the youth united in the ranks of the Young Communist International enjoys and will continue to enjoy every opportunity of *independently* developing its revolutionary movement and solving the problems of this movement.

Communists in youth organisations must be able to work in such a way as to influence the decisions of these organisations by convincing their members, and not by issuing orders in the name of the party.

I call to mind the words of the great Lenin which form the basis for the relations between the Communist International and the youth and its organisations:

Frequently the middle-aged and the aged *do not know how* to approach the youth in the proper way, for, necessarily, the youth must come to socialism *in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances* than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favour of the *organisational independence* of the Youth League, *not only* because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence, the youth *will be unable* either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism *forward*.

Comrades, you must *study, study while you fight*.

Combine your day-to-day practical activities with a profound study of the original sources of Marxism-Leninism, for without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice.

*Be exemplary, staunch and valiant fighters against fascism, against capitalism.*

Hold aloft *the banner of the liberation of humanity from capitalist slavery, the banner of the Communist International*.

Rally the young generation of working people of the whole world around this banner. This emblem of stupendous victories already waves over one-sixth part of the globe and it will conquer throughout the world! It is the flag of the great leader of the world proletariat, Comrade *Stalin!*

[Speech at the opening of the Sixth Congress of the Young Communist International, 25 September 25 1935.]

## VI

### Reply to Spanish Socialists

Comrade Husto Amutio, editor, *Adelanta-Verdad*, Valencia.

Many thanks for your friendly letter. The fact that the socialist youth and the entire fighting proletariat of Spain—as you say in your letter—followed the work of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern with extreme interest, and read the report on working class unity in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and fascism with tremendous satisfaction, is a new proof of the fact that in its decisions this historic Congress really expressed the common interests and common desires and longings of the working class of all countries.

I am extremely glad that you, advanced Spanish proletarians, socialists and communists, are seriously getting down to fulfilment of the great task of uniting the working class and all working people for the struggle against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive. I am sure that the toilers of Spain, who have, on more than one occasion, displayed brilliant examples of revolutionary heroism, will succeed in barring fascism's path by establishing a firm united fighting front of the working class and the people.

The road to victory over fascism and over the forces of reaction and counter-revolution in Spain lies through the unity of the socialist and communist youth, through the realisation of unity of action of the Socialist and Communist Parties, through the liquidation of the split in the trade union movement, and the extension and consolidation of workers' and peasants' alliances throughout the country.

Only a united struggle of communists, socialists and anarcho-syndicalist workers, marching shoulder to shoulder in the front ranks of all the toilers of town and countryside, will secure the victory of the working class over the common class enemy. The successes of the movement for unity in Spain constitute a big step forward along the road towards the establishment of international unity of the proletariat.

I wish you success, dear comrades, socialists, communists and anarcho-syndicalist workers, in boldly, shoulder to shoulder, overcoming all obstacles to the establishment of unity raised by the splitters of the working class, whether conscious agents of the bourgeoisie or misled opponents of the united front.

I wish you every success in achieving this militant unity, so that the Spanish people will not have to experience the horrors which the German people are now undergoing under the yoke of the barbarian fascist regime, and so that, in the long run, the victory of socialism will be assured in Spain.

Fraternal Bolshevik greetings.

G. Dimitrov

*26 November 1935.*

## VII

### The legal system of German fascism

*In the fascist newspaper Völkischer Beobachter of 18 December 1935 von Ribbentrop, Hitler's "special plenipotentiary" on questions of foreign policy, published a letter to Lord Allen of Hartwood, in reply to the request of certain English lawyers—addressed through Lord Allen personally to Hitler—that Hans Lütten, a German lawyer, be released.*

*In this letter Ribbentrop puts forward a number of theses. Firstly, that the present regime in Germany constitutes a special legal system which corresponds to the "spirit" and "natural feelings" of the German people. Secondly, that the advent of the German fascists to power on January 30, 1933, was a "revolution." Thirdly, that the historic mission of German fascism is to save civilisation. Fourth and last, that he, Ribbentrop, helped to obtain the release of Dimitrov, a fact which he now bitterly regrets.*

*Ribbentrop regrets the "magnanimity" of the German government in releasing Dimitrov.*

*Referring to the report delivered by Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, which he foully distorts, Herr Ribbentrop writes: "This carefully elaborated programme is the result of the release of Dimitrov, i.e. the result of the liberal British outlook and German good nature and magnanimity!"*

*Below is Dimitrov's reply to questions put to him by representatives of the press on this subject.]*

**QUESTION:** *What is your opinion of the letter written by the Hitler diplomat Ribbentrop to Lord Allen of Hartwood, published in the official organ of the German government, Völkischer Beobachter, on December 18, in answer to the demand for the liberation of the German lawyer Lütten, addressed by English lawyers to Hitler?*

**DIMITROV:** Herr Ribbentrop is not giving his own individual opinion. Indeed, his personal opinions are of very little value. His letter constitutes an official statement of the German government attempting to justify the monstrous crimes which have given rise to a wave of protest throughout the civilised world. Ribbentrop writes as the mouthpiece of unbridled German fascism, which is attempting to win the support of public opinion in England both for punishing its political opponents and for the war adventures that it is planning. It is not accidental that this letter has appeared at a time when the dastardly execution of the German communist Claus has aroused the indignation of all honest people throughout the world, at a time when, faced with the catastrophe of starvation into which fascism has driven the masses of working people in Germany, the German fascists are greatly intensifying the terror throughout the country. In speaking openly in defence of those who wield the executioner's axe, their accomplice in the kid gloves of a diplomat, by his letter, virtually challenges the whole of world public opinion.

**QUESTION:** *What do you think of Ribbentrop's assertion that the present German regime represents a special legal system corresponding to the "spirit" and "natural feelings of the German people"?*

**DIMITROV:** Ribbentrop's assertion is a gross insult to the great German people. What cynicism one

must possess, and with what “Nietzschean” contempt one must regard the people to whom Ribbentrop’s letter is directly addressed, to make such a statement! Fascism and a legal system are two absolutely incompatible things. Fascism is the negation of any kind of legal system. In essence fascism is arbitrary rule. It is the arbitrary rule of an armed gang of hirelings of big capital who enslave the vast majority of the people in the interests not only of the exploiting minority in general, but particularly in the interests of the most rapacious exploiters.

What kind of legal system is it—apart from its alleged conformity to the “spirit” and “natural feelings” of the German people that has deprived nine-tenths of this people of elementary political rights? What kind of a legal system is it that is destroying the lower of the German people in prisons and concentration camps? What kind of a legal system is it that, as Ribbentrop himself says, keeps incarcerated people like Lütten, who are absolutely innocent, simply because they have a different “spiritual viewpoint” from that of Herr Ribbentrop?

Ribbentrop’s justification for the abolition of the old legal system in Germany is, as he says, that “Adolf Hitler could also be tried under the same clauses of the criminal code as other mortals.” But a system under which no fascist murderer is held responsible for his criminal acts before any court and under any clause of the law is an arbitrary system. It is a regime of criminals in power.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the “special legal system” of Ribbentrop stands closer to the “system” of the American gangsters who terrorise the population of the USA than to any other existing legal system. Under what legal system, for example, can we include the provocative burning of the Reichstag by the German fascists? Let the “coordinated” German Academy of Law, whose materials Herr Ribbentrop so obligingly promises to send to Lord Allen, try from the viewpoint of a legal system to justify this provocative act which served, as its initiators planned, as a pretext for a whole number of St. Bartholomew’s nights. By no “legal system” will the Ribbentrops be able to justify such a step as the arrest of people who had nothing whatever to do with the affair, and their trial on the charge of setting fire to the Reichstag, when the whole world knows that the Reichstag was set on fire at the orders and under the leadership of the fascist rulers.

Let the German Academy of Law try to give a legal justification of the assassinations so frequently perpetrated by the fascists, or the numerous cases of murder during so-called “attempts to escape,” or the death sentences passed on anti-fascists on the basis of forged documents and suborned witnesses. Let it try to justify the system of tortures and inquisition to which the fascist hangmen subject imprisoned communists, social-democrats and other anti-fascists. Let Herr Ribbentrop explain what standards of a legal system embrace such actions as the murder by a fascist of the German Professor Lessing on Czechoslovakian territory, the bloody slaughter of June 30, the murder of General Schleicher and his wife, the shooting of scores of Storm Troopers. And what about the anti-Semitic pogroms and the persecution of Catholics, which recall the worst pages of the times of the Inquisition, of the times of the Huguenots? And sterilisation? Under what legal system are such vile acts permissible? And the Bacchanalia of the public burning of the immortal productions of human thought and genius?

Yes, such a “special legal system” has had precedents in history, in the dark days of the Middle Ages. It still arouses horror among those who study the history of tortures, the stake, the burning of “heretics,” the execution of Giordano Bruno, the brutal “racks” upon which unfortunate people were

stretched during the days of Ivan the Terrible. At that time also there were executioners striking off heads at the place of execution, at that time also there were Ribbentrops who lauded this “special legal system.” But we know that the peoples utterly destroyed this system, and without regret drove out those who were the bearers of it. And it requires the spiritual degeneration of bourgeois society and all the rottenness of decaying capitalism to revive this system once more, and to bring shame on the country which has given the world Marx and Engels, Goethe, Schiller, Wagner and Heine. The court of history will not be gentler with those who have raised the axe and the block as the symbol of modern mediaevalism in an epoch when the five-pointed star with the emblem of the hammer and sickle is already blazing over one-sixth of the globe.

QUESTION: *What is your estimate of Ribbentrop’s statement that “revolutions are not decided in court rooms and in accordance with ordinary legal standards”?*

DIMITROV: It is quite true that revolutions are not decided in court rooms and on the basis of ordinary legal standards. But Herr Ribbentrop, in thinking that he has here found the key to the justification of the crimes of German fascism, has overlooked a “trifle.” The whole point is that the advent of the German fascists to power on January 30, 1933, was not a revolution at all. It is well known that every genuine revolution means the passing of power from one class into the hands of another class. But in Germany the bourgeoisie as a class were in power and have remained in power. The capitalist system has remained untouched. All that has changed is that the most reactionary, the most chauvinistic and most imperialistic circles of finance capital have become the complete masters and have extremely intensified capitalist exploitation and oppression. Political forgery will not help Ribbentrop. He thinks that by sticking the verbal label “National-Socialist revolution” onto the reactionary frenzy of the fascists, he thereby justifies the fascist terror. It never occurs to the fascist diplomat that real revolutions, however harsh they may be, do not need justification, because they lift the people that brings about the revolution, and the whole of mankind as a consequence, to a higher stage of human civilisation. But the reason why the bloody orgy of the fascists cannot be justified in any way is that it reduces the great German people to the level of barbarism.

The fascist legend of a National-Socialist revolution has hitherto been an article primarily for home consumption, intended to lead the masses astray and to take the place of the fats, meat and eggs that are not forthcoming. Ribbentrop, Hitler’s travelling salesman, is now attempting to throw these rotten wares onto the European market. He quite seriously recommends the raging fascist frenzy as a “model of revolution” for all other nations.

It is impossible not to smile when reading such a statement by Ribbentrop as that the notorious methods of the National-Socialist revolution “have no precedent in history” and “are in crying contradiction to the cruel and barbarous methods by which revolutions were carried out among other peoples of the cultured world,” and that, finally, they serve to “preserve the ethical and moral principles of the people.” All this represents such record-making in shameless lying that it does not even need a reply. It is a truly fascist “model” of boundless insolence.

QUESTION: *What is your attitude to the statement of Ribbentrop that it is the historic mission of German fascism to save civilisation?*

DIMITROV: The same as it would be to a statement of American gangsters if they were to attribute to themselves the mission of saving mankind from banditry. It is well known that the German fascists

aim their blows at everything which bears the imprint of human progress, free thought, independent creation, at all who are not fascists. It could not be otherwise, because fascism is the most merciless enemy of human progress and civilisation. It is the embodiment of the most savage and unbridled obscurantism. It directs its blows first and foremost against the working class movement and particularly against communism, because communism represents the vanguard of the world working class movement and the bearer of a new civilisation.

And this role of communism stands out with particular clearness in the light of those great achievements of socialist construction which have been brought about in the USSR under the wise direction of the greatest man of our era—Stalin. Millions of people workers, peasants, intellectuals, scientists, engineers and technicians—in the capitalist world are becoming more and more convinced that socialism in the USSR means a mighty growth of the productive forces, the continuously growing well-being of the broadest masses of the people, an unprecedented rise in their cultural level, the all-round development of human personality, the birth of a new man, a new life, a new psychology. Socialism means peace and fraternity among the peoples. And for this very reason all that is honest, independent and free among mankind is despite all difficulties rallying with the working class to the united front against fascism, against this plague of modern humanity.

QUESTION: *What have you to say about Ribbentrop's claim that he assisted in securing your liberation?*

DIMITROV: In making such a statement Ribbentrop, to put it mildly, exaggerates the role played in history by his own personality. As everybody knows, my Bulgarian comrades and I were liberated from prison because even a fascist court could not do other than acquit us. It acquitted us because it was proved up to the hilt at the Leipzig trial that the Reichstag was fired, not by the communists, but by the German fascists. We were liberated because the wave of indignation against the crimes of German fascism rose so high throughout the world, and fascism so disgraced itself and made itself such a laughing stock at Leipzig, that nothing was left for it but to expel us from the country. But where does Ribbentrop come in here? If the Ribbentrops could have torn me to pieces at Leipzig, they would have done so with the greatest of pleasure, but they were powerless. The bandit who lets his victim go because his hands are held down by people who rush to the aid of his victim is the last one to be able to boast of his own magnanimity.

Ribbentrop tries to depict the programme of the united fighting front against the capitalist offensive, fascism and war, which was developed at the Seventh Congress openly before the whole world, as a world terrorist plot not only against fascist Germany but against the whole of Europe and especially against the British Empire. And it would seem that this terrible calamity took place as a result of the "British liberal outlook and German complacency and magnanimity," which, as Ribbentrop assures us, led to my liberation. Ribbentrop needs all this lying balderdash to persuade British public opinion not to repeat such a "mistake" as my liberation, and in order to set the hands of German fascism free to wreak vengeance on Thälmann and the other prisoners in German dungeons. He deliberately distorts the decisions of the Seventh Congress so as to distract attention from the real plotters and terrorists who are trying to drag the world into the catastrophe of a new imperialist war. The stenographic record of my speech has been published. It has been read by the workers of all countries, and English lords can also read it. In my report, in conformity with the programme and the

tactics of the Communist International, not only did I not speak as a supporter of individual terror, but I fought with all the passion of a fighter for communism against those who have made the weapon of political individual terror the basic method of achieving their anti-popular aims. I have in view first and foremost the German fascists.

There is no doubt that more than ever before serious danger threatens the life of Thälmann and tens of thousands of communists, social-democrats and other anti-fascists imprisoned in German jails and concentration camps. New crimes of fascism are pending. The hand of the fascist butchers must be turned aside. It is for the millions of workers and all honest people to have their say.

## VIII

### **Silence is impossible: Action is wanted**

The terrorist attack by the fascist gangs on the French Socialist deputy Léon Blum is arousing great indignation. No fighter in the labour movement, on whatever flank he stands, to whatever workers' organisation he belongs, whatever may be his differences with the Socialist Party, can pass over this vile deed.

Léon Blum is one of the leading figures of the People's Front, set up by the best part of the French people against the fascist hirelings of finance capital, which is striving to establish a fascist regime in France. The attack on Léon Blum is not only a blow against Léon Blum personally; it is a blow against the entire working class of France, a blow against the People's Front, which embraces wide masses of the working people in the fight against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive.

It is not the first time that we raise our voice in defence of socialist leaders who have fallen victims to fascist reaction. It is not so long since we communists fought for the release of Largo Caballero from his prison in Spain with the same determination with which we have defended and are now defending our friend and fellow-communist, Comrade Thälmann. Likewise we considered it our duty to come forward in defence of the social-democratic workers and their organisations in Austria, Germany and everywhere that they have been subjected to attacks from the fascists. And when in Spain thousands of socialist workers together with their communist brethren were subjected to a bestial extermination in the Asturias, we did not hesitate for a single moment to stretch out our hand to the Socialist International and to propose joint action in defence of the heroic Spanish fighters.

The terrorist attack on Léon Blum in France, where fascism has only just begun its surreptitious moves towards power, shows clearly what all French workers, including the social-democratic workers, have to expect on the morrow, were fascism to win. Every day reports arrive of arrests, torture, murder, beatings, execution of anti-fascists and especially of communists in Germany, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Italy and the Balkan States. In these countries things have come to such a pass that any communist, any left fighter of the labour movement can be secretly murdered and his corpse thrown into the street; that any provocation, like that of setting fire to the Reichstag, can be framed; that any trade union official can, with the aid of a venal press, be branded as a terrorist and conspirator; that anybody serving the cause of the working class can be accused of the most horrible crimes and be thrown into prison or concentration camp.

The fascist potentates condemn the masses of the people to hunger, poverty and ruin. While employing a system of the most refined and mocking cruelty in their respective acts against the foremost fighters from the toiling masses, they have the effrontery to declare any discontent called forth by the hard conditions of the masses, any movement of the people resulting from the unbearable fascist regime, to be the work of the "hand of Moscow" and the consequences of Bolshevism "penetrating from abroad."

To remain silent in face of this bloody orgy of fascism—as is the case in the ranks of the Socialist International on the argument that it is primarily communists who are being beaten and exterminated, that here and there Social-Democratic Parties still enjoy comparative legality in countries where the

Communist Parties have been driven underground, such as Poland, Hungary and Finland—this means in fact to encourage the executioners of the working class.

Now, for every man of sound and honest mind it is clear that what is meted out today to the communist fighters of the labour movement, tomorrow will be done to both the social-democratic workers and to the entire labour movement by the unbridled fascist gangs, if the working class does not repel fascism in time by united organised mass action and deal it a crushing blow. The experience of the labour movement in Italy, Germany and Austria on this speaks eloquently enough.

And the *first lesson* that the workers not only of France but also of all capitalist countries will draw from the terrorist attack on Léon Blum is the following: the parties and organisations of the Communist and Socialist Internationals must unite their forces as speedily as possible on a national and international scale for a most stubborn, systematic struggle against fascism, against the terrorist gangs, yesterday the assassins of Minister Barthou, today the kidnappers of anti-fascists on the territory of foreign powers; yesterday the assailants of Blum, today the accusers of Kisch, fighter of the Hungarian labour movement, as a spy of a foreign power; yesterday the murderers of the Italian communist Sozzi, today the butchers of the peaceful Ethiopian population by aerial bombardment; who yesterday seized hold of Manchuria, and today of Northern China, preparing to attack the Mongolian People's Republic and insolently provoking the great land of Soviets on its Eastern borders.

In the struggle against this fascist plague which menaces the working class, all working people, the whole of mankind, those active in the labour movement cannot but address the question to all honest people considering themselves to be democrats, supporters of liberty and peace, as to where they stand? Whether with those who have made methods of individual terror their chief weapon of struggle, who now roam various parts of the globe armed with bomb and revolver, with the lighted torch of war or with those fighters of the labour movement who, defending the rights of the masses, fighting for their open organisation, strive by organised mass action to bar the way to fascist barbarism and war? Whether with those who trample human culture under foot, who burn the works of human genius in bonfires, who rule with the aid of the dictatorship of a terrorist gang—or with the new civilisation coming into being in the land of victorious socialism, with the new proletarian democracy, the real multi-national people's democracy that is being realised in the Soviet Union?

Only a wide anti-fascist front that unites the efforts of the international working class will win the sympathy and active support of all working people, will prove to be a sufficiently effective means of putting a straitjacket on the gangs of fascist violators. And the sooner this international united working class action is achieved, the less difficult, the less agonising and the less drawn out will be the struggle of the masses of the people against fascism. Every day of delay places an awful responsibility on those who reject this unity. The German working class is paying with its blood to this day for the capitulatory policy of German social-democracy.

The attack on Blum is a warning primarily to those who now continue to apply the same capitulatory policy as German social-democracy. The attack on Léon Blum shows how wrong are those leading figures of the Socialist International who on the basis of the first successes of the People's Front in France and in face of the growing difficulties of fascism, are lulling the masses with the notion that the fascist danger is on the decline. It shows how profoundly correct are the communists when they unceasingly summon the masses to unremitting vigilance towards the fascist danger and to united

action so as to carry through to the end the struggle against fascism.

It would be a fatal error to consider, after the adoption by the French Chamber of decrees against the fascist leagues, that the fascist danger in France has been overcome. And if the fascist movement is undergoing difficulties in France under the pressure of the mass struggle, if its mass basis is really beginning to slip away, this by no means implies that the French fascists have decided to lay down their arms. No, exactly the contrary is true: the more violently will they rage, the more frequently will they resort to acts of individual terror, the more desperately will they organise plots and attempt to prepare fascist *coups d'état*. Decrees in themselves are not yet a guarantee against fascism. For the Weimar Republic in its day also adopted "decrees" against the open activity of the fascists. But this in no way prevented the German fascists from arming themselves further and seizing power. The real guarantee against fascism is the action of the masses themselves, keeping a proper check upon the disarming of the fascist gangs and their real disbandment. Only by a united struggle, carried on step by step, day by day, only by tirelessly extending the anti-fascist movement of the masses and thoroughly strengthening the People's Front on the basis of organs elected by the masses in the enterprises, will the working people in town and country cut the claws of the fascist beast and carry the struggle against fascism to a victorious conclusion. Such is the *second lesson* which the working class will draw from the attack on Léon Blum.

And these lessons the working class will firmly master. They will well remember that it is their duty to defend every working class fighter, every supporter of the People's Front, to defend the entire labour movement, its organisations, its press, etc., against the criminal hands of the fascists. There is nothing surprising in the fact that those who fight against communism and not against fascism, against the USSR, and not against the fascist regime, who kindle the flames of war and do not defend the cause of peace, do not fall under the blows of fascist reaction. More than this, Doriot, the insidious fascist agent who daily slanders the Communist Party and the Communist International, is lauded to the skies by the fascist press. Trotsky, purveyor of ideological material for war against the Land of the Soviets, wrecker of the labour movement, is made one of the chief contributors of the American fascist Hearst press-combine. The fascists sing the praises of the opponents of the united front among the leading figures of the Socialist International, for these people assist not the working class, not the masses, but the worst enemies of the people. But all the more justified is the working class in undertaking the defence of those fighting in the ranks of the People's Front, of those helping its cause.

Let the bonds between those associating in the united front become still stronger and closer, let the communist and social-democratic workers feel themselves drawn still closer together in their joint struggle against the common enemy, since the most important task of the proletariat is in the shortest possible time to achieve complete victory over fascism. The defenders of the position of the People's Front are not to be scared by the fascist terrorists. The just cause of the People's Front must and shall be victorious.

[16 February 1936.]

## IX

### The united front against the warmongers

The international solidarity of the proletariat, if energetically put into effect, is a *powerful factor*. We can never forget that the active solidarity displayed in deeds by the international proletariat at critical moments in the existence of the Soviet Union—the first proletarian state in the world and the fatherland of all working people—during the military intervention, the civil war and famine, considerably helped our heroic Russian brothers to smash the counter-revolution, to drive out the brazen interventionists, to ease the position of those who were starving and to make possible peaceful socialist construction.

Thanks to the energetic display of international solidarity, the workers of various countries have on several occasions been able successfully to ward off the blows of the enemy. Many thousands of working class fighters have been saved through international solidarity campaigns. The fact that the fascist butchers have not dared, as has long been their design, to murder the leader of the German workers, Comrade Thälmann, whose life is under perpetual menace, the fact that the leader of the Hungarian workers, Comrade Rákosi, has not been condemned to death, as previously decided by the Hungarian fascists, and that numerous proletarian revolutionaries and anti-fascists who were doomed to death have remained—alive all this we undoubtedly owe to effective international solidarity.

The powerful wave of international solidarity on the part of industrial workers, working people generally and progressive intellectuals, regardless of what party or organisation they belonged to, was the force which at the Leipzig trial made it possible to gain a victory over German fascism, and which not only saved our lives from the axe of the executioners in the service of the fascist gang ruling in Germany, but also hindered the fulfilment of Göring's foul plan of physically exterminating, with the aid of a new provocation and Bartholomew's Eve, the numerous cadres of the German proletariat in the hands of the fascists, in fascist jails and concentration camps.

If, nevertheless, the international solidarity of the working people has not succeeded in displaying all its power and in achieving still greater successes in the struggle against economic, social, political and cultural reaction, in the struggle against fascism and for the interests and rights of the working people, this is mainly due to the fact that reactionary elements still play a decisive role in the leadership of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, as well as in the leadership of the majority of the Socialist Parties and trade union organisations in the various countries; and they prefer the united front with their own national bourgeoisie to the united front of the workers in their own countries and on an international scale, continuing systematically to hinder the consolidation and energetic putting into effect of international solidarity.

All the proposals of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions for jointly rendering aid to the Spanish revolutionaries, and for a joint struggle against the common enemy, have, as is well known, been turned down by these reactionary social-democratic and trade union leaders, regardless of the fact that along with the communist workers the social-democratic workers and progressive intellectuals also suffer and bear incalculable sacrifices owing to fascism, political reaction and the capitalist offensive.

However, never before have the all-round consolidation and organised putting into effect of proletarian solidarity been so essential as just now when the capitalist offensive against the standard of living of the working people is growing without a break; when fascism is already raging in a number of capitalist countries, while in others it is striving irrepressibly for power; when the instigators of a new imperialist war, and first and foremost German fascism, are feverishly arming themselves, preparing a horrible slaughter for labouring mankind.

May International Solidarity Day in 1936 be yet another decisive step along the path of the further development and consolidation of ever necessary international solidarity, and of the attraction of new millions of men, women and children from among the working people and intellectuals to the cause of international solidarity!

## X

### The struggle for peace

#### 1

Never since 1914 has the menace of a world war been so great as it is now. And never has it been so necessary to mobilise all forces to avert this calamity which threatens all mankind. But to do this, one must first of all realise from where the danger is arising, who are responsible for it, and against which countries the attack is being directed.

It would not be correct to think that the war which is approaching threatens the Soviet Union alone or even the Soviet Union in the first place. As a matter of fact the occupation of the Rhineland by Hitler's armies is a direct threat to France, Belgium and other European countries. It is also a fact that Hitler's immediate plans of conquest are directed towards the seizure of territories in neighbouring countries where there is a German population.

Whereas Hitler talks today about the "sovereignty of Germany" he will talk tomorrow about the "sovereignty of all the Germans." Under this slogan he will try to carry out the annexation of Austria, the destruction of Czechoslovakia as an independent state, the occupation of Alsace-Lorraine, Danzig, the southern part of Denmark, Memel, etc. And this is quite easy to understand. It is much easier for German fascism to send an army first of all to seize the territory of neighbouring countries under the slogan of the "national unity of all the Germans," and only later to fight against the powerful land of the Soviets. German fascism, in strengthening its positions on the Rhine, also threatens the independence of the Polish people, in spite of the fact that the present rulers of Poland are its allies.

As far as the Far East is concerned, there can be no doubt that a *direct* blow is aimed at the Chinese people, although the fascist military clique of Japan are preparing for war against the Soviet Union and have an agreement with Berlin for this eventuality. Japan has already occupied Manchuria and is now occupying one province of China after another. Japanese imperialism is striving by this means to subject all the peoples of Asia, including India, and to seize the Philippines and Australia. It is preparing for a decisive encounter with the United States and Great Britain.

Hence it is clear that the peoples of the West would commit a fatal error if they allowed themselves to be lulled by the illusion that the fascist war-mongers in Europe and the Far East do not threaten them. In particular, the people of the countries neighbouring on Germany have food for serious thought regarding the defence of their independence and liberty.

As is well known, the fundamental cause of imperialist wars lies in capitalism itself, in its predatory efforts. But in the existing international situation, the instigator of the approaching war is fascism, this mailed fist of the most aggressive and warlike forces of imperialism.

The war danger has become so immediately threatening because the road to power was not barred against German fascism at the proper moment. Having obtained power by means of an internal war against the mass of the people of its own country, fascism has grown a direct war menace to the countries of the whole world. Having enslaved its own people, it is advancing with the torch of war in its hand to attack other peoples.

The war danger has become extremely menacing for the further reason that the fascist aggressor has

been allowed to enjoy a position of impunity. The war preparations of German fascism (the introduction of universal military service, the air and naval armaments) were carried out with the systematic connivance of capitalist powers and the direct assistance of British ruling circles. The passivity and wavering of the League of Nations in regard to the Japanese attack on China and the Italian aggression in Ethiopia encouraged the impudence of the aggressor.

But the growth in the aggressiveness of German fascism and of the Japanese military clique is first and foremost the result of the fact that *the international proletariat did not succeed in acting unanimously with all the power of its gigantic forces, did not rally around itself all the working people and all the friends of peace into a mighty front against war*. The resistance of the reactionary section of the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions to the united front of struggle has not yet been broken. But the refusal of these reactionary leaders (supporting the imperialist policy of their own bourgeoisie) to undertake united independent proletarian action against war, lulling the masses to sleep with the illusion that the League of Nations would do everything necessary for the maintenance of peace this has hindered the struggle of the proletariat against war and paralysed its pressure on the capitalist governments.

In addition to the openly reactionary leaders who disrupt the unity of action of the international proletariat in defence of peace there are also "left" phrasemongers who propagate fatalistic views to the effect that war is *inevitable* and the maintenance of peace *impossible*. Since the fundamental cause of war is capitalism, then, they say, so long as the latter exists, it is impossible to avoid war, and it is hopeless and useless to fight for the maintenance of peace. Such people are out-and-out doctrinaires, if not simply impostors. They see everywhere around them the raging forces of war, but they do not at all notice the mighty factors for peace.

The Soviet Union, the country of the victorious proletariat, with its consistent and resolute peace policy, is such a factor for peace. Another factor for peace is the proletariat of the capitalist countries. These are the leading forces in defending peace against the war-mongers. The mass of the peasants, all working people, and the mass of the people in all capitalist countries, are also for the maintenance of peace. A number of capitalist countries at present are interested in the maintenance of peace. In the countries where fascism rules, as well as in the countries where the rulers abet the instigators of a new slaughter, the peoples do not want war.

Phrasemongering doctrinaires, such as those from the British Independent Labour Party, depict matters as if the question of war and peace depends only on the capitalist governments. Yes, this would be the case if the mass of the people were simply pawns in the hands of the governments and did not *fight* to maintain peace in spite of their governments. But that is just the point; it is radically wrong to regard the mass of the people as puppets in the hands of the government. If these masses, without whom war could not be carried on, were to act *resolutely and promptly* against the war plans of the governments, they could force these governments to renounce war and the abetting of war plotters. *The whole thing is to organise the struggle of the peoples for the maintenance of peace in good time and to carry it on continually and everywhere against the fascist war-mongers and their backers.*

A united peace front is required which would include not only the working class, the peasants, the intellectuals and other working people, but also the oppressed nations and the peoples of countries whose independence is threatened by the war-mongers. A peace front is required extending to all parts

of the world, from Tokyo to London, from New York to Berlin, acting in coordination against the war-mongers, against German fascism in Europe, against the Japanese military clique in the Far East. And this peace front will become powerful and invincible if it organises practical mass action, not restricting itself to protests, resolutions and declarations.

By economic and political measures, the war-mongers should be put absolutely in a *state of siege*. They should be cornered in such a way that they are incapable of carrying out their criminal plans. The globe should be encircled with such a network of organisations of the friends of peace, such a mighty movement of international solidarity and such effective measures of a united international policy of the proletariat for the maintenance of peace, as will effectively tie the dastardly hands of the war-mongers.

The fascist aggressor must be made to feel most emphatically that his every step is vigilantly watched by millions of people and that any attempt to attack other peoples will meet with the determined resistance of the proletariat and working people of the whole world.

Only the proletariat, uniting its ranks, can be the organiser of such a peace front, can be its driving force, its backbone. This is now the *central task* of the international proletariat as a whole. The success of the fight against fascism itself also depends on its successful solution.

## 2

To *want* peace is not enough. It is necessary to *fight* for peace. It is absolutely inadequate to carry on general propaganda against war. Propaganda against war "in general" does not in the slightest degree hinder the conspirators sitting in Berlin or Tokyo from carrying out their dastardly work. They would be quite satisfied if the working class were to go no further than such general propaganda.

A successful struggle to maintain peace absolutely requires that the joint activity of the proletariat and the widest masses of the people be directed against the *specific instigators of war* and against those forces inside the country which help them directly or indirectly. From this point of view it is extremely important in every country to work out a definite and correct tactical line in the struggle for the maintenance of peace, taking into account the situation of the party and the working class movement of the given country and also its internal and international situation.

In the countries where fascism is in power, the working class, putting in the forefront of its struggle against the fascist dictatorship exposure of chauvinist demagogy and war preparations, unites all forces to avert the catastrophe into which fascism is preparing to hurl the people. When the proletariat and the masses of the people of Germany, Italy and other fascist countries fight against the power of fascism and its military aggression, they are acting not only for their own salvation, but in the interests of peace, in the interests of all peoples, of all mankind.

A particularly important question now in the tactics of the working class, especially in the countries which are directly in danger of an attack, is the attitude which should be adopted towards the foreign policy of the government and the defence of the country. To the working class and all working people it is by no means a matter of indifference what foreign policy the government carries on towards the fascist enemies of peace; whether this policy helps to strengthen collective security or to hinder it; whether the government protects the agents of the fascist aggressor or takes effective steps against them; how it treats sons of the people in the ranks of the army, in what spirit they are trained, what elements the officers of the army are composed of, whether these are reliable in the fight against the

fascist enemy or whether they are fascist reactionary elements; how the population is to be protected against the horrors of war, etc.

To adopt an attitude of indifference to the question of the defence of the country, to leave this question without control in the hands of a bourgeois government, will not in any case assist the cause of defending peace. It is no accident that the ruling section of the bourgeoisie has always looked upon this sphere as its monopoly, regarding it as a kind of "holy of holies." This monopoly of the bourgeoisie must be demolished once and for all.

The proletariat cannot get along without its own independent policy on these questions. Without on any condition permitting itself to slip into adopting the position of the bourgeoisie, the party of the proletariat must actively interfere in foreign policy and in questions of national defence, advancing its own platform and its own demands.

As the supreme supporter of the active defence of its own people and country from fascist enslavement, the working class must closely link up the question of the defence of the country with the demands for the extension of the democratic rights of the workers and peasants and the defence of their vital interests, taking as its starting point the fact that only the democratisation of the regime, the democratisation of the army, its cleansing from fascist and other reactionary elements, and the satisfaction of the urgent demands of the workers and peasants, can strengthen the defensive capacity of the people against a fascist attack. In every concrete situation, the representatives of the working class will support such proposals and will seek to secure the carrying out of such measures as open up the greatest possibility for bringing to bear on the widest scale the pressure of the masses of the people upon the foreign policy of the government, as well as for their effective control over the activity of the government in questions of national defence. They will also support all those measures which hinder the capitulation of the bourgeois governments to the fascist aggressor and the betrayal of the independence and liberty of the people by these governments.

In case of a direct threat of war by a fascist aggressor, the communists emphasising that only the proletarian power is able to ensure the reliable defence of the country and its independence, as is plainly shown by the example of the Soviet Union—will seek to bring about the formation of a *People's Front government*. Such a government, taking determined steps against fascism and the reactionary elements in the country, against the agents and backers of the enemies of peace, and ensuring the control of the organised masses over the defence of the country, will assist in raising the capacity of the people for defence against a fascist aggressor.

Since today the power is in the hands of bourgeois governments which are no guarantee for the genuine defence of the country and which use the armed forces of the state against the working people, the party of the working class cannot take any political responsibility for the defensive measure of these governments, and therefore opposes the war policy of the government and the military budget as a whole. This does not exclude abstention from voting in particular cases, giving the reason for doing so, on those various measures of a defensive character which are necessary to hinder the attack of a fascist aggressor (*e.g.*, the fortification of frontiers), of voting and speaking for measures dictated by the interests of the defence of the population against the horrors of war (gas shelters, gas masks, Red Cross work, etc.)

The time has gone by when the working class did not participate *independently and actively* in

deciding such vital questions as war and peace. The difference between communists and reformists, between revolutionary and reactionary leaders of the working class movement, is not at all that the latter participate in deciding these questions while we revolutionaries remain aloof. No ! The difference is that on these questions, as on other questions, reformists defend the interests of the capitalists, while revolutionaries defend the interests of working people, the interests of the people as a whole.

These flexible Bolshevik tactics, which are the application of the general tactical line of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International to a specific question, arise of necessity from the whole present-day international situation, particularly from the existence of definite fascist aggressors.

It is really ridiculous when "left" phrasemongers of various kinds oppose these tactics, adopting the pose of irreconcilable revolutionaries. If we are to believe them, all governments are aggressors. They even quote Lenin, who, during the imperialist war of 1914–18, correctly rejected the argument of the social chauvinists that "we were attacked and we are defending ourselves." But the world at that time was divided into two military-imperialist coalitions which were equally striving to establish their world hegemony, and which had equally prepared and provoked the imperialist war. At that time there were neither countries where the proletariat had conquered nor countries with a fascist dictatorship.

But now the situation is different. Now we have: (1) a proletarian state which is the greatest bulwark of peace; (2) definite fascist aggressors; (3) a number of countries which are in direct danger of attack by fascist aggressors and in danger of losing their state and national independence; (4) other capitalist governments which are interested at the present moment in the maintenance of peace. It is, therefore, completely wrong now to depict *all* countries as aggressors. Only people who are trying to conceal the real aggressors could so distort the facts.

### 3

The peace which exists at present is a bad peace. But in any case this bad peace is better than war. And every consistent supporter of peace will understand at once the need to support all measures which assist in maintaining it, including the measures of the League of Nations, particularly sanctions. Sanctions can be made into an effective means against an aggressor.

If the sanctions undertaken by the League of Nations did not prevent Italy continuing the war against Ethiopia, this is not an argument against sanctions but against the powers which frustrated their application.

And if German fascism today is throwing out a challenge to the peoples of the whole world, this is precisely because it reckons on freedom from punishment, because sanctions were not applied to Japan, because the sanctions against Italy were frustrated by the capitalist states, because, finally, when Hitler sent his troops to the frontiers of France and Belgium he was convinced in advance that sanctions against him would be frustrated by the British bourgeoisie.

It is said that the application of sanctions increases the war danger and will lead to war. This is not true. It is just the opposite, the *impunity of the aggressor* increases the danger of war. The more resolutely sanctions of an economic and financial character are applied to a fascist aggressor (complete refusal of credits, stopping commerce and the supply of raw material), the less will German fascism be inclined to begin a war, because the greater will be the risk to it.

The League of Nations must be ruthlessly criticised for its irresoluteness, passivity, inconsistency.

The working class wages an irreconcilable struggle against the governments of those imperialist countries, members of the League of Nations, which help the aggressor for the sake of their own selfish interests, disrupt measures for preserving peace and sacrifice the interests of small nations to the interests of the big imperialist powers. But it does not follow that we should in general take up a negative position towards the League of Nations. What interest has the proletariat in playing into the hands of the war-mongers, all of whom are at present against the League of Nations? The League of Nations has been deserted by the chief instigators of war, Germany and Japan. The League of Nations includes the Soviet Union, which throws all its international weight into the scales on the side of peace and collective security. In the League of Nations there are also other states that do not want to give the fascist aggressors an opportunity to attack other peoples. Those who cannot distinguish between the League of Nations in the past and the League of Nations at present, those who cannot vary their approach to the different members of the League of Nations, those who refuse to bring mass pressure to bear on the League of Nations and the various capitalist governments to secure the adoption of measures to maintain peace, such people are windbags and not revolutionaries or proletarian politicians.

The working class must support those measures of the League of Nations and various states which are really directed towards the maintenance of peace (non-aggression pacts, pacts of mutual aid against the aggressor, pacts of collective security, financial and economic sanctions). And not only must it support these measures, but by a mighty mass anti-war movement it must force the League of Nations and the governments of the various capitalist states to take serious steps in defence of peace.

It is not true that the policy of constantly yielding to the demands of the fascist war-mongers by the League of Nations and by various countries (Great Britain, France, Belgium, etc.) can help to maintain peace. The workers have not forgotten that previously in the internal policy of Germany, it was precisely the concessions and capitulation to attacking fascism which paved the latter's way to power. In the international arena, a similar capitulatory policy frees the hands of militant fascism for attack.

It is also not true that the cause of peace will gain from attempting at the present moment to raise the question of a redistribution of the sources of raw material, colonies and mandated territories, as the reactionary social-democratic leaders are doing. In reality this is done with the aim of distracting the attention of the masses from a concrete struggle against the war-mongers. On the other hand, such proposals conceal the desire to give colonies to German fascism, which is bound to strengthen still more the military position of German fascism. It is not the business of the proletariat to advocate any particular division of colonies and mandates among the imperialists. Its task is to support the struggle of the colonial peoples for their interests and their rights and for their final liberation from the imperialist yoke.

#### 4

While demanding effective measures from the League of Nations and the bourgeois governments against the aggressiveness of the fascist firebrands, the proletariat must not overlook for a moment that the *chief, fundamental and decisive thing* in the maintenance of peace is the *independent action of the masses in defence of peace against the actual war incendiaries*.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that if the international proletariat, with its mass organisations,

especially the trade unions, had acted in unison and by strikes and other measures had prevented a single ship or a single train going to or from Italy, Italian fascism would long since have been forced to stop its war of plunder against the Ethiopian people.

But the formation of a really wide People's Front for peace, strong enough to carry on such a struggle against military fascism, is possible only if there exists *unity of action of the proletariat itself*. It was precisely the establishment of the unity of action of the working class which made it possible for the French and Spanish proletariat to build up a mighty anti-fascist People's Front.

Torn by internal contradictions, the London conference of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions, under the pressure of the reactionary wing, evaded the question of the necessity for immediately bringing about unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale. This conference did not call upon the working masses for independent action, but limited itself to an appeal to rely wholly on the League of Nations. It did not take a stand in defence of the Chinese people, who are being attacked by Japan. It did not condemn in the slightest degree those labour leaders and social-democratic leaders who defend the aggressive policy of German fascism, masking this by phrases about the "maintenance of peace."

But, simultaneously, a movement for the united front of the working class is rapidly developing of late in the ranks of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions. The basic interests of the whole international proletariat require that these forces gain the upper hand and overcome the resistance of the opponents to the united front.

The fact that fascism, taking advantage of the discord in the parties and organisations of the working class in various countries, has gone over to a military offensive, insistently demands a *single international policy of the working class for the purpose of maintaining peace*.

To sum up, this single international policy of the proletariat can be brought about on the following basis:

1. The restoration and strengthening of real international proletarian solidarity to defend the interests of the widest masses of working people; the Social-Democratic Parties must make a decisive break with the imperialist interests of their bourgeoisie.

2. Every possible support for the peace policy of the Soviet Union, the proletarian state that stands unswervingly in defence of peace among peoples. And this presupposes in the first place a determined struggle by the working class parties against the counter-revolutionary attempts to depict the foreign policy of the Soviet Union as identical with the policy of the imperialist states and to represent the Red Army, that bulwark of peace, as being the same as the armies of imperialist states attempts which play into the hands of the fascist war-mongers.

3. The blow against the fascist aggressor must be directed with definite purpose and with concentrated force at every moment; the attitude taken towards the aggressor must be different from that taken towards the victims of his attack; any attempt to gloss over the difference between fascist and non-fascist countries must be exposed.

4. An independent struggle by the proletariat for the maintenance of peace, independent of the capitalist governments and the League of Nations, making it impossible for the working class movement to be subordinated to the behind-the-scenes designs of the imperialist governments in the League of Nations.

Under present conditions, the fight to maintain peace is a fight against *fascism*, and this fight is in essence *revolutionary*.

The maintenance of peace is a deadly danger for fascism, because, by increasing its internal difficulties, it leads to the undermining of the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The maintenance of peace helps the growth of the forces of the proletariat, the forces of revolution, helps to heal the split in the ranks of the working class movement. It helps the proletariat to become the leading class in the struggle of all working people against capitalism. It undermines the foundations of the capitalist system and hastens the victory of socialism.

“War may break out unexpectedly. Wars are not declared nowadays. They just start” (*Stalin*). But this demands first and foremost that communists have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of the war danger and the ways and means of overcoming it.

A decisive step at present towards establishment of unity of action of the international proletariat against the war-mongers is for the Communist Parties of each separate country to develop in all fields of social and political life the most active, persistent and extensive campaign for the maintenance of peace. The communists will carry on this campaign, not postponing it until pacts for joint activity have been signed with the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties, but they will unfailingly carry it on from the point of view of the struggle for the establishment of unity of action between the Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party. Communists will exert every effort to overcome the resistance of the reactionary social-democratic leaders to the united front and to strengthen in every way the bonds of joint struggle against the common enemy between the communist and social-democratic workers.

Such a campaign, helping to draw the communist and social-democratic workers closer together, will help to activise and rally all the forces of the proletariat, not only on a national but on an international scale. This will greatly assist setting into motion other strata of the working people of town and country, the masses of the petty bourgeoisie, peasants and intellectuals, all friends of peace. All this will hasten the formation of an invincible front of struggle of the international proletariat, of all toiling people, of all peoples, for the maintenance of peace.

*The struggle for peace is a struggle against fascism, a struggle against capitalism, a struggle for the victory of socialism throughout the world!*

[1 May 1936.]

## XI

### **The Second International and the trial of the terrorists**

It is impossible without a feeling of deep indignation to read the telegram about the trial of the terrorist Trotsky-Zinoviev centre, sent in such haste to the Soviet government by the official representatives of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions, signed by de Brouckere, Adler, Citrine and Schevenels.

Did these reactionary leaders act with the same alacrity when the Communist International proposed to the Labour and Socialist International that joint assistance be given to the Asturian miners when they were fighting, with weapons in hand, in October 1934? Did they hasten to reply to the repeated appeals for joint action made by the Communist International for the protection of the Ethiopian people when it was attacked by Italian fascism? Not at all. One recalls that they stated at that time that they were not competent to enter into negotiations on this question, and that it was necessary to wait for a session of the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International. But at that time it was a question of a really just and honest matter, the defence of the vital interests not only of the Spanish but of the international proletariat, and of the fight against a most unjust, disgraceful war of conquest.

But now they show themselves fully competent, on their own account—without consulting their organisations—to take under their protection the accused terrorists who had raised their criminal hands against the leader of the Soviet power.

It has always been so. When the proletarian court in the Soviet Union wielded its avenging sword against saboteurs who scattered glass splinters in the workers' food, poisoned collective farm cattle and spoiled machines, or against spies and military saboteurs, agents of fascism who destroyed railway tracks, and caused explosions, such reactionary leaders as Citrine and Adler invariably came forward to protect and intercede for this counter-revolutionary gang of ruffians. And it often happened that when the apparatus of the proletarian dictatorship caught agents of foreign fascism in the act of preparing attacks on the leaders of the land of socialism, the sympathy of the reactionary leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions was not on the side of the workers and collective farmers of the Soviet Union, but on the side of their bitterest enemies.

The leaders of the Labour and Socialist International sent no telegram of sympathy, whether to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or to the Soviet government, when Comrade Kirov, one of the best sons of the people, selfless fighter for the cause of the liberation of the international working class, was treacherously murdered. On the contrary, at that time also, they hastened to take under their wing those against whom the people's wrath was directed. It is all the more scandalous that, just at this time, when around the heroically fighting Spanish people a real, international united front of struggle is being created against the rebel generals, and against German and Italian fascism, for the protection of the republic and of democracy, Citrine and Co. come forward with their hostile demonstration against the land of socialism, the most solid and unshakable bulwark of the liberties of the people.

What can these advocates of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev say, in view of the irrefutable facts?

Has it not been proved that Trotsky, whom reactionary socialist leaders made a great song about at

one time, is the organiser of individual terrorism in the Soviet Union? It has been proved.

Has it not been proved that his accomplices, Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, prepared terroristic attempts in the course of a number of years on Comrade Stalin, the greatest leader and organiser of triumph of socialism, and against his best companions in the fight, leaders of the party and the Soviet power? It has been proved.

Has it not been proved that this terrorist gang murdered Kirov? It has been proved.

Has it not been proved that these despicable terrorists worked in league with the *Gestapo*, that is, with the secret police of German fascism, the most savage enemy of the working class, the bestial persecutor and torturer of communist, socialist and non-party workers? It has been proved.

Has it not been proved that the counter-revolutionary terrorists, in their foul underground existence, cultivated the habits and customs of the fascist executioners who set the Reichstag on fire, and later destroyed persons who took part in that outrage? It has been proved.

All this was proved in an open session of the Soviet court, in the presence of representatives of the international press. It was confirmed by the categorical admissions of the defendants themselves. Driven into a corner by the facts and the irrefutable evidence, they fully admitted having committed the crimes with which they were charged and did not deny their political and organisational connection with fascism. Is it not a fact that in their last speeches the accused, one after the other, admitted the heinousness of their crimes against the working class?

But Citrine, Adler and the others come forward in their defence! Ridiculous and pitiable are the statements of these leaders about granting the accused their due rights. They were given every possibility of saying whatever they liked. They were given the right to choose their defending counsel, to call witnesses, to demand examination of the evidence, etc. But they renounced the right of choosing defending counsel, to call any witnesses and to deliver speeches in their defence, for the chain of their crimes was too obvious and indisputably proved. Their crimes were proved before the whole world in public trial by documents, facts, material evidence.

The criminal conspirators were caught red-handed, weapons in hand, with passports in their possession obtained from the agents of the Hitler *Gestapo*, with explosives. The court was given documentary proof of the personal leadership of the terrorists by Trotsky, who had sent them to the Soviet Union to murder Stalin and to organise terroristic acts against the leaders of the socialist state. Overwhelming proof of the guilt of the Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorists was produced at an open trial.

It was clearly proved that Trotsky, Zinoviev and their gang stood on the other side of the barricades, in the same camp as those who are fighting against the Spanish people, sending aeroplanes, weapons and munitions to the rebel generals, and carrying on counter-revolutionary intervention in Spain.

Citrine and the rest are trying to justify their intervention on behalf of the terrorists—the enemies of the Soviet power—by pointing to the necessity of maintaining proletarian solidarity with the fighting working class in Spain. They try to create the impression that the trial of the counter-revolutionary terrorists in the Soviet Union endangers the fulfilment of this proletarian solidarity with the Spanish people. But that is an obvious lie.

The trial of the terrorists, agents of fascism, is an integral part of the anti-fascist struggle of the international working class. True solidarity with the Spanish people is not compatible with the protection of the agents of fascism in other countries. One cannot sincerely support the Spanish people,

which is fighting against fascism, and at the same time play the part of protector of the terrorist rabble in the Soviet Union which is helping fascism. Whoever supports counter-revolutionary terrorists in the USSR, directly or indirectly, is, at bottom, serving the ends of Spanish fascism, disrupting the fight of the Spanish people and facilitating the latter's defeat.

This action of the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and of the International Federation of Trade Unions tends to undermine the solidarity of the international proletariat with the proletariat of the Soviet Union. It is a blow at the movement towards unity of the working class of the world. It is directed towards shattering the united front of the working people against fascism in Spain, France and other countries. This action of Citrine and the others is a direct blow against the heroic fight of the Spanish people, for if the Spanish people were to follow the foul advice which the reactionary socialist leaders permit themselves to offer to the peoples of the Soviet Union, the Spanish Republic would be doomed to defeat.

It is just because the counter-revolutionary generals too long went unpunished that the Spanish people is having to make such sacrifices—because measures were not taken in good time against the fascists, who were secretly preparing a conspiracy against the people.

There is no reason to doubt that Hitler and Mussolini, Generals Franco and Mola, the fascists of France and other countries, all sworn enemies of the unity of the working class and the People's Front, all enemies of democracy, of socialism and of the Soviet Union, will welcome this scandalous act, for the step taken by Citrine and Adler tends to deepen the split in the ranks of the world working class movement and plays into the hands of international reaction.

It would be wrong to put the responsibility for this action on all the parties and organisations which belong to the Labour and Socialist International and to the International Federation of Trade Unions.

They certainly did not empower Citrine and Schevenels, de Brouckere and Adler to come forward in defence of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who organised terrorist acts against the leaders of the great Soviet country. They did not empower these leaders to take the accused, the allies of German fascism and the Gestapo agents, under their protection. They did not instruct them to make use of the trial of the terrorist gang for a new slander campaign against the Soviet Union and for a rupture of the united front against fascism.

It is the bounden duty of the millions of supporters of unity in the ranks of the Labour and Socialist International and of the IFTU, in connection with the disgraceful intervention of Citrine and the others, to administer a rebuff to the saboteurs of the united front. It is high time to put an end to their coming forward in the name of the workers' organisations to the detriment of the united struggle against the common enemy.

The example of the accused degenerates plainly reveals to everybody how renegades, double-dealers, who, like Trotsky, make play with radical phrases, act as wreckers in the ranks of the labour movement and carry out the villainous work of fascism. Now even the most short-sighted people can see for what purpose Trotsky needed the formation of a Fourth International, and whom this dirty crowd of crazed, petty-bourgeois individualists, self-centred careerists, agents of the Gestapo and of the secret police of other countries are serving.

To be able to display keen class vigilance at every step, to learn how to expose concealed enemies, to know how to expose double-dealers and agents of the class enemy and to remove them ruthlessly and

in good time from the ranks of the proletarian organisations—this is one of the most important lessons of the trial for the workers' movement in all countries.

We do not doubt that all organisations of the working class will administer a well-merited rebuff to the anti-Soviet efforts of the Citrines; that they will strengthen and develop the united front movement and rally millions of working people around the just, national war of the Spanish people against the rebel generals, who are supported by the Italian and German fascists; that they will rally the working class against fascism and its contemptible accomplices, the Trotskyist plotters.

[October 1936.]

## XII

### The fifteenth anniversary of the Communist Party of China

During the fifteen years of its existence, the Communist Party of China has grown into a powerful revolutionary party, steeled in the fire of the Chinese revolution. One of the best sections of the Comintern, it has succeeded in establishing Soviet districts and building the armed forces of the revolution—the Red Army, which is displaying miracles of heroism, and which the seven campaigns of the enemy have not succeeded in breaking.

The Communist Party of China achieved these successes in exceptionally difficult circumstances. It is distinguished from the Communist Parties in other countries by a double task that has fallen to its lot, *viz.*, that of acting as the ruling party in the Soviet districts, in a situation of uninterrupted armed struggle against the internal enemies of the Chinese people, and at the same time in the remaining parts of China having, under illegal conditions, to organise the masses and lead their struggle against the ruling militarist regime. Three-quarters of the members of the party have been under arms for a number of years and have been at the front all the time. Tens of thousands of the best sons of the Chinese people, and first and foremost communists and Young communists, have fallen in the struggle for the great cause of its liberation. A very large number of Chinese communists have been thrown into jails by the reactionary generals.

If, in spite of these difficult conditions and great sacrifices, the Communist Party of China has grown into a powerful political force, this is due to the fact that it has deeply-rooted connections with the Chinese people, that it untiringly defends their interests, armed with the revolutionary theory of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, that it protects their unity as the apple of its eye, that it does not fear to reveal its own mistakes in Bolshevik fashion, that it learns from these mistakes and opportunely corrects them, and that it does not allow alien elements to make their way into its ranks, sweeping away all kinds of capitulators and those who support the class enemy.

But as a real Bolshevik Party, the Communist Party of China realises that, however great the successes it has achieved, they are only the first serious steps on the road to the liberation of the Chinese people. And now it is making every effort to solve its most important historic task at the present stage, that of becoming the pioneer in establishing a united national front against the Japanese plunderers, and of uniting the now divided forces of the Chinese people for saving China from dismemberment and enslavement.

The efforts of the Communist Party—directed towards ending the civil war in the country and establishing collaboration with the Kuomintang and all other political groupings and armed forces of China in the organisation of resistance to the Japanese marauders have the sympathy, endorsement and support of the friends of the Chinese people throughout the world. The declaration of the Communist Party in favour of a united all-China democratic republic, as the best means in the present circumstances of uniting all the forces of the Chinese people against their worst enemy, the Japanese fascist military clique, testifies to the fact that the Communist Party is taking account of the actual situation, and is soberly outlining the tasks that correspond to the present stage of the liberation struggle in China.

The firmness and consistency of this line for the unification of all the forces of the Chinese people, the line pursued by the Communist Party, are also proved by the fact that the party, with a view to facilitating the establishment of a united national front, is introducing the necessary alterations into its policy in the Soviet districts, while at the same time continuing to strengthen the Soviets as the only centre of democracy in the country at the present time, and as the reliable support of the struggle of the Chinese people against the Japanese imperialists.

Tremendous difficulties face the Chinese Communist Party. The struggle against heavily armed Japanese imperialism—a crafty enemy which is cleverly dispersing the forces of China and using every internal struggle there for its own robber ends—requires tremendous efforts by the whole Chinese people, and first and foremost by the Communist Party.

The Communist Party has to expose the machinations of the Japanese provocateurs, to expose the dense network of Japanese intrigues to the whole of the Chinese people, and to isolate the agents of imperialism from the honest Chinese patriots, who sincerely desire to protect the independence and liberty of their native land.

The party, basing itself on the will of the masses, has the task of carrying on a systematic struggle to establish a united national front with the Kuomintang. This is no light task, for many of the leaders of the Kuomintang, and many of its military men and political workers, blinded with hatred of the communists, give way to Japanese provocation, and instead of organising resistance to the usurper, jointly with the Communist Party and Red Army, are wiping out the armed forces of China in a criminal war against the Red Army, and in internal conflicts among the generals. The Communist Party has the task of mobilising the public opinion of China, and of securing that all real Chinese patriots give up this policy, which is ruinous for the national interests of China.

The party has the task of still further strengthening its connections with the masses of workers and peasants, with all toilers, with the working intellectuals, by coming forward as the consistent defender of their elementary rights and urgent interests, and by mobilising them for the struggle under the slogan, “Clear the Japanese usurpers out of China.”

The party has the task of unceasingly strengthening the Red Army and raising its fighting power, for the stronger the Red Army the quicker will a united Chinese National Army be set up, and the more successfully will the Chinese people be able to carry on the struggle against the offensive of the Japanese military clique, which is armed with the most advanced technique.

But there are also internal difficulties in the path of the Communist Party of China. It has to overcome the resistance of sectarian elements, who do not understand that in the present conditions the only way to secure the liberation of the Chinese people is by establishing a united national front against the Japanese violators. It also has to carry on a struggle against the opportunist capitulators who are ready to sacrifice the political and organisational independence of the party and the Red Army, and to dissolve them in other organisations and armies. The Communist Party of China, while loyally and honestly fulfilling its obligations according to the agreement undertaken by it regarding the struggle against the usurper, does not intend to take either the path of blind faith in its allies, or the path of capitulation.

The Chinese Bolsheviks perfectly well understand that the basic condition for overcoming these difficulties is to strengthen the party itself, its unity and iron discipline, all the more so since the

enemies of the party are, in the present situation, increasing their efforts tenfold so as to penetrate into the party, to do it harm and to hinder the cause of the liberation of the Chinese people.

There can be no doubt that the Communist Party, which during fifteen years has proved its loyalty to the masses of the people of China, and its ability to fight for the interests and liberation of the people, will overcome all difficulties and obstacles in its path and will bring into being the united national front of the Chinese people against the Japanese fascist military clique.

The international proletariat is following the events in China with unflagging interest. It has repeatedly demonstrated its solidarity with the fighting Chinese people and the Communist Party of China. But at the moment when the direct menace of complete enslavement hangs over China, these usual manifestations of solidarity are insufficient. What is needed is to surround the Chinese people, who are fighting for their liberty, with live sympathy and love, and with real moral and political support. It is necessary that energetic measures be taken to influence public opinion and the governments, first and foremost in England, France and the USA, and to secure that all direct and indirect support of the robber plans and deeds of the Japanese fascist military clique is really abandoned. We must unceasingly brand—as a foul plot against peace, culture and democracy—the alliance between German fascism and the Japanese military clique, directed towards the dismemberment and enslavement of China and towards unloosing a new imperialist world war.

Let the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Communist Party of China become a real impulse for mobilising the forces of the entire international proletariat to render help to the Chinese people, for this great people is fighting for its independent national existence on one of the most important sectors of the world front of struggle against fascism and war.

[October 1936.]

### XIII

## The People's Front

#### 1

The policy of the People's Front of struggle against fascism and war, proclaimed by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, has aroused a mighty echo among the working masses of all countries. The practical realisation of this policy in France and Spain has provided clear proof that the People's Front is *actually possible* and has enhanced its popularity.

There is not a single country, at the present time, where the idea of the People's Front does not daily find more and more adherents among all those who cherish democracy and freedom, among all those who advocate peace among nations. The effort to form a People's Front is growing as well in countries where the bourgeois-democratic revolution has still by no means had its last say; in Japan, for instance, where the fascist-feudal military clique, with its rapacious military adventures on Chinese territory and on the frontiers of the great Soviet Union, is thrusting the Japanese people into an abyss of most terrible calamities. And it is growing also in the so-called classic countries of bourgeois democracy, in Great Britain, for instance, where the destinies of nations have been traditionally decided by the two parties of monopoly capital—the Tory and the Liberal—which, by their reactionary policy both nationally and internationally, pave the way for the burial of democracy and peace.

The tremendous historical significance, the correctness and timeliness of the People's Front policy, are perhaps particularly clearly expressed in the attitude towards this policy shown by the enemies of the proletariat, the enemies of democracy and peace, the fascist war-incendiaries, and the reactionary forces throughout the world. The governments of capitalist countries, bourgeois parties, statesmen and politicians, bourgeois newspapers, have all become seriously alarmed by the decisions of the Congress. The reactionaries of all countries have raised an unparalleled campaign of slander and calumny against the Communist International and against all adherents of the People's Front. In fascist Germany they have even formed a special organisation, called the "Anti-Comintern," to carry on propaganda on an international scale against the Communist International and to combat the policy of the People's Front. At the National-Socialist congress in Nürnberg, Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg opened a particularly furious cannonade against the danger of the People's Front, which is menacing the fascist dictatorship, and against democracy in general. While directing the most vehement outbursts against the already existing People's Front in France and Spain, they at the same time thus expressed their alarm and fear of the People's Front movement which is taking shape in Germany itself. The Pope at Rome and their "graces" the bishops in different countries hastened with epistles and sermons, to shield their flock from that "frightful Bolshevik danger," the People's Front. The question of the People's Front is always in the columns of the press in the capitalist countries and is the subject of the most lively discussion.

The workers' class enemy quickly sensed and understood what a tremendous danger the People's Front, the unity of all anti-fascist forces, constitutes for him. As long as the proletariat is disunited, as long as it is isolated from the other strata of toilers, the working people in town and country, as long as it has not established proper relationships and collaboration with the other democratic forces in the

country, it is not so difficult, as the examples of Italy, Germany and Austria have shown, for the handful of financial and industrial magnates, for the fascist bourgeoisie, to crush the working class movement, to defeat the various strata of the people one by one, and destroy democracy. The fascists have successfully applied the well-known crafty motto—"divide and rule?"

But when the scattered proletarian detachments, at the initiative of the communists, join hands for the struggle against the common enemy, when the working class, marching as a unit, begins to act together with the peasantry, the lower middle classes and all democratic elements, on the basis of the People's Front programme, then the offensive of the fascist bourgeoisie is confronted with an insurmountable barrier. A force arises which can offer determined resistance to fascism, prevent it from coming to power in countries of bourgeois democracy and overthrow its barbarous rule where it is already established.

As the examples of France and Spain have shown, the establishment of the People's Front signifies a turning point in the relation of forces between the proletariat on the one hand, and the fascist bourgeoisie on the other, to the advantage of millions of the working masses. The People's Front makes it possible for the lower middle classes, the peasantry and the democratic intelligentsia, not only to resist the tutelage and oppression of the clique of finance capital, but also to rise up against it in defence of their vital interests and rights, relying for support on the militant collaboration of the working class nationally and on an international scale. The People's Front offers a way out of the situation which seemed so hopeless to the sections of the lower middle classes, who considered themselves doomed to submission to fascist domination. The People's Front helps the working class to avoid the political isolation towards which the bourgeoisie purposely impels it; it creates the most favourable conditions for the working class to accomplish its historic role, to head the struggle of their people against the small clique of financial magnates, big capitalists and landlords, to be in the vanguard in the uncompleted democratic revolution and in all movements for progress and culture. The class struggle between exploited and exploiters thus receives an immeasurably wider base and a mighty scope.

While the split in the ranks of the working class, the absence of unity between them and the other strata of the working people, pave the way to power for fascism, the unity of the proletarian ranks and the formation of the People's Front ensure victory for democracy over fascism, defend peace against fascist incendiaries of war, and in the long run pave the way for the victory of labour over capital.

It is difficult to imagine a higher degree of political short-sightedness and absurdity than to contrast the principles of the class struggle with the policy of the People's Front, as some of our overzealous critics "from the left" do in regard to the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. We frequently observe the characteristic phenomenon that not a few left socialists, who have become disillusioned with the social-democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and are moving away from reformism, are frequently inclined to go to the other extreme and become the victims of sectarianism and leftist excesses. They make the mistake of identifying the policy of the People's Front with the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and demand "a pure working-class policy," declaring that the joint struggle of the working class and the democratic sections of the lower middle classes, the peasantry and intelligentsia against fascism constitutes a retreat from the position of the class struggle. But this does not at all mean that the People's Front policy is identical

with the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie; it only shows that we must patiently explain the class meaning of the People's Front policy to the sincere left socialists and help them to get rid of their own political shortsightedness, which can only play into the hands of fascism and reaction in general.

## 2

As was stated at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the People's Front will be formed in a different way in different countries, depending on the historical, social and political peculiarities of each country, and the concrete situation existing therein. To imitate uncritically and transfer mechanically the methods and forms of the People's Front in one country to another can only complicate its formation, expansion and consolidation.

However, as experience has shown, it is equally true for the majority of the capitalist countries, that:

First, the formation of the People's Front is possible in the actual struggle today against fascism;

Second, the People's Front will be realised the more rapidly, and the sections of the working masses joining it will be the greater, the more determinedly the working class itself acts as one unit, the more quickly its organisations, and in the first place the mass trade unions and the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties, bring about unity of action in the struggle against fascism;

Third, the People's Front will spread and strengthen as its programme for the defence of the interests of the working people, for the defence of democracy and peace against fascism and the fascist war-mongers, is carried out;

Fourth, the success of the People's Front is entirely dependent upon the extent to which its ranks are consolidated, and upon the extent to which the masses and organisations which take part in it have undergone political and organisational preparation so as to be ready promptly to repulse every blow aimed by fascism, without waiting for its general offensive.

Today, when the Spanish people is engaged in a deadly struggle against the fascist rebels, when fascism is raising its head everywhere in the capitalist countries and, in the first place, in France, Czechoslovakia and Belgium, it is the supreme duty of the working class to hasten in every way the formation and consolidation of the People's Front by establishing united action nationally and on an international scale. It is the duty of communists to do everything necessary, taking into consideration the conditions in their own countries, to help the working class to fulfil this its historic task.

If we are briefly to formulate the most important, immediate tasks which the whole situation today places before the world proletariat, they may be reduced to the following:

*To exert every effort to help the Spanish people to crush the fascist rebels;*

*Not to allow the People's Front in France to be discredited or disrupted;*

*To hasten by every means the establishment of a World People's Front of struggle against fascism, and war.*

All these tasks are closely linked. The most urgent, though, of these tasks, the very first at the present moment, is that of organising international aid to the Spanish people for their victory over fascism.

The historic importance of the struggle against fascism in Spain has been expressed concisely and at the same time most clearly in the words of the leader of the working people of the world, Comrade

Stalin, in his telegram in reply to the greetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain:

*The liberation of Spain from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is not the private affair of Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive mankind.*

The course of development in all the capitalist countries in the near future will depend a great deal upon the outcome of the struggle of the Spanish people against the fascist brigands. The action undertaken by the fascists in Spain has shown once more that fascism is not only the bitterest enemy of the proletariat, the enemy of the Soviet Socialist Republics, but the enemy of every form of liberty, of every democratic country, even if its political and economic regime does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois society.

Fascism means the destruction of all the democratic rights won by the people, the establishment of a kingdom of darkness and ignorance and the destruction of culture; it means nonsensical race theories and the preaching of hatred of man for man, for the purpose of kindling wars of conquest. Death and destruction are being spread today in Spain by the rabble who form the Foreign Legion, by the duped Moroccan troops led by fascist generals, and by the ammunition and military units sent to Spain by the fascist rulers of Germany, Italy and Portugal. The combatants of the Republican army fighting at the walls of Madrid, in Catalonia, in the mountains of Asturias, all over the peninsula, are laying down their lives to defend not only the liberty and independence of Republican Spain, but also the democratic gains of all nations, and the cause of peace against the fascist war incendiaries.

The special significance of the Spanish events consists in the fact that they have demonstrated the mighty power of united proletarian action, the power of the People's Front in the struggle against fascism. For it is now quite clear to everybody that if united action had not been achieved between the communist, socialist and anarchist workers in Spain, if a broad fighting front of the Spanish people—from the communists to the Left Republicans—had not been formed, the fascist generals would long ago have established their dictatorship. They would have wreaked bloody vengeance upon the workers and other toilers and upon all democratic elements all over the whole of Spanish territory. They would have doomed the country to an orgy of mediaeval reaction and inquisition, would have placed it under the heel of German and Italian fascism, would have handed over to them the most important strategic points in the Mediterranean, and have turned Spain into a military base for carrying out their robber plans.

But in Spain the fascist rebels and their inspirers from Berlin and Rome have encountered that force which is barring their way. They have encountered *the armed resistance of the People's Front*. The Spanish people by their heroic struggle are today demonstrating how democracy is to be defended against fascism. The victory of the Spanish people is the interest of all who do not want to suffer fascist barbarism in their country. The victory of the Spanish people will be the victory of the whole of world democracy, the victory of progress and culture over fascist reaction, the victory of the peace front over the fascist instigators of war. It will strengthen the People's Front in France and strike a heavy blow at fascism in all countries.

The heroic struggle of the Spanish people serves as a striking and convincing warning to the fascist forces of darkness in those countries where they are feverishly preparing for fascist *coups d'état*, that the time has passed when fascism can make use of disunity in the ranks of the working class and other

toilers, when it can catch the people unawares, when it can deceive the politically backward sections of the population and seize state power. It shows that where there are a firm People's Front and international solidarity of action among the working class, it will be impossible to establish fascist rule over a people prepared to defend their freedom and independence. Thus, the cause of democracy and peace in Europe, the struggle against fascism and war in all countries, is linked in a thousand ways with the interests of the People's Front in Spain, whose courageous fighters have taken up arms to defend the Republic and ensure the victory of the Spanish revolution.

### 3

Everything that has happened during the recent period, and primarily the lessons of the Spanish events, point to the fact that the time has come when we must defend democracy by every means, including the force of arms. These are the lessons that must be learned and well remembered by all workers and other toilers, by all those who do not want to become victims of fascist bondage and savage violence.

It is not at all that the supporters of democracy and peace are in general advocates of armed struggle, but that fascism kindles the flames of civil war against the democratic regime of the country, brings about destruction and death, and compels the people to defend their lives, their freedom and independence by taking up arms.

It must be understood that it is not a case now of some far distant menace of fascism, but that fascism, which has already set up its terroristic dictatorship in such big countries as Germany and Italy, and is seeking to do the same in Spain, is preparing to crush the working class movement and to destroy democracy in other countries, and that it kindles the flames of world imperialist war.

The war undertaken by fascism against the Spanish people cannot be considered as a casual isolated act. No, this war is a link to the chain of the fascist offensive on the international arena. No illusions must be harboured that the war undertaken by fascism against the Spanish people will be the last of its kind. Fascism is preparing to strike at democracy in France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, at the democracy of England, Switzerland, Scandinavia and other countries. Everywhere the fascist reactionaries are feverishly working, from within and without, to prepare, organise and, at a convenient moment, to carry out fascist rebellions and *coups d'état*. In order to prepare for a new imperialist war, to seize foreign territories and to subject other nations, in order to ensure the unbridled rule of the most reactionary, rapacious elements of finance capital and to organise a crusade against the Soviet Union, fascism needs to smash the working class movement and destroy European democracy.

All adherents of democracy must bear in mind that the fate of anti-fascist democracy in Europe is indissolubly bound up with the fate of the working class, with the establishment of the People's Front. Democracy will inevitably perish under the blows of the fascist offensive, if it does not rely for support on the working class and the broad masses of the working people, if it is not prepared to defend itself against fascism by every means at its disposal.

The policy of retreating before fascism, both nationally and on an international scale, brings grist to the mill of fascism; it brings destruction to the nations, it means the end of democracy. This policy is equally harmful for those who retreat before fascism inside the country and those states which retreat before it on the international arena.

The fascist rulers of Germany are systematically blackmailing the countries of bourgeois democracy, and the present rulers of those countries succumb to the influence of this blackmail. But it must be realised that the brazen fascists are becoming the more insolent the more concessions are ceded to them, and the less the resistance they meet. The fascists are using their well-tryed method of provocation. In Germany they fired the Reichstag and then shouted that the communists had done it. In Spain they started a rebellion against the parliamentary regime, against the lawful republican government, and then shouted that the People's Front was to blame for the civil war. The fascists put fear into the hearts of the spineless liberals and flabby democrats; while the democratic jobbers fearing for their profits and the ministers, politicians and leaders from the ranks of various liberal and democratic parties who cling to their soft seats, as well as not a few people from the Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals, give way to this intimidation and do their utmost to find means of conciliation with fascism. They try to persuade us that such a "middle" policy can be adopted whereby "the wolves would be satisfied and the sheep go unharmed." *But concessions will not sate the fascist wolves. This kind of policy will not check them. Actually it only leads to demobilising the forces and the will of the working masses.*

The Spanish events provide a particularly vivid example in this respect, too. It is now clear to all that the fascists, and first and foremost the fascists of Germany and Italy who have raised the revolt, with the Spanish generals as their cat's-paws, counted upon the young Spanish Republican government not offering them any serious resistance; they expected that it would not be difficult for them to subject the country and take over its natural wealth and the islands having strategic importance. In resorting to military action in Spain the fascists had before them the examples of the recent past, when their criminal acts had been allowed to go unpunished. The introduction of compulsory military service in Germany, the militarisation of the Rhineland, the seizure of Ethiopia by Italy and the earlier seizure of parts of China by Japan, which took place with the connivance of the bourgeois democratic countries and the League of Nations, have whetted the appetites of the fascist bullies and encouraged them to attempt a new robber raid. The fascists would never have dared to kindle the flames of civil war in other countries, to send arms, aeroplanes, tanks, flotillas of warships and, lastly, army units, had they been promptly and firmly checked. They would have been compelled to retreat if, at the very beginning of the fascist rebellion in Spain, they had encountered the mighty force of the international working class movement marching in a united front, if they had encountered resistance on the part of the bourgeois democratic governments, if these governments had not supported the blockade of the Spanish Republic by their fraudulent policy of non-intervention.

We often hear the argument advanced by people who pretend to be adherents of democracy, that the establishment of the People's Front only leads to increased fascist aggression, that it hastens the armed action of fascism. From this they draw the conclusion that if you want to avoid the barbarous rule of fascism, do not form a People's Front, but try to come to terms peacefully with Hitler and Mussolini and your own Hitlers and Mussolinis in each country. But nothing could be more misguiding and harmful for the proletariat and the people in the bourgeois democratic countries than to follow the sheepish wisdom of these woe-begone democrats. It amounts to the absurd, stupid, foul moral: "Don't annoy the beast if you don't want it to attack you." And this monstrous moral is being taught to the social-democratic workers precisely after the cruel defeat of the working people of Germany and Austria!

For in Germany and Austria, as is well known, the leaders of social-democracy and the trade unions had absolutely refused to undertake any joint action with the communists, their excuse being that the

united front with the Communist Party would alienate the middle strata from the working class, would strengthen the position and the aggression of fascism, would hasten on its general offensive and lead to fascist victory and the annihilation of democracy. It was as a result of this policy that the German and Austrian people suffered heavy defeats, followed by countless horrors and calamities.

On the other hand, we see that the People's Front in France has barred the way against fascism, while it is precisely owing to the People's Front that for five months now the Spanish people have been heroically defending their liberty and independence. In this grave struggle the chances for victory will be the greater the more the Spanish working class is able to maintain to the end the firm unity of the People's Front, the more it is able to subordinate the historically formed differences between the communists, socialists and anarchists, to the greater interests of the people, to the cause of suppressing the fascist rebellion, the more determinedly it resists the attempts at taking dangerous leaps over the inevitable stages of the revolution advocated by certain short-sighted sectarians, light-minded visionaries and Trotskyite provocateurs. Finally, the quicker and more resolute the support afforded to the Spanish people by the world proletariat and the whole of progressive mankind, the sooner will the Spanish people finish with the fascist rebels.

An analogy, it is true, is not always proof, but frequently it throws a clearer light on a given situation. We can definitely assert that if, at the time of the Leipzig trial when the sword of brutal Hitler fascism hung over the heads of the accused communists, the anti-fascists of all countries, and we in court, had adhered to this wiseacre policy of "Don't annoy the beast," German fascism would not then have suffered such a moral and political defeat, the heads of the falsely accused communists would not have remained on their shoulders, and the "St. Bartholomew Night" prepared by the bloodthirsty fascists for the thousands of prisoners of fascism in the jails and concentration camps would not have been averted.

No, the policy of "Don't annoy the beast," is an unworthy policy! It is a policy which under all circumstances is fatal for the working class, for democracy and peace. On the contrary, *the fascist beast must be muzzled. It must be confronted by the mighty organised fist of the People's Front. It must be muzzled in iron so as to prevent it from biting. It must be struck at and finished once and for all, in order to save the democratic gains won by the people and safeguard peace.*

This, of course, does not mean that we should fall prey to the provocations of the fascists, who, while using all means to kindle the flames of civil war inside the country and imperialist war abroad, seek to deceive the masses of the people and create the impression that it is precisely the parties of the People's Front and the states which support peace that lead to civil war and military complications.

In the contemporary political history of Europe we have two most important and instructive examples showing different attitudes towards fascism that led to diametrically opposite results.

While in Germany the social-democratic leaders refused to establish united working class action and, precisely because of this, facilitated the advent of the fascists to power, we have a different example in France. The French proletariat, thanks to the joint action of the Communist and Socialist Parties and the policy of unswerving struggle on the basis of the People's Front against the fascist danger, caused fascism to be effectively repulsed and prevented the fascists from establishing their rule. This is the greatest victory of the proletariat and democracy in Europe after the coming of fascism to power in Germany. And the working people of other capitalist countries can and must learn much from the French proletariat.

But these successes in France are only the first successes. They must be consolidated; they demand that the offensive against fascism proceed further. Every attempt to discredit and break up the People's Front must meet with the most resolute resistance on the part of all workers, all anti-fascists. The mustering of the fascist forces within the country, the growing fascist aggression in neighbouring countries, the Spanish events, which are fraught with lessons to be learned, indicate clearly to the workers and all anti-fascists that they must increase their efforts tenfold in the struggle against fascism, that they must forge an even stronger and more stable united People's Front.

There is no ground to doubt that this line will be followed persistently and firmly, as the only correct line in the struggle against growing fascist aggression. But maintaining the People's Front in France does not mean by far that the working class will support the present government at any price. The composition of the government may change, but the People's Front must remain and grow stronger all the time. If for some reason or other the existing government should turn out to be unable to put through the programme of the People's Front, if it takes the line of retreat before the enemy at home and abroad, if its policy leads to the discrediting of the People's Front and thus weakens the resistance to the fascist offensive, then the working class, while still further strengthening the bonds of the People's Front, will strive to bring about the substitution of another government for the present one, of a government which will firmly carry out the programme of the People's Front, will be capable of dealing with the fascist danger, will safeguard the democratic liberties of the French people and ensure its defence against foreign fascist aggression.

Alongside with maintaining and strengthening the People's Front in France, the unfolding of united action among all sections of the English working class against fascism and war deserves special attention. England plays a tremendous role in the whole of the political life of the world. Her position most definitely influences a number of bourgeois democratic countries and the international situation in general. The whole situation today raises with particular force the question of the role of the working class of England nationally and on an international scale. This fact imposes on it particularly important obligations with regard to the struggle against fascism and for the preservation of peace, and also with regard to the task of establishing international unity of the working class movement. The English working class won democratic rights earlier than the working people of other countries. The democratic regime they won has made it possible for them to influence the policies of their country to a greater extent than is the case with the proletariat of a number of other countries. The English workers possess powerful means for the struggle for democracy, to safeguard peace against fascism and, in particular, against the fascist brigands in Spain and the German, Italian and Portuguese interventionists.

There is no doubt that the working class of England, with the glorious traditions of the Chartist movement behind it, the proletariat in whose midst the First International of Marx and Engels was established, and which possesses powerful, united trade union organisations, will find in itself sufficient strength and will power to overcome all obstacles on the way to creating a united People's Front of struggle against fascism and war, and to fulfil with honour its international obligations in defence of democracy, culture and peace.

The decisive role in the task of establishing a mighty People's Front belongs to the working class. It can and must rally around itself all working people, all the forces of democracy, all anti-fascists. At the present juncture, when we are faced with furious fascist aggression directed, as was particularly clearly demonstrated by the Nuremberg Congress of the bestial German fascists, *against every kind of democracy*, when everything must be done to save the Spanish democratic republic, when over the world hangs the ominous threat of a new world imperialist war, *it is not only impermissible to allow the forces of the proletariat to be divided, but it is impermissible and criminal to allow any slackening in the work of establishing the united front.* This slackening only plays into the hands of fascism. It may cause the proletariat and democracy to suffer new heavy blows.

The working class must no longer tolerate a situation where, at a time when in Spain the socialist and communist workers are fighting and dying together at the front, defending not only the liberty and democracy of the Spanish people but the democracy and culture of the whole of Europe against fascist barbarism, there are to be found leaders of the Second Socialist International who bring all their influence to bear to widen the split in the proletarian ranks.

At a time when the fascist rebels in Spain are slaughtering socialist and communist workers who are fighting shoulder to shoulder at the front, when they are spreading death and destruction throughout the country, the leadership of the Socialist International persistently refuses to organise aid for the Spanish people jointly with the Communist International. The Secretary of the Socialist International, F. Adler, finds nothing better to do than to write long articles in defence of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorists, who have been aiming at the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. The trial of these foul murderers and traitors to the land of socialism, who had established direct connections with the German fascist secret police, was made use of by some of the leaders of the Socialist International in an attempt to break up the united front.

There are a number of countries with social-democratic governments or coalition governments in which social-democratic ministers, leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties and of the Socialist International, are taking part. But not only do these governments not make common cause with the Soviet Union in its position on the Spanish question, the only position which is in accord with the interests of the Spanish people and with the cause of the defence of democracy and peace, but by the manner in which they act they lend support to the hypocritical policy of non-intervention and actually hinder the cause of effective resistance to the fascist interventionists and murderers of the Spanish people.

Of course, the responsibility for this policy, which is most detrimental to the interests of the world proletariat, lies with the socialist leaders who are carrying it out. *But it would be against the historical truth if we were to keep silent concerning that share of responsibility which falls upon all leaders and members of the Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals.* For the leaders speak and act on their behalf, as their representatives. Inasmuch as they allow such a policy to be pursued, *they cannot disclaim responsibility for it.* They must become cognisant of the common duty history places upon them, together with the communists, to do everything to bar the way against fascism and to safeguard peace.

In the formation and extension of the People's Front of struggle against fascism and war, the greatest significance is attached to the united front of the working class itself in the main capitalist

countries, to united action on the part of the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties, as well as the trade unions of different political tendencies and, on the international arena, to joint action of the Communist and Socialist and Amsterdam International. All obstacles in the way of this united action must be removed as rapidly as possible. To this end the Communist Parties and all supporters of proletarian unity and the People's Front in the ranks of the Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals have a tremendous amount of intensive daily activity ahead of them.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International was fully aware of the fact that it is no simple task to put an end to the split in the ranks of the working class. All that the enemies of the working class, their agents and henchmen have done over the course of long decades for the purpose of dividing the forces of the working people cannot be eliminated with a wave of the hand and by mere wishes.

Our whole experience since the congress has shown still more clearly that the road to united action on the part of the working class nationally and on an international scale *is far from being a straight, smooth, paved road*. It is a pretty hard, zig-zag road, often thorny and steep. Open and covert enemies of unity never cease to throw up different kinds of obstacles and barriers along that road. Every step has to be taken after great effort, by stubborn work and struggle. There are the misguided ones who must have things explained to them patiently, so that they may become convinced. There are the waverers and those of little faith who have to be urged on all the time. There are saboteurs and double-dealers who must be ruthlessly exposed. There is a persistent struggle to be waged against the cunning sophists, the crafty politicians and practised demagogues, who do their utmost to persuade the rank and file, the politically inexperienced workers, *that two times two are not four, but three*, that the united front of the working class does not increase their power, but only leads to increased fascist aggression.

And at the same time it is necessary to be on guard against falling prey to the provocative manoeuvres of the enemies of unity, but untiringly to extend a brotherly hand to all organisations of the working people, inviting them to joint struggle even when they have avowed opponents of unity at their head. For every communist, every class-conscious worker, must not forget for a minute that the opponents of unity of the international proletariat, the Citrines or whatever else they call themselves, would be extremely gratified if, in the face of their sabotage and provocation, the communists themselves would give up the struggle for unity and refrain from consistently carrying out the People's Front policy. This would only make it easier for these leaders to carry on in their role as splitters and would save them for the time being from the severe verdict of the proletariat and of history. We must know how to carry on an unabated, ideological struggle against reformism and other anti-Marxist tendencies in the ranks of the working class movement, and at the same time fight persistently for the establishment of the united People's Front, and carefully avoid any disruption of united action in the daily struggle against fascism and war.

Twenty-two years ago, on the eve of the world imperialist war, when he was gathering together the forces of the working class for the coming struggle for socialism, the great Lenin spoke of the tremendous importance of unity in the ranks of the proletariat:

The workers really need unity. And the thing that must be understood above all else is that, apart from the workers themselves, *no one* will "give" them unity, *no one is in a position* to help their unity. Unity

cannot be “promised”—that would be an empty boast, self-deception; unity cannot be “created” out of “agreement” between little groups of intellectuals—this is an error of the saddest, most naive and ignorant type.

Unity must be *won*, and only by the workers themselves; the class-conscious workers themselves are capable of achieving this by stubborn and persistent work.

Nothing is easier than to write the word “unity” in letters a yard high, to promise unity, to “proclaim” oneself an adherent of unity. But in reality, unity can only be advanced by work and the organisation of the advanced workers, of *all* class-conscious workers . . .

This is not easy. It requires work, persistence, the rallying together of all class-conscious workers. But without such work there is no use in talking of the unity of the workers.

These remarkable words of Lenin are particularly valuable and instructive for the working class of all capitalist countries at the present period.

## 5

The whole course of events since the Seventh Congress of the Communist International provides indisputable confirmation of the vital necessity of the earliest possible realisation of its historic slogans regarding working class unity and the People’s Front of struggle against the worst enemy of mankind—fascism. The Communist International and the Communist Parties of the various countries, backed by the masses of the working people, will not cease for one moment to exert all their power in the fight to bring about this unity. They will not fall prey to any provocation whatsoever directed towards widening the split in the ranks of the working class and breaking up the People’s Front. And despite the opposition of the saboteurs in the Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals, the world proletariat will bring about its militant unity.

*In the struggle against fascism and war, not empty words, not platonic wishes, but action is needed. To achieve this action it is necessary to bring about the unification of all the forces of the working class and to carry out unswervingly the policy of the People’s Front.*

[December 1936.]

## XIV

### On the threshold of a new year

Among all the happenings of the past year, two historic events, on which the attention of the world is deservedly concentrated, stand out particularly clearly.

First, the Stalin Constitution of the USSR, which embodies what was won in the great country of socialism—the victory of socialist society in which there is no place for exploitation of man by man—a victory of genuine, completely consistent Soviet democracy.

Second, *the heroic struggle of the Spanish people* defending, arms in hand, their elementary democratic rights, their liberty and independence against fascist rebellion in their country and against fascist intervention from without.

Naturally, the historic significance of these two events and their effect on the further fate of the peoples of the world is not alike.

Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of their direct influence on the development of the People's Front in the struggle against fascism and war, these events have an inner relationship.

At the moment when the special Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets [November 1936] raised high over the world the banner of the Stalin Constitution, the banner of developed socialist democracy in the USSR, at the other end of Europe, in Spain, the mass of the people were heroically defending and are continuing to defend a democratic republic from attacks by Spanish fascists and German and Italian fascist interventionists who are trying by fire and sword to enslave the Spanish people, to destroy its elementary democratic rights and liberties, to plunder Spain and convert it into a military base for robber wars against the democratic countries of Europe, first and foremost against France.

The Stalin Constitution demonstrates to the whole world the victory of socialism, giving legislative form to the socialist society which is already built in the USSR, a society without antagonistic classes, without exploitation, without crises or unemployment. The Stalin Constitution does not limit itself to a formal proclamation of democratic liberties, the equality of all citizens of the USSR, equality of rights for all races and nations and the right to work, rest and education, but *actually* assures the necessary material conditions and means for giving effect to these rights and liberties.

The Stalin Constitution is an attractive mobilising force for the masses of the people in the capitalist countries.

The heroic struggle of the Spanish people against fascist barbarism also arouses an echo in the ranks of the world working class, and engenders a mighty movement of solidarity and aid from the peoples of other countries, and first of all from the free and happy peoples of the USSR.

This is an extremely vivid demonstration of the real possibility of the genuine democratic forces of capitalist countries rallying still more closely and effectively along with the mighty Soviet democracy against fascist barbarism and against the fascist interventionists and aggressors who are trying to disrupt the cause of peace and kindle a new world war.

The liberation of Spain from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is not the private affair of Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive mankind.

This revealing estimate of the historic significance of the struggle against fascism in Spain, given by

Comrade Stalin, is closely connected with his words on the international significance of the new Constitution of the USSR:

Today, when the turbid wave of fascism is bespattering the socialist movement of the working class and besmirching the democratic strivings of the best people of the civilised world, the new Constitution of the USSR will be an indictment of fascism, declaring that socialism and democracy are invincible. The new Constitution of the USSR will serve as moral assistance and real support for all those who today are fighting fascist barbarism.

The victory of the Spanish people over fascist reactionaries and fascist intervention, and the establishment of a strong republican parliamentary democratic regime, based on a People's Front, will decisively undermine the material political basis of fascism in Spain, and lead to further consolidation of the democratic forces in France, England and other countries, where fascism threatens to destroy the democratic rights and liberties won by the peoples.

The victory of the People's Front in Spain will be a palpable blow to the aggressive war plans of Hitler and Mussolini. It will assist the maintenance of international peace and serve as a powerful impulse for unleashing and strengthening the democratic movements of the mass of the people within Germany itself, within Italy itself, and everywhere that bloody fascism dominates.

The Spanish people are marching confidently to victory despite the tremendous trials and difficulties which they have to go through and overcome. The guarantee of this victory does not consist only in the courage and self-sacrifice which the Spanish people have already exhibited in this struggle, nor only in the wide solidarity of the working class and all advanced and progressive sections of society.

*The guarantee of victory is more especially a most remarkable weapon formed and tested in battle—the People's Front.*

Not only the communists, but also the other parties and organisations of the People's Front in Spain understand better and better that this weapon needs to be guarded, strengthened and perfected, and that it must be used with ever greater skill, displaying the maximum vigilance and determination regarding all those who, at the behest of the enemy, would try to split or shake the People's Front from within. The maximum fighting unity of all those taking part in and supporting the People's Front, the greatest solidarity and unity in action against the common enemy—this, above all, is the guarantee of victory over fascism in Spain.

At the same time it must not be forgotten that still greater strengthening of actions of solidarity by the international proletariat and all democratic forces is necessary for hastening and facilitating the victory of the Spanish people, who are defending with their blood not only their own freedom and independence but also the democratic liberties of other peoples and the cause of peace.

Platonic, passive sympathy for the Spanish people is far from being real aid, while the policy of systematic retreat before fascist intervention, which is becoming ever more insolent, only makes more difficult the struggle of the Spanish people and increases the number of its sacrifices.

On the threshold of the New Year, one can say without exaggeration, there is just now no higher duty for the international proletariat, for the people of all countries, for all honest elements of mankind, than that of increasing in every way the aid to the Spanish people so as to ensure their victory.

There is no more imperative duty than that of influencing public opinion and governments with the aim of ending the ostrich-like policy of hiding the head in the sand when confronted with unbridled

fascist intervention. There is no more vital task than that of supporting by deeds the peace policy of Soviet democracy which aims at stopping fascist intervention, curbing the aggressors and defending the independence of the democratic rights and liberties of the people.

[December 1936.]

## XV

### The tenth anniversary of *Stato Operaio*

*Stato Operaio*, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party of Italy, began to appear ten years ago at a time of exceptionally great difficulty for the working class and communist movements of Italy, at a time when fascism had driven the Communist Party deeply underground, organised the most ferocious terror against it and destroyed all the independent organisations and remnants of the liberties of the Italian working people.

At that time the Italian communists were faced with very difficult and complicated tasks. These did not only consist in holding high the banner of the party before the working class and all working people in Italy, while courageously facing persecution, exile, prison, torture and death. The tasks facing the Communist Party at that time consisted first and foremost in preventing fascism from isolating the communist vanguard from the working people, in preserving, extending and strengthening the connections between the communist organisations and the urban and rural workers and the peasants. The party had to exert all its efforts so as to march at the head of the daily struggle of the working people for bread and their rights, so as to direct this struggle towards the overthrow of the bloody dictatorship of fascism. The party had to bar the way to the extension of the ideological influence of fascism among the working people, whom the fascists had forcibly driven into their own organisations.

The Communist Party as a whole did not immediately understand all these tasks. It failed to change its slogans, its methods of work and forms of organisation with the necessary rapidity. This tardiness was utilised by fascism and cost the party heavy losses.

But the merit of the Italian communists, who were the first to have to work and fight under conditions of fascist dictatorship, lies in the fact that in a situation fraught with the greatest difficulties, and in spite of losses sustained and mistakes committed, they never lost courage in the face of the brutality of fascism, but conducted an incessant struggle under the leadership of the Communist International to convert their party into a true Bolshevik Party, striving bravely to correct their mistakes, to do away with sectarianism and right opportunism, and to master the great principles of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin.

*Stato Operaio* was one of the chief weapons of this struggle. Striving to educate the party's cadres in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, the magazine helped to provide the whole of the working class of Italy with this education and revolutionary orientation. While conducting an incessant ideological struggle against fascism, the magazine at the same time became one of the factors in rallying all the anti-fascist forces in the country. Herein lies the tremendous importance of the work performed by your magazine, to which, on behalf of the Communist International, I now send fraternal militant greetings.

The policy of Italian fascism today is a criminal policy of aggression and war. Having destroyed the independence of the Ethiopian people in blood and flame, Mussolini is now engaged in armed intervention against the Spanish people, which is unwilling to submit to fascist dictatorship, and is conducting a heroic struggle in defence of its liberty and national independence. This policy of furious military aggression pursued by Italian fascism, which is resulting in a continuous decline in the economic position of Italy and the impoverishment of the Italian working people, is in contradiction to

the vital interests not only of the working class, but of the whole Italian people. This policy, which is being pursued in close alliance with German fascism, is actually making the destiny of the Italian people dependent upon the fascist rulers of Germany, who are thrusting the peoples of Europe into a bloody catastrophe. This policy is in glaring contradiction to the democratic revolutionary traditions embodied in the immortal figure of Garibaldi, hero of the Italian people, to the traditions which are the inalienable inheritance of the Italian people. This has been understood by the Italian soldiers sent by the fascists to Spain who have now gone over to the ranks of the Republican troops.

The Italian workers and peasants who have contributed glorious pages to the history of the international working class movement, to the history of the struggle for bread, freedom and peace among the peoples, today have the primary task of putting an end to the criminal intervention of Italian fascism in Spain, of putting an end to Mussolini's military aggression, which is a menace to the peoples of the whole world. The example set by the volunteers of the Garibaldi Battalion, who are heroically fighting in the ranks of the People's Republican Army of Spain, should call forth in Italy a wave of enthusiasm and the will to struggle. It is precisely in Italy itself that the chains of fascist oppression must and will be broken once and for all by the daily struggle of the workers and farm labourers, peasants, artisans, young people, progressive intellectuals and all working people.

One of the necessary conditions for bringing this about is the task of unmasking, holding up to shame and driving out of the ranks of the working people the Trotskyite agents of fascism—this gang, without ideals or principles, of diversionists, spies and terrorists, who organise terrorist acts against the leaders of the great land of socialism, and do their utmost to prevent the establishment of working class unity and the development of the People's Front movement against fascism and war.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Italian communists understand all the seriousness of the tasks which confront them today, and that they will make every effort to solve these tasks.

On the tenth anniversary of the founding of the militant organ of the Italian Communist Party, I send special greetings to the glorious fighters of the Italian party—to Gramsci, Terraccini, Parodi, to all comrades, prisoners of fascism, to all those who remain unbroken by persecution or by being deprived of their liberty. The Communist International is proud of these comrades. The communists and working people of the whole world will never forget that the struggle for the release of these foremost proletarian fighters is the duty of all who hate fascism, of all who love liberty and peace.

From the bottom of my heart I wish *Stato Operaio* to continue in the future to fulfil its role successfully as the theoretical organ of the Communist Party of Italy, the leader of the ideological struggle against fascism, the educator of real Marxist cadres of the working class and tireless fighters for the establishment of a mighty anti-fascist People's Front in Italy.

[May 1937.]

## XVI

### The supreme demand of the present moment

#### 1

The entire international situation at the present moment is marked by fascism's feverish preparations for a new division of the world by a war of conquest, and at the same time by the establishment of international working class unity and the gathering of the forces of the workers, the supporters of democracy and of peace, for the struggle against fascism and war.

Fascist aggressors in the West and in the East are making all possible haste to come to an agreement on the ways, means and objects of their aggression.

Berlin, Rome and Tokyo are linking up their forces by various pacts and military agreements.

The intervention of Hitler and Mussolini in Spain, their war against the Spanish people, as well as the acts of aggression of the Japanese militarists in China, are without doubt stages in the preparation of a big war.

In spite of the difference of interest existing between these war incendiaries, they have joined forces to carry on undermining work in the non-fascist countries which stand for the maintenance of peace; they are in every way supporting the reactionary parties and groups in these countries, organising *coups d'état* against governments and regimes which are inconvenient to them and their aims, and everywhere sowing counter-revolutionary anarchy.

Their criminal hand may be seen in the treacherous activity of de la Rocque and Doriot in France, Degrelle in Belgium, Henlein in Czechoslovakia, in the machinations of the fascists in the Scandinavian and Balkan countries, in Hungary and Austria, in Poland and the Baltic States, and in the policy of the pro-Japanese elements in China, as well as in the Hearst circles of the United States of America.

Vitally interested in weakening to the maximum degree the capacity of peoples to defend themselves against fascist aggression, in disorganising the labour movement and disrupting the People's Front that is being built up, the fascist aggressors, with this end in view, utilise the Trotskyites everywhere as their agents.

They give their patronage to the Fourth International, this medley of secret service agents and renegades and traitors to the working class.

The fury of the fascists is directed especially against the Soviet Union, against the great land of socialism, as being the most powerful bulwark of peace, liberty and the progress of the whole of mankind, as being the biggest obstacle in the way of fascist aggression.

There can be no doubt that the fascist rulers of Germany and Italy, and the fascist military clique of Japan, would already have kindled the flames of a world war had there been wanting so mighty a sentinel of peace as the Soviet Union, had not serious advances taken place in the ranks of the international proletariat in the direction of strengthening the struggle against fascism and establishing the united People's Front, had the Spanish people not so heroically succeeded in beating off the attacks of fascism, had the French proletariat not established the anti-fascist People's Front, and had the Chinese people not taken the path of uniting their forces in a nationwide front against the Japanese marauders.

But all this has only hindered the fulfilment of the insidious plans of the fascist warmakers.

They have not given up their plans, and never will do so voluntarily.

After the rout of Mussolini's fascist hordes at Guadalajara, the foreign interventionists are hurling new armed forces against the Spanish people.

While making peaceable declarations to Lansbury, a labour leader suffering from childish naïveté and political blindness, Hitler is intensifying his preparations for dealing a blow at Czechoslovakia, the destruction of which as an independent state is necessary, according to the fascist view, to "pacify Europe."

The German fascists are preparing to engulf Austria, preparing fascist *coups d'état* in Belgium and a number of other countries.

The Japanese militarists in their turn are trying in every way to smash up the democratic opposition in Japan itself, so as the more aggressively to hurl themselves against the Chinese people.

The experience of many years has gone to prove that the fascist instigators of war are not to be held back by persuasion or arguments. There is only one effective means of curbing them, and that is the united and unbroken struggle of the masses of the people against fascism in the different countries and on an international scale. Only united action of the international proletariat rallying around itself all sections of the workers, all progressive and democratic elements, all genuine supporters of peace, can succeed in curbing the impudently brazen fascists and putting an end to their robber plans once and for all.

All recent events go to show that in those places where the working class takes action against fascism with unanimity and determination, where the workers rally in a united anti-fascist front, fascism is unable to enslave the working class, or to subjugate a nation which has decided to defend to the utmost, and by all possible means, its rights, liberty and independence.

The nine months' struggle of the Spanish people, who are sturdily beating off the armed attacks of fascism, the successes of the People's Front in France, and the growing anti-Japanese movement in China, have already led to results which undoubtedly go to confirm this truth, as well as the entire historical significance of the united People's Front for the struggle against fascism and war. Living examples now exist in a number of countries for everyone to convince himself that in those places where the People's Front has been established, where the masses resist fascism and do not follow the rotten theory of "Don't tease the fascist beast," there fascism meets with defeat. The successes of the People's Front in the non-fascist countries not only bar fascism's path in those countries, but also exert an irresistible influence over the mass of the people in the countries of fascist dictatorship, and undermine the basis of this dictatorship.

The first serious defeats which the fascist interventionists have met with in Spain, notably at Guadalajara, have already raised the curtain which covers up the internal rottenness, contradictions and instability of the fascist regime, and have led to an increase of anti-fascist feeling in Italy and Germany.

At the present period, history is allocating a great mission to the world's working class, namely, that of saving mankind from the barbarism of fascism and from the horrors of the new imperialist bloodbath

being prepared by it.

At the present stage, the specific way of fulfilling the historical mission of the international proletariat is as follows:

To help the Spanish people to rid themselves of fascist violators and interventionists.

To help the people of Germany and Italy to smash the chains of the fascist regime.

To help the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese marauders.

To help the small nations to defend their liberty and independence.

To establish an impregnable barrier against fascist aggression in the West and in the East.

And the fulfilment of this mission is quite within the powers of the international proletariat, if they act in unison and in an organised fashion. The very foremost detachment of the international proletariat, the working class of the Soviet Union, is a force which is organised as a state. It stands at the head of a mighty state, which is on guard for the peace and liberty of all peoples. The working class of the USSR, under the guidance of the great party of Lenin and Stalin, overthrew the landowners and capitalists on one-sixth of the earth's surface, established the proletarian dictatorship, achieved the triumph of socialism, and are realising genuine democracy as consolidated in the new Constitution of the USSR.

When speaking of the tremendous international significance of this Constitution in his report at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, Comrade Stalin said:

Today, when the turbid wave of fascism is bespattering the socialist movement of the working class and besmirching the democratic strivings of the best people in the civilised world, the new Constitution of the USSR will be an indictment against fascism, declaring that socialism and democracy are invincible. The new Constitution of the USSR will serve as moral assistance and real support to all those who are today fighting fascist barbarism.

Another heroic detachment of the international proletariat, the working class of Spain, is in the front line fighting against fascism and is drawing its ranks and those of the Spanish people ever more closely together in the anti-fascist People's Front. The Spanish working class, headed by the People's Front government, is the leading force of the armed people, and is defending not only the liberty and independence of its own country, but also the interests of the entire working class of the world and the general cause of democracy and peace. The working class of France, which began by establishing the united front in its own ranks, has linked its trade unions into a single Confederation of Labour, which now embraces more than 5,000,000 workers, and has established a People's Front against which the dark intrigues of French fascism are being shattered. The successes of the People's Front in France are giving a powerful impulse to the movement of the People's Front in other countries.

For the first time in the history of America, the working class of the United States is displaying its independence as a class, uniting its forces into mass trade unions and actively taking the lead of the democratic and progressive forces in the country against reaction and fascism.

In Britain the working class, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population and possesses a powerful organisation, constitutes a tremendous force, whose relative weight in the international working class movement is increased by the special position occupied by Britain in world politics.

Were militant unity of action between all the forces of the labour and communist movement brought about, the British working class would be in a position not only to drive back reaction of all

kinds in their own country, but also to play an important role in the international struggle against fascism and war.

Without indicating all other countries in detail, it may be remarked without any exaggeration that the movement for working class unity is growing, even if not at the same pace everywhere, not only in the countries which are menaced by fascism and the aggression of the fascist states, but also in the countries of fascist dictatorship.

The establishment of unity of action by the international working class against fascism, the common enemy, the mortal enemy of the whole of mankind, is the basic *urgent task facing the working class organisations throughout the world, the supreme demand of the moment.*

This is a difficult and big task, one going beyond the bounds of the ordinary current tasks of the labour movement. But if this task is solved, it will bring about a fundamental change in the course of political events, will give them a new direction in the interests of the workers, and will make of the working class and its organisations a force exerting tremendous influence over the fate of their own people and also over the fate of the whole of mankind.

What is required, first and foremost, to fulfil this task of such tremendous historic importance?

First, what is required is that all working class organisations should recognise the need for concentrating the struggle against the *main enemy*, against the clenched fist of the most reactionary section of the big bourgeoisie, against fascism. What is required is that, in determining their policy, all working class organisations should make their starting point the defence *of the interests of their own class*, and should not act to the advantage of the interests of the bourgeoisie. By making their starting point their own class interests, the working class and its organisations thereby defend the interests of all the exploited, of the entire people. An end must be put to the policy of reconciling the interests of the exploited and the exploiters. One cannot be at one and the same time on the side of the financial magnates and on the side of the working people. One cannot, as is said, serve at one and the same time both God and Mammon. One cannot be for the rebel generals and for the Spanish people. One cannot be in favour of a victory of the Spanish people, and seek a compromise with General Franco. One cannot pledge one's sympathies for the Spanish Republic in words, and in deeds refuse it the means of defence in order to oblige the British Conservatives. One cannot declare one's readiness to carry on a struggle against fascism and at the same time intrigue against the communists, the most consistent fighters against the fascist violators.

Second, what is needed is to *defeat the enemies of the united front* in the ranks of the labour movement. The mass of the workers are thirsting for united action, but a non-critical attitude towards "authoritative people" and a badly understood loyalty to their organisation frequently prevent workers from opposing those leaders who are frustrating the establishment of a united front by their dishonest manoeuvres. Since these leaders have no desire to subordinate themselves to the general and supreme will of the working class, since they prefer to serve the bourgeoisie and place their personal careerist interests above the interests of the working class, it is the elementary duty of every working class organisation to find within itself sufficient courage, to find ways and means to fulfil its will to unity despite all obstacles.

Third, it is necessary that all those who are carrying on a campaign of slander against the USSR be given the most determined rebuff. The struggle against the USSR is a struggle against socialism, the

great aim of the working class recorded in the programme of the overwhelming majority of working class organisations throughout the world. The struggle against the USSR is a struggle against the greatest victory of the working class in the history of mankind, a victory which multiplies by many times the forces of the entire international proletariat and working people. The struggle against the USSR is a most important part of the insidious plan of the fascists aiming at splitting up the forces of the international proletariat so as the more easily to attack them separately, to destroy the labour movement, and to place the working class and all the working people in the capitalist countries under the yoke of the fascist dictatorship.

One cannot be an enemy of fascism and at the same time carry on a struggle against the USSR—the vanguard of the international anti-fascist movement. One cannot be a socialist or even an honest democrat if one is not resolutely and entirely on the side of the Soviet Union, the great land of socialism and real democracy for the whole of the people. The attitude towards the Soviet Union is in essence the touchstone of the devotion of every individual active in the working class movement and of every working class organisation, to the interests of the working class and their loyalty to socialism.

Fourth, what is needed is, while carrying on the struggle against fascism, to be absolutely merciless in dealing blows at *its Trotskyite agents*, who are a gang of spies, diversionists, terrorists and police provocateurs in the service of German fascism and the Japanese militarists. The Trotskyite degenerates, on instructions from the fascist intelligence services, are carrying on subversive work against the land of socialism, are doing everything possible to deepen the split in the working class movement and to prevent its unity, and are striving to disintegrate the People's Front movement from within. Everywhere their actions are those of wreckers of the working class movement and disorganisers of the struggle of the masses of the people against fascism. International proletarian unity against fascism and war is unthinkable and impossible unless a struggle is carried on against the Trotskyite agents of fascism.

Such are the most *elementary conditions* necessary to bring about unity of action of the international proletariat against fascism and war. But it is precisely the activity of those leaders who have the decisive word in determining the policy of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals that runs counter to the fulfilment of even these elementary conditions. Not only do they systematically reject the proposals of the Communist Parties and the Communist International for joint action in defence of the Spanish people, but they suppress the initiative of those organisations of the Second International which take part in a common front with the communists against fascism and the German and Italian interventionists in Spain. In vain did the delegates of the Socialist Party and the General Workers' Union of Spain endeavour, at the London Conference of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, to break through the wall of cold indifference to the heroic struggle of the Spanish people. In vain did they appeal to these Internationals for support of the struggle of Republican Spain by means of joint action by all organisations of the working class. The Spanish delegates left the conference profoundly disillusioned. Both Internationals in the decisions they adopted did not go beyond the bounds of declarations and decisions acceptable to the British Conservatives.

The enemies of working class unity, the reactionary leaders in the ranks of these Internationals, not only sabotage decisive, all-round support for the Spanish people, but they go further. They are adopting all measures to split the People's Front in Spain itself, carry on intrigues, sow mistrust, set the

Socialist leaders against the Communist Party, thereby weakening the stronghold of the People's Front and the defensive capacity of the Spanish Republic. In addition, at the present time, when the example of the French proletariat, which has established unity of action and on the basis of the People's Front has driven fascism back, is raising the spirit of the workers of all countries, the reactionary leaders are weaving a network of intrigues directed towards sowing mistrust between the Socialist and Communist Parties of France, towards undermining the People's Front and preparing the conditions for the establishment of a coalition government of the bourgeoisie and Socialist Party, directed against the communists and the People's Front movement. In this way they sacrifice the interests of the working class for the benefit of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie. As far as these leaders are concerned, the main enemy is not fascism, but communism. As far as the Citrines, Bevins and Adlers are concerned, the main enemy is not Franco, but Dolores Ibárruri, heroine of the Spanish people; not de la Rocque and Hitler, but Thorez and Thälmann.

### 3

It would be naïve to think that working class unity of action could be achieved by exhorting, persuading or casting a spell over the reactionary leaders. International proletarian unity cannot be achieved without a stubborn struggle of all the adherents of unity against the overt and covert enemies of unity.

Voices are sometimes raised in the socialist ranks to the effect that the communists, by their open and clear-cut criticism of the conduct of the leaders of the Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals, render difficult the establishment of a united front. But is it possible to achieve the establishment of the united front without engaging in resolute criticism of those who hinder it by all possible means? What sort of militant members of the labour movement could we be, if we did not openly state the full truth on a question of such great importance to the whole working class?

He who is silent about or attempts to cover up the harmful actions of the reactionary leaders in the ranks of the working class is doing no service to the cause of working class unity. He who supposedly in the interests of the united proletarian front gives up the struggle against the enemies of this united front and gives up criticising reformism, which subordinates the working class movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie, is doing a bad service to the working class.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, in proclaiming the policy of the united proletarian and People's Front, especially pointed out that:

Joint action with the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations not only does not preclude, but, on the contrary, *renders still more necessary* the serious and well-founded criticism of reformism, of social-democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and the patient exposition of the principles and programme of communism to the social-democratic workers.

He who does not follow these directions of the Seventh Congress is a poor fighter for the working class unity and for the People's Front against fascism and war. He who thinks that the existence of the People's Front frees us from the necessity of waging a struggle for the basic principles and fundamental interests of the working class movement against theories and viewpoints hostile to the working class is deeply mistaken. The cause of the united front will not suffer from such a struggle; it only stands to gain from it. Moreover, such a struggle is a necessary condition for the real development and consolidation of the united People's Front of struggle against fascism and war.

It should never be forgotten that in carrying on a consistent and stubborn struggle for the establishment of a united People's Front the communists are not pursuing a policy of establishing an unprincipled bloc; they are pursuing a policy based on principle.

When we carry on a resolute struggle for the defence of democratic rights and liberties against reaction and fascism, we do so as Marxists, as consistent proletarian revolutionaries, and not as bourgeois democrats and reformists. Where we come forward in defence of the national interests of our own people, in defence of their independence and liberty, we do not become nationalists or bourgeois patriots; we do so as proletarian revolutionaries and true sons of our people. When we come forward in defence of religious freedom, against the fascist persecution of Catholics and Protestants, we do not retreat from our Marxist outlook, which is free of all religious superstitions.

When carrying out the policy of the People's Front against fascism and war, when participating in joint action with other parties and organisations of the working people against the common enemy, and fighting for the vital interests and democratic rights of the working people, and for peace and liberty, the communists do not lose sight of the historic need for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, which has outlived its day, and for the achievement of socialism, which brings emancipation to the working class and the whole of mankind.

Correctly to combine the operation of the policy of the People's Front with the propaganda of Marxism, with the raising of the theoretical level of the cadres of the working class movement, with the mastery of the great teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as a guide to action—all this we must learn and teach our cadres and the masses day after day. We must not allow a situation where "you cannot see the wood for the trees." We must not allow practice to become divorced from theory, a gap to develop between the fulfilment of the urgent tasks of today, and the further perspectives and aims of the working class struggle. It must not be forgotten that the further the People's Front movement develops, and the more complicated the tactical problems of the movement, the more necessary does it become to make a genuine Marxist analysis of the situation and of the relation of the opposing forces, the more necessary does it become to retain the reliable compass of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The proletariat is the most consistent fighter for the establishment and consolidation of the united People's Front against fascism, both on a national and international scale. Without the proletariat, the People's Front is altogether impossible. The proletariat is the main driving force of any anti-fascist people's movement, of any mass movement in defence of democracy and peace. The proletariat fights jointly with the democratic petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry and intellectuals against their common enemy. But the proletariat must rely primarily on its own forces, on the unity of the ranks of the working class movement in each country and on the unity of the international working class movement. For the more united and organised the proletariat is, the more truly will it be able to defend its class interests and the better will it be able to fulfil its leading role in the ranks of the united People's Front.

Hence the communists and all class-conscious workers are faced with the task of sparing no efforts, of stopping before no difficulties, of not leaving even the smallest possibilities unused in order to advance the cause of united working class action on a national and international scale. This must be developed until trade union unity is fully achieved and a united mass party of the proletariat is established. And here it must be clearly stated that the sooner proletarian unity is achieved, the greater

will be the successes in establishing and consolidating the united People's Front, the stronger the Communist Parties themselves become numerically, organisationally and ideologically, and the more they will enjoy the confidence and support of the best and most advanced elements of the working class and of the working people generally. For the communists are the most resolute and consistent fighters for the achievement of working class unity on a national and international scale.

As far back as the dawn of the establishment of the international communist movement, Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto*, in defining the historical role of the communists in the ranks of the international proletariat, declared:

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole . . . The communists, therefore, are, on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

True sons of their class, defenders of the interests of their people, free from all connection with and dependence on the bourgeoisie, thoroughly consistent internationalists, the communists will best of all be able to play the role of *a uniting link* in the ranks of the proletariat itself and also among all the parties, organisations and groups of the working people, democratic petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and intellectuals in the struggle against fascism and war.

It follows, therefore, that in order to achieve success in the struggle for working class unity, for the united People's Front, it is necessary to work every day untiringly to strengthen and consolidate the ranks of the Communist Parties and of the entire Communist International. This is dictated by the vital interests both of the international proletariat and of the whole of advanced and progressive mankind.

[June 1937.]

## XVII

### The lessons of Almería

The unparalleled act of provocation by German warships in the Spanish ports of Ibiza and Almería, accompanied by the bombardment of the port of Almería on May 31, 1937, can only be regarded as an open and brazen act of war of the Hitler government against the Spanish Republic.

On the same day the German and Italian governments announced their withdrawal from the so-called Non-Intervention Committee, issued the order for the dispatch of further warships to Spanish waters, and declared that henceforth they would act "according to their own discretion" in relation to the Spanish Republic. In this connection Blomberg, German War Minister, flew to Rome. The provocative character of the whole behaviour of the German and Italian fascists is obvious.

During the last few months, especially since the débacle of the Italian troops at Guadalajara, it has become clear that, in spite of the help given to General Franco by fascist Germany and Italy, he cannot avoid defeat. But the defeat of Franco would mean the collapse of the whole fascist intervention in Spain. To avoid this defeat and its serious consequences for fascism, the notorious heroes of the burning of the Reichstag are resorting to new acts of provocation in the efforts to free their hands completely for further military action against the Spanish people, and for the seizure and plunder of Spain. No inventions and evasions of the fascists can hide this fact.

The allegation of the Hitler government that Spanish Republican aeroplanes attacked a German warship engaged in performing "control duties" is an out-and-out lie. First, as clearly shown by authentic information, the fascist cruiser *Deutschland* was not attacked, but itself attacked aeroplanes of Republican Spain. It was only after this that it was bombarded by the Republican aeroplanes. Second, the German warship had no business at all in a port occupied by the rebels. As is well known, the control in this sector devolved on French ships, and consequently the *Deutschland* could not perform any international control functions in these waters. That, nonetheless, the cruiser was there only goes to prove that it was helping the rebels. It is, therefore, the height of fascist cynicism that fascist warships, which are supposed to ensure non-intervention, should themselves bombard a Spanish town, and that the fascists should now represent themselves as victims who have been subjected to attack and insult.

As is well known, the attack on Almería is not the first case of barbarous behaviour by the fascists. The last few weeks have continually brought to light new facts of fascist sadism, ferocity and extermination of thousands of peaceful citizens, as well as the destruction of peaceful towns. Not so long ago the ancient town of Guernica, the place traditionally held sacred by the freedom-loving Basque people, was destroyed by fascist aviators. For months, the fascist rebels and interventionists have been attempting the destruction of heroic Madrid, and they wish to raze Bilbao to the ground.

By bombarding Almería and taking further war measures, the Hitler government desires once more to confront public opinion with a "*fait accompli*." Those in power in Berlin and Rome are again speculating on the non-fascist states and progressive public opinion allowing themselves to be intimidated and giving way to fascist extortion.

It is no secret that the helplessness of the League of Nations in the face of the seizure of Ethiopia,

and the continual concessions made by the biggest Western states to the German and Italian interventionists in Spain, encouraged and still encourage the brazen aggressiveness of the governments of Berlin and Rome. And what the fascist bosses in Berlin and Rome are counting on is that the international working class movement will not be in a position to muster its scattered forces for a victorious struggle against fascist aggression. It is well known that the fascist beasts, cowardly and hysterical as they actually are, fear nothing so much as that their aggression and acts of provocation should meet with courageous and resolute resistance from the united working class and the whole of progressive mankind.

The destruction of Almería and the murder of peaceful inhabitants, women and children, by the fascist interventionists has aroused a storm of popular indignation in all countries. Public opinion is rising, millions of working people are being set in motion. But what has to be done is to organise these forces for effective resistance to the fascist violators.

In connection with the situation created by the bombardment of Almería, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the General Confederation of Labour in Spain have appealed to the Labour and Socialist International, the Communist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions to take measures to organise joint action in defence of the Spanish people. The fullest support should be given to this initiative of the Spanish workers' organisations, which corresponds to the feelings, thoughts and interests of millions of working people, and which should be put into effect in all countries. *Never before was it so essential as just now.* The Spanish workers' organisations are absolutely correct in calling on the world proletariat "to take the most energetic joint action in order to mobilise proletarian solidarity of all peoples who are determined to frustrate the realisation of the plans of fascism."

The many million forces of the international labour movement must be immediately mobilised against the bandit military action of German and Italian fascism.

Everybody understands that there must be no delay in this matter. In such a serious situation, it is absolutely clear that the Socialist, Communist and Trade Union Internationals ought to call a joint conference, establish a permanent contact committee, outline all the necessary measures and immediately proceed to put them into operation, *i.e.*, do what is being demanded by the Spanish socialists, communists and trade union members who are fighting side by side and shedding their blood in the struggle against the fascist violators.

The brazen attack on Almería may become the beginning of events pregnant with serious consequences for all peoples if forces are not mobilised in time to curb the fascist interventionists. The Spanish comrades are perfectly correct in stressing, in their appeal to the international proletariat, that in this struggle against German and Italian intervention it is not only the liberty and independence of Spain that are at stake, but also the maintenance of *universal peace*, the struggle against fascism, "the intention of which is to kindle a *world conflagration*."

This is a fact about which there can be no doubt whatsoever. Therefore, all the more urgent is the duty of all working class organisations immediately to declare for the establishment of *international* unity of action, and also for united action by the working people in the various countries. Only the *united* forces of the whole international labour movement and of all sincere friends of peace can ensure that the criminal designs of the fascist barbarians and instigators of war are finally frustrated.

One must really be politically blind not to see the tremendous significance and consequences of *coordinated* action by the working class and its organisations in each country and throughout the world. By such action it would be possible to rouse and mobilise the widest masses of the people. The British Conservatives who are sponsoring the machinations of Hitler and Mussolini would be driven into a corner. The British and French governments would be compelled to adopt energetic measures against the intervention of German and Italian fascism. It would be possible to achieve the withdrawal of the armed forces of Germany and Italy from Spain, and the recall of the warships of the interventionists from Spanish waters. It would be possible to secure the operation of international law in relation to the Spanish Republic. It would be possible to ensure that the fascist interventionists and conquerors should be regarded, as they deserve to be regarded, as aggressors, bandits and pirates. Joint action of the working class throughout the world would provide the Spanish Republic and its heroic fighters not only with immeasurable moral aid, but also with colossal material aid. All this would undoubtedly hasten the victory of the Spanish people. Finally, a joint offensive by the progressive forces of the whole world would make it possible to curb the instigators of war.

A tremendous, historic responsibility rests with those upon whom the decision of the Labour and Socialist International and of the International Federation of Trade Unions now depends. Nothing can justify the fact that up to now attempts at organising joint action by the international proletariat in defence of the Spanish people have been nullified. This *must not and cannot continue*. The whole situation is such as to demand that an absolutely clear position be taken up by every working class organisation, by every leader of the workers' movement, on the questions of united action by the world proletariat in defence of the Spanish people.

*One cannot sit between two stools*. Every worker, every honest socialist, is necessarily faced with the question: what sort of a *labour* international is one that turns down united front proposals when millions of workers affiliated to it imperatively demand united action? What sort of a *Socialist* international is one that turns down demands which come from its own sections, and even from such a section of it as the Socialist Party of Spain, which stands together with the Communist Party in the front line of the struggle against fascism? What sort of labour *and socialist* leaders are those who would disrupt the united action of the international proletariat, when it is just this unity that is the *decisive means* of curbing the fascist violators? What sort of bearers of international working class solidarity are those who, by disrupting united action of the international proletariat, help fascism to crush the working class movement and enslave the peoples one after another?

The fate of the Spanish people and the cause of universal peace urgently demand unity of action on the part of all international working class organisations. The bombardment of Almería is a serious lesson to all working people, irrespective of their political views or the organisations to which they belong. It is a serious warning against further disunity of the forces of the labour movement.

Unity of action of the international proletariat must and shall be established.

[July 1937.]

## XVIII

### On unity of action

#### *Correspondence between the Communist International and the Labour and Socialist International*

##### 1. RADIOGRAM FROM VALENCIA TO DIMITROV

Georgi Dimitrov,  
General Secretary,  
Communist International,  
Moscow.

A National-Socialist naval squadron, fulfilling control functions in waters near Almería, has just perpetrated on our town an act of base aggression which surpasses all the crimes committed by German and Italian fascism in its invasion of our country. Violating all rules of international law, trampling upon international treaties, German naval guns have bombarded the civil population of Almería and inflicted loss of life.

In face of this military action which is an outrageous expression of the war intentions of fascism, we workers and peasants of Spain, the masses of working people who are fighting in the front ranks of the struggle against national and international fascism and who are defending our freedom—and thereby also defending the proletariat of the world from the horrors of a monstrous war—appeal to you. We appeal to you, comrades of the Socialist and Labour International, the Communist International, the International Federation of Trade Unions, and the entire active proletariat in the ranks of the workers' parties and trade union organisations, and urge you to strengthen your solidarity with the Spanish people whose homes and unarmed children are once again subjected to criminal attack.

We call upon you to resist the fascist governments which, with unprecedented brutality, attack our civil population, menacing the lives of the aged, of women and children. We once again appeal to you, the vanguard of the world proletariat, to the glorious standard bearers of the struggle of the proletariat, to take the most energetic joint action in order to mobilise proletarian solidarity of all peoples who are determined to frustrate the realisation of the plans of fascism, the intention of which is to kindle a *world conflagration*.

Long live international solidarity of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism.

Forward, together with the people of Spain.

Forward for peace and freedom throughout the world.

*On behalf of the Workers' Socialist Party of Spain, RAMÓN LAMONEDA, Secretary.*

*On behalf of the Communist Party of Spain, JOSÉ DÍAZ, General Secretary.*

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the General Workers' Union of Spain, FELIPE PRETEL,  
Acting General Secretary.*

[1 June 1937.]

## 2. REPLY OF DIMITROV

To Ramón Lamonedá, Secretary of the Workers' Socialist Party of Spain; to José Díaz, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain; to Felipe Pretel, Acting General Secretary of the General Workers' Union of Spain, Valencia.

In reply to your radiogram of June 1 we draw your attention to the fact that the Executive Committee of the Communist International fully supports your proposal as to the organisation of joint action by the Labour and Socialist International, the Communist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions in defence of the Spanish people who have been subjected to an onslaught by German and Italian fascism.

Steadfastly pursuing the policy of establishing united action by the international proletariat in the struggle against fascism and war, standing unreservedly on the side of the Spanish people, engaged in a heroic struggle against the fascist rebels and interventionists, the Communist International has on several occasions proposed to the Labour and Socialist International the organisation of joint action by the international workers' organisations as the most decisive means in the struggle against fascism, in the defence of democracy and peace. Unfortunately these proposals have not up till now produced any positive results by reason of the fact that they have been turned down by the leadership of the Labour and Socialist International.

Taking account of the seriousness of the position that has arisen after the bombardment of Almería, and on the basis of your appeal, we are taking steps to establish contact with the Labour and Socialist International.

Today we have dispatched the following telegram to de Brouckere, Chairman of the Labour and Socialist International: [ . . . ]

We shall do everything we possibly can to ensure that the international proletariat finally achieves the unity so urgently required in respect to the defence of the Spanish people against the fascist barbarians and to maintain international peace.

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,*  
GEORGI DIMITROV, *General Secretary.*

[3 June 1937.]

## 3. TELEGRAM FROM DIMITROV TO LOUIS DE BROUCKERE

To L. de Brouckere,  
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Labour and Socialist International,  
Brussels.

We have received an appeal from Valencia, from the Socialist Party, Communist Party and the General Workers' Union of Spain suggesting joint action by international working class organisations in defence

of the Spanish people who have been subjected to an onslaught by German and Italian fascism. We presume that you also have received this appeal.

In this connection we draw the fact to your attention that we are in full agreement with the proposals of the Spanish comrades and entirely support their initiative. We on our part propose that a joint contact commission of all three Internationals (Communist International, Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions) be established to bring about international united action against the military intervention of Germany and Italy in Spain. We are prepared to discuss any proposals that either you or the International Federation of Trade Unions may make in respect to the defence of the Spanish people.

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,*  
GEORGI DIMITROV, *General Secretary.*

[3 June 1937.]

#### **4. TELEGRAM FROM DE BROUCKERE TO DIMITROV**

Georgi Dimitrov,  
General Secretary,  
Communist International,  
Moscow.

Have received similar appeal from Valencia. Fully realise necessity of energetic action and more determined than ever to undertake it. We informed our Spanish friends of our intentions even before receipt of their message. Our International will do its duty fully under its own responsibility. As you know, neither the chairman nor the secretary of our International has the necessary powers to participate on its behalf in the committee which you propose.

DE BROUCKERE.

[4 June 1937.]

#### **5. REPLY OF DIMITROV TO DE BROUCKERE**

Georgi Dimitrov,  
General Secretary,  
Communist International,  
Moscow.

To de Brouckere,  
Chairman of the Labour and Socialist International,  
Brussels.

Received your reply to the telegram of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in which, on the basis of the appeal of the Spanish workers' organisations, we proposed the creation of a contact committee of the three Internationals with the aim of establishing united action in defence of the Spanish people.

Unfortunately your telegram does not give a clear answer to the concrete proposal made by us. Your reference to the fact that neither the chairman nor the secretary of the Labour and Socialist International has the power to decide the question of creating a contact committee does not seem convincing to us, if only because you could request such powers from the corresponding authorities of your International.

Nor can it be assumed that the absence of formal powers is decisive when it is a question of the life and independence of the Spanish people subjected to the attack by German and Italian interventionists.

Nor can we share your opinion that the Labour and Socialist International is fully carrying out its duty, inasmuch as it continues to reject the unification of all the forces of the international proletariat in defence of the Spanish people.

The solidarity movement in favour of the Spanish people is as yet far from being adequate, chiefly because the actions of the international organisations are disunited. This movement would acquire a tenfold greater force if, in spite of all the difficulties, international unity of action could be established.

It is precisely with this object in view that we propose the creation of a contact committee of the three Internationals. If, however, for one reason or another, you consider the form of contact proposed by us to be unacceptable, the interests of the common cause of aiding the Spanish people nevertheless demand that you, on your part, make other concrete proposals for the achievement of this aim.

The chief thing for us is not the form but the essence. The Communist International, which is doing all in its power to ensure the victory of the Spanish people over the fascist rebels and interventionists as speedily as possible, is ready, without delay, as we stated previously, to discuss any proposals you may make.

Together with the Spanish workers' organisations we have the right to expect your concrete proposals on this vitally important question. We should also consider it advisable, with a view to speeding up the realisation of the necessary joint action, to have a preliminary exchange of opinions between representatives of the Communist International and of the Labour and Socialist International.

In the event of your agreement, we await information from you as to the time and place of such a meeting.

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,*  
GEORGI DIMITROV, *General Secretary.*

[8 June 1937.]

## **6. TELEGRAM FROM DIMITROV TO LAMONEDA, DÍAZ, AND PRETEL**

To Ramón Lamonedá, Secretary of the Workers' Socialist Party of Spain; to José Díaz, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain; to Felipe Pretel, Acting General Secretary of the General Workers' Union of Spain, Valencia.

From the chairman of the Labour and Socialist International we received the following reply to our proposal regarding the establishment of international united action in defence of the Spanish people: [ . . . ]

Alluding to the motives of a formal character—the absence of the corresponding powers—the chairman of the Labour and Socialist International has evaded giving a straightforward reply to our proposal regarding the establishment of a contact committee for joint action of the three Internationals in defence of the Spanish people.

We continue to insist on concrete proposals on the part of the leadership of the Labour and Socialist International directed towards the establishment of international unity of action.

With this aim in view, we have also proposed a meeting of representatives of the Communist International and of the Labour and Socialist International. Upon receipt of a reply we shall inform you.

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,*  
GEORGI DIMITROV, *General Secretary.*

[8 June 1937.]

#### **7. RADIOGRAM FROM DE BROUCKERE TO DIMITROV**

G. Dimitrov,  
General Secretary,  
Communist International,  
Moscow.

We, too, think that what is important is the essence, and the essence is agreed action in favour of Spain. We are always ready to meet your representatives for information purposes and to exchange views on the best way of pursuing this action, by common agreement where possible, at all times without needless friction. We can meet your delegates in any place you may select in Geneva or its environs. We ask you to give us 48 hours' notice. We shall come to an arrangement as to the time of the meeting.  
DE BROUCKERE.

[10 June 1937.]

#### **8. REPLY OF DIMITROV TO DE BROUCKERE**

To de Brouckere, Chairman,  
Labour and Socialist International,  
Brussels.

In reply to your telegram we wish to inform you that the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International has appointed the following delegation to negotiate with representatives of

the Labour and Socialist International on the question of aid for the Spanish people: Maurice Thorez, Marcel Cachin, José Díaz, Franz Dahlem (members of the Executive Committee of the Communist International) and Luigi Gallo (member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Italy). Comrade Thorez has been commissioned to communicate with you directly regarding the place and date of meeting.

*On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Communist International,*  
GEORGI DIMITROV, *General Secretary.*

[15 June 1937.]

## XIX

### **A year of heroic struggle of the Spanish people**

For a whole year now the Spanish people, in the front line of the struggle against world reaction and fascism, have been manfully defending their liberty and independence and thereby safeguarding the interests of democracy, culture and peace against the fascist barbarians and war-mongers. It may be asserted without any exaggeration that after the great October Revolution this heroic struggle is one of the most considerable events of the post-war political history of Europe.

When on July 18 of last year the telegraph announced the rebellion of the fascist generals against the Spanish Republic, nobody could think that the civil war which was stirred up by the fascist scoundrels would continue so long. Both the friends and the enemies of the Spanish people, each in their own way, counted on a very rapid conclusion of the war.

In a few days the fascist rebellion was crushed by the Spanish workers and the people's militia in the most important centres of the country. Madrid and Valencia, Barcelona and Bilbao, Toledo, Málaga, Alicante and Almería, almost all the important cities in Spain, were in the hands of the Republican government.

In launching a struggle against the democratic conquests of the Spanish revolution and basing themselves at the beginning of the rebellion mainly on the counter-revolutionary officers whom the people hated, on the Moroccan troops and Foreign Legionnaires, the rebel generals met with the armed resistance of all the forces of the Spanish revolution, of the entire Spanish people, united in the ranks of the People's Front around the Republican government.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that had there been no intervention by the fascist states, had Hitler and Mussolini not placed their arms, air forces and regular troops at the disposal of the rebel generals against Republican Spain, the Spanish people would long ago have cleared their country of the fascist aggressors. The now well known facts go to prove that the rebel generals would never have dared to undertake a war against the Spanish Republic at all had they not been inspired to do so by the fascist states. Actually, this bloody plot against the Spanish people was hatched and organised in Berlin and Rome. The fascist war-mongers made use of the counter-revolutionary generals so as to lay their hands on Spain, on its wealth, on its raw materials for the war industry, and so as to establish themselves in the Mediterranean Sea for the new imperialist war they are preparing. Hitler and Mussolini apparently calculated that Generals Franco and Mola, who acted as their tools, would be able in a few days to seize Madrid, to dissolve the Republican regime and to present them with rich booty in the shape of so-called "national" Spain. There can be no doubt that they were also strengthened in this conviction by the fact that despite the repeated and insistent warnings of the Spanish Communist Party the Republican government of that time did not take any radical measures against the plot that was being prepared by the counter-revolutionary generals, and could have been taken unawares. Mussolini and Hitler hoped that fascism could achieve victory in Spain without meeting with any serious armed resistance on the part of the masses of the people, as was the case in Italy in 1922 and in Germany in 1933.

All these calculations, however, turned out to be radically false. Spain proved to be too hard a nut for the teeth of fascism. The Spain of 1936 was not the Italy of 1922, nor the Germany of 1933. The

fascist rebellion in Spain broke out after the first victory of the democratic revolution of the Spanish people, after the Spanish proletariat and the masses of the people had drawn the lessons from the events in Italy, Germany and Austria, after the foundations of the anti-fascist People's Front had already been laid. By overthrowing the mediaeval monarchy and establishing the parliamentary-democratic republic, the Spanish revolution gave rise to an inexhaustible source of the forces of the Spanish people in the struggle against the counter-revolution, which wants to bring back the old regime of the landlords and financial oligarchy so hateful to the people. In view of this, for the Spanish people the struggle against the fascist rebellion is indissolubly bound up with the maintenance and development of the democratic conquest of their revolution against the regime of mediaevalism and obscurantism, against the landowners, against the thoroughly decayed aristocracy and the counter-revolutionary officers.

Having become convinced of the inability of Franco to secure victory for fascism with the aid of the Moroccans and the Foreign Legion, the fascist states themselves took over the conduct of the war against the Spanish Republic. There are actually units of the German and Italian armies, their artillery, tanks and planes around Madrid and Guadalajara, on the southern and northern fronts, pitted against the valiant Republican army and engaged in demolishing cities, destroying villages and deluging the land of the Spanish people in rivers of blood. The fleets of the fascist states blockade Spanish ports, bombard and demolish sea towns. Madrid, Guernica and Almería will forever remain in the minds of progressive mankind as ill-omened memorials of fascist barbarism.

And the greater the confidence in the righteousness of their cause, the greater the energy and enthusiasm with which the Spanish people carry on the struggle, the more they strengthen the Republican army, close their ranks and eliminate weaknesses and defects in the conduct of the war after each new act of provocation by the fascist interventionists—the more cynically do Hitler and Mussolini increase their intervention, openly declaring that they will not permit the existence of a Republican Spain. In plain talk the recent articles of Mussolini amount to the unbridled and cynical thesis that: Spain must be a fascist colony, otherwise it will be transformed into ruins.

In the light of these facts it is difficult to find pages in modern political history recording behaviour more shameful than the behaviour of the decisive Western capitalist states, which proudly call themselves democratic, in relation to the Spanish people and their struggle for liberty and independence. At the very time when before the eyes of the whole world the fascist interventionists are openly engaged in a predatory war in Spain, these countries, and primarily Great Britain, have been engaged for practically a year in the farce of “non-intervention” in Spanish affairs. Even after Hitler and Mussolini have rejected the so-called international control, those who guide British foreign policy still continue to seek compromise formulas of agreement with the brazen fascist interventionists.

The League of Nations, the statutes of which contain a special clause regarding sanctions against the aggressor, providing specifically for cases analogous to the present armed intervention of Germany and Italy against the Spanish people, maintains an obstinate silence.

Although it is clear that should the fascist interventionists succeed in enslaving Spain they will not hesitate to instigate rebellions like that of Franco in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Denmark, Belgium and other countries, the League of Nations, chiefly under the pressure of Great Britain, studiously avoids taking any decision on the Spanish question which would guarantee the international rights of the

constitutional government of Spain. Thereby it actually spurs on the fascist interventionists and aggressors. The democratic United States of America, headed by Roosevelt, maintains the position of an unperturbed "observer." The efforts of the Soviet Union, which stands resolutely and consistently on the side of the Spanish people, to induce the non-fascist states to pursue a firm and insistent policy in relation to the fascist interventionists, so as to secure to Republican Spain its lawful rights and the opportunities of defending itself against onslaught and of being sovereign master in its own country, have not as yet led to positive results. The selfish interests of the big capitalists and the financial cliques in Great Britain, France and the USA still continue to dominate not only over the interests of the Spanish people and of the maintenance of peace, but also over the real interests and future of their own peoples.

Thus a strange picture is presented which should compel every worker and every supporter of democracy and peace to think things over seriously. At the very moment when the fascist states are acting in agreement against the Spanish Republic, when Berlin, Rome and Tokyo are planfully, step by step, preparing a new predatory world war, when the increasing intervention by Mussolini and Hitler in Spain is accompanied by the provocation of the Japanese militarists on the Amur, and by military operations in North China, the governments of the big Western states are engaged in endless discussions regarding the bankrupt "non-intervention" and "control" plans and are pursuing an ostrich policy in relation to the frenzied interventionists and war-mongers who recognise no limits.

One must not think that the policy of the ruling circles of Great Britain, France and the USA on the Spanish question and on the question of the maintenance of peace corresponds to the sentiments, feelings and will of the overwhelming majority of the peoples of these countries. It is precisely for this reason, in order to justify their policy, that they are constantly attempting to frighten their peoples with the thought of the war which they allege will be precipitated by the fascist states if the non-fascist states and the League of Nations take resolute action against the interventionists.

But it is quite clear to everyone who knows the actual international situation, the situation in the fascist countries themselves and the relation of forces between the supporters of peace and the war-mongers, that this is nothing but cheap playing on the anti-war sentiments of the broad masses. For in so far as the fascist states are concerned, the conquest of Spain is one of the most important prerequisites for the world war which they are preparing. Giving them the opportunity of entrenching themselves in Spain means helping them to increase their preparations for war, helping them to transform that country into a base for an attack on France, helping them to strengthen their military strategic positions in the Mediterranean.

The real truth of the matter is that a defeat of the Spanish people would increase the threat of war a hundredfold and considerably hasten the precipitation of a war on the part of the fascist aggressors. A victory for the Spanish people, on the contrary, would raise a new barrier in the way of the precipitation of war. Everyone who is seriously desirous of maintaining peace must do all in his power to ensure that the fascist interventionists are driven out of Spain as rapidly as possible and that the Spanish people are able to secure their liberty and independence.

Even such an admirer of Hitler as Lloyd George could not deny this truth. Speaking recently on the Spanish question in the House of Commons he declared: "It is said that if we display firmness in relation to Berlin and Rome, there will be war. I say to you that if we do not display such firmness, war will surely take place."

One of the most important reasons that makes it possible for the non-fascist Western states to occupy such a position of toleration towards the fascist interventionists, and Pilate-wise to wash their hands, is undoubtedly the circumstance that the international proletariat has not as yet succeeded in acting unitedly and preparedly for the fulfilment of the main demands of the Spanish people, namely, *the immediate withdrawal of the interventionist armed forces of Italy and Germany from Spain ; the lifting of the blockade from the Spanish Republic ; the recognition of all the international rights of the lawful Spanish government ; the application of the statutes of the League of Nations against the fascist aggressors who have attacked the Spanish people.*

These demands, which in the main were advanced by the Communist International soon after the fascist rebellion in Spain, were also proclaimed later by the Labour and Socialist International, and undoubtedly are the demands of every class-conscious worker and every honest supporter of peace. The international proletariat is without a doubt on the side of the Spanish people, against the fascist rebels and interventionists. It has displayed and continues to display its solidarity with the Spanish fighters not only by rendering material aid and by supplying food and medical assistance, but by giving a number of its best sons, who are fighting in the Republican army around Madrid, Guadalajara and at the other fronts.

However, all this is far from sufficient. The international labour movement, its political and trade union organisations, cannot consider its duty towards the Spanish people and the defence of peace fulfilled until it has seen to it that international rights are secured to the Spanish Republic and the fascist intervention in Spain is stopped. To achieve this it is necessary to intensify the solidarity campaign on behalf of the Spanish people in all countries. It is necessary to mobilise all forces so as to render impossible the policy of toleration in relation to the fascist interventionists.

It is essential to realise that in this connection the main role in Europe is being played by Great Britain, and therefore a special responsibility for the fate of the Spanish people, for the maintenance of peace, rests with the working class of Great Britain, with the people of Great Britain. It is impossible to tolerate the scandalous situation wherein the Labour leader Lansbury makes his obeisances to Hitler and Mussolini with an "olive branch" in his hand, while Citrine, General Secretary of the Trade Union Council, echoes the songs of Chamberlain and Eden, designed to lull public opinion in Great Britain, at the very time when the fascist hordes of Italy and Germany are shedding the blood of the Spanish people and demolishing Spanish cities and villages.

If the Spanish people and international peace are to be effectively protected, *joint and concerted action on the part of all the international organisations of the working class is absolutely essential.* Let it not be said that such concerted action is impossible. True, there are a number of obstacles in the way. There are leaders and groups in the Labour and Socialist International and in the International Federation of Trade Unions that, out of considerations which have nothing in common with the interests of the international proletariat and the Spanish people, oppose joint action by the international working class organisations, and even threaten to leave the Socialist International if an agreement regarding joint action with the Communist International is adopted.

But can such a situation be regarded as something fixed once and for all and not subject to alteration? It is necessary to overcome obstacles and not to capitulate before them. The interests of the international proletariat and the cause of the defence of peace, which coincide absolutely with the

interests of the Spanish people, must be placed above all personal and group considerations.

The meetings between the representatives of the Communist International and the Labour and Socialist International in Annemasse and Paris have shown that both sides are at one in the main demands for the defence of the Spanish people and the maintenance of peace. Why, then, not do the only thing that can rapidly and surely lead to the fulfilment of these demands—organise united action by the international working class organisations and proceed to the joint utilisation of all the reserve forces at the disposal of the world labour movement?

On the anniversary of the heroic struggle of the Spanish people, in face of the ominously increasing fascist intervention in Spain and the new Japanese aggression in North China, this question rises most acutely before each working class organisation, before every person who is active in the labour movement, before all supporters of democracy and peace, and demands a practical solution.

During a year of uninterrupted and tense fighting the Spanish proletariat has succeeded in defending the conquests of the democratic revolution, in strengthening unity in the ranks of the People's Front, and in securing the establishment of a heroic people's republican army, half a million strong. It is clearing the way for its united political party and for the unification of its trade unions, and working steadily for all the domestic conditions necessary for final victory over fascism.

The Spanish proletariat, headed by the Communist Party and marching in the front ranks of its people, is honourably fulfilling its duty in the front line of the struggle against world reaction and fascism. The international proletariat on its part must fulfil its duty in relation to its glorious Spanish detachment in full.

The communists, while intensifying their own action in defence of the Spanish people and of peace in every way, *will not therefore cease to point still more persistently to the imperative need for establishing united action on the part of the international labour movement, nor will they cease to fight with all their energy to bring it about as rapidly as possible.*

[July 1937.]

## XX

### Fascism is war

Two years ago, in August 1935, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, in analysing the international situation and seeking ways and means whereby the working class could carry on the struggle against the offensive of fascism, pointed to the indissoluble connection between the struggle against fascism and the struggle for peace.

*Fascism is war*, declared the Congress. Coming to power against the will and interests of its own countrymen, fascism seeks a way out of its growing domestic difficulties in aggression against other countries and peoples, in a new redivision of the globe by unleashing world war.

As far as fascism is concerned, peace is certain ruin. The preservation of international peace renders it possible for the enslaved masses in the fascist countries to gather their forces together and to prepare for the overthrow of the hated fascist dictatorship, and to enable the international proletariat to win time for the establishment of unity in its ranks, to rally together the supporters of peace, and to establish an insurmountable barrier in the way of the outbreak of war.

When the Seventh Congress characterised fascism as the firebrand of war, when it pointed to the growing danger of a new imperialist war and to the need for establishing a powerful united fighting front against fascism, there were very few people even in the labour movement who did not hesitate to accuse us communists of deliberately and for purely propagandist purposes ascribing this role to fascism, and of exaggerating the war danger.

Some people did this consciously, in the interests of the ruling classes, while others did so out of their political shortsightedness. The past two years, however, have provided a sufficiently clear demonstration of the complete absurdity of such accusations.

Now both the friends and foes of peace are openly speaking of the menace of a new world war which has come upon us. And it would also be difficult to find serious-minded people who at all doubt that it is precisely the fascist governments that are foremost in the desire for war.

In actual fact, war is already going on in various countries. For one year already, both the Italian and the German interventionists have been carrying on a war against the Spanish people before the eyes of the whole world.

After having accomplished the seizure of Manchuria, the Japanese fascist militarists are now again attacking the Chinese people and are carrying on a new war in North China. Manchuria, Ethiopia, Spain, North China—these are stages towards the new great robber war of fascism. These are not isolated acts.

There exists a bloc of fascist aggressors and war-mongers—Berlin, Rome, Tokyo. The German-Japanese agreement “against the Communist International,” an agreement which, as is well known, is of a military nature and to which Mussolini has in fact also linked himself, is already being applied in practice.

Under the flag of struggle against the Communist International, against the “Red menace,” the German, Italian and Japanese aggressors are trying by means of partial wars to seize military-strategic positions, key positions on land and naval routes, and sources of raw materials for their war supplies

with a view to unleashing further imperialist war.

There is no need to be under any illusions, there is no need to wait for a *formal* declaration of war, to see that war is now on. As far back as March, 1936, Comrade Stalin, in his interview with Roy Howard [head of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain], said: "War may break out unexpectedly. Nowadays wars are not declared. They simply begin."

All events of recent years serve as a glaring confirmation of this thesis. Without officially declaring war, Japan opened military operations against China and seized Manchuria, Italy attacked the Ethiopian people and seized Ethiopia, and Germany and Italy are waging a war against the Spanish Republic. It is well known that the people have no desire for war, and that a number of non-fascist states are, in the present conditions, interested in maintaining peace. On what, then, do the fascist war-makers base their calculations?

The entire experience following the robber drive by the Japanese imperialists into Manchuria and by Italian fascism into Ethiopia shows unquestionably that the bandit bloc of the rulers of Germany, Japan and Italy, in order to carry out their military plans in practice, are striving first of all to hinder *united action* by the states interested in the maintenance of peace; secondly, to prevent unity of action by the international labour movement, the establishment of a mighty united world front against fascism and war; thirdly, to carry on undermining diversionist and espionage work in the Soviet Union, which is the most important buttress of peace.

It is on this chiefly that the fascists base their calculations. And in actual fact the fascist aggressors and warmongers are working strenuously and jointly in these three directions. They are blackmailing the Western European states by threatening their territorial interests. They are preparing an onslaught on the USSR. They are making extensive use of the toleration of the ruling circles of Britain, France and the United States.

While making proposals for an agreement on the plundering of the small countries, Spain and China, they are striving in every possible way to win the good graces of the British Conservatives and a number of Liberal and Labour leaders, so as to win Britain away from France and other democratic countries. Holding out a similar lure, the fascists are exerting unbelievable efforts to come to an agreement with the French reactionaries in regard to French resignation from the Franco-Soviet pact, thus isolating France from the Soviet Union.

The fascist states left the League of Nations to get a free hand for their aggression. They terrorise the weak states by threatening attacks from outside, and by organising conspiracies and rebellions within these countries.

The fascist warmongers make use of traitors, and particularly of the Trotskyists, to carry on disruptive, disorganising work in the ranks of the labour movement, to disrupt the People's Front in Spain and France. The recent putsch in Barcelona gave a particularly clear demonstration of how the fascists make use of Trotskyist organisations to stab the People's Front in the back.

The fascists also make splendid use of the work of the opponents of international proletarian unity in the ranks of the Second International and the International Federation of Trade Unions, and assiduously recruit their agents everywhere.

But, as was disclosed at the recent trials of Trotskyists and spies, the fascist aggressors have put forth special efforts to send Trotskyist agents into the great land of socialist victories to carry on

disruptive work there. The fascists calculated that if they succeeded in undermining the power of the Soviet Union, the most loyal guardian of peace, then the success of their military plans of aggression would in the main be assured.

Hence one can understand the furious howl set up by the fascists and their tools at the merciless wiping out of the traitors to the great land of socialism by the organs of the dictatorship of the working class, supported by the entire Soviet people. The exposure and wiping out of the fascist agents, terrorist wreckers and spies in the land of socialism strengthen its economic, political and military might, break up the sinister plans of the fascist scoundrels, and thereby help to strengthen peace.

This has been the most powerful and crushing blow dealt to the warmongers in recent times. It is an exceptionally important contribution to the struggle to maintain peace throughout the world. On more than one occasion the Soviet Union has upset the war plans of the fascist aggressors by its consistent and resolute peace policy. It can be asserted without any exaggeration that mankind would long ago have been hurled into the most terrible war in history had not the Soviet Union been insistent and unswerving in carrying through its peace policy, had there been no glorious Red Army in existence.

But while the fascist aggressors meet with necessary rebuffs from the Soviet Union, which is acting in the interests not only of the Soviet people but also of the whole of toiling mankind, this cannot be said of the countries of bourgeois democracy. Here, as is being demonstrated with particular clearness by the examples of Spain and China, we meet with the overt and concealed assistance being given to the fascist bloc by the ruling circles of the most important Western non-fascist states. Was it not support for the fascists when the seizure of Manchuria by the Japanese militarists was met with toleration? Was not the lack of resolute resistance to the bloody campaign of Mussolini against the people of Ethiopia encouragement to the fascist aggressor?

Take the entire farce of non-intervention in Spanish affairs, which has already been carried on for a year under the leadership of the British government, and the negotiations going on regarding the recognition of Franco as a "belligerent"—are they not in fact an encouragement to the war being waged by the fascist states against the Spanish Republic?

Is not the present complacent attitude towards the brazen marauders in North China the most scandalous encouragement to the unbridled Japanese militarists, who wish to enslave the great Chinese people?

How can the peoples of Great Britain, France, the United States and the people of other non-fascist countries look on calmly at these things? How can they put up with this systematic toleration and encouragement of fascist aggression, which facilitates the foul work of the fascist firebrands of a new world war?

In the face of these things, it becomes still clearer how great is the historic responsibility which lies on those circles and leaders of the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions which are stubbornly resisting the establishment of united action by the international proletariat, of action by its organisation on the basis of a united, agreed-upon policy against the fascist warmakers, of the establishment of a mighty international front of peace.

When the Japanese militarists seized Manchuria, there were people claiming to be leading lights in the labour movement who assured the workers in their organisations that Manchuria was a long way off and the Japanese invasion did not touch on the interests of the international labour movement.

When Mussolini's fascist hordes crushed the Ethiopian people, these individuals asserted that the events in Ethiopia were a local colonial conflict and that the international proletariat ought not to interfere. When later on the fascist aggressors brazenly attacked the Spanish Republic and began a war within Europe itself, it was only after many months of tormenting vacillations that the leaders of the Second International agreed to a joint conference with the delegation of the Communist International at Annemasse, and yet not for the purpose of actually bringing about united action between the international workers' organisations, but only to recognise the advisability of joint action "where it is possible."

Since then the fascist intervention in Spain has been considerably intensified. And now there has been added the new aggression of the Japanese militarists in North China, which, according to Japanese plans, is to become a second Manchukuo and the basis for a further seizure of China.

Is it not clear that at this moment, when the Spanish people are exerting all their efforts to beat off the onslaught of the fascist interventionists, when the Chinese people are rising up against the Japanese militarists who have attacked them, the international workers' organisations should at least unite their efforts and come to the defence of international peace, resolutely and fully prepared for action?

The situation is now developing in such a way that to maintain peace throughout the world means first and foremost to bring about the defeat of the fascist invaders of Spain and China.

They must be taught a good lesson, they must be really made to feel that the international proletariat and all progressive and civilised mankind will not tolerate their military aggression and acts of robbery, and are ready to do everything to prevent them from fulfilling their plans of igniting the flames of a new world war.

Can it be that the Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions will rest content now with general, wordy declarations and incantations in favour of peace, while in deeds they shun joint action by all organisations of the international labour movement, which is so vitally needed?

Surely it is clear that joint action by the international workers' organisations in each separate country and on an international scale is alone capable of mobilising the forces of progressive mankind for a struggle against war, to bar the road to the war-mongers, and also to exert pressure on the official policy of the most important non-fascist states to curb the fascist aggressors who have thrown off all restraint.

It is impossible to carry on a serious struggle for the maintenance of international peace unless first and foremost all necessary steps are taken to establish a united front of the working class in each country and united action by the international workers' organisations. It is impossible to carry on a serious fight for peace unless the forces of the labour movement and of the wide masses of the people are mobilised to drive the fascist usurpers out of Spain and China as rapidly as possible.

The relation between the forces of war and the forces of peace is not what it was in 1914. Tremendous world historical changes have taken place since that time. The imperialists succeeded in casting millions of people into the inferno of a world slaughter when circumstances were such that neither a powerful proletarian state nor its Red Army existed, when there was no People's Front in France and Spain, when the Chinese people were not in a position to defend their national

independence, when the masses of the people had not had the experience of the imperialist war and the great proletarian revolution, when the international working class did not as yet possess such a world organisation as the Communist International.

The international labour movement has sufficient forces and means at its disposal to bring about the cessation of the intervention of German and Italian fascism in Spain, the onslaught of the Japanese militarists in China, and to secure international peace.

*This, however, requires that the tremendous forces and means at the disposal of the international labour movement be united and directed towards an effective and unyielding struggle against fascism and war.*

[August 1937.]

## XXI

### The Soviet Union and the working classes of the capitalist countries

#### 1

Unbounded are the joy and enthusiasm with which the millions of working people throughout the world, all fighters against capitalist spoliation, fascist barbarism and imperialist war, greet the twentieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution. Honest supporters of democracy, progress and peace, the best people of science, culture and art in all countries greet the twentieth anniversary of the existence of the first socialist state in the world as an event of world-historic importance.

No other event in the history of mankind has had such tremendous influence over the entire course of social development, over the fate of all the peoples of the earth, as the victory of the great October Socialist Revolution. There has not been hitherto such a state as the USSR, which millions of people in all corners of the globe, regardless of nationality or race, love as their very own fatherland, and with which they feel themselves, their lives, their fate and their hopes vitally bound up.

As a result of the bourgeois revolutions, capitalism defeated the feudal system and won a dominating position. It encircled the entire world in its system of economy, overcame feudal particularism and established big national states. But capitalism merely replaced one form of exploitation by another, class antagonisms of one kind by another. It could not unite the peoples in peaceful fraternity. It deepened the gulf between them, creating new international contradictions and new causes of destructive wars of conquest.

As a result of the great October Socialist Revolution, socialism was victorious over capitalism on one-sixth of the globe. A powerful socialist state rose up in a tremendous territory covering half of Europe and Asia, in the heart of the world, a state based on the abolition of the exploitation of man by man and on a fraternal alliance among the peoples, and showing the way to the liberation of mankind from the bondage of capitalism, to the unification of all the peoples of the earth in a supreme fraternity of free and happy working people.

In the course of twenty years of severe struggle, in the face of the furious resistance of the defeated exploited classes within the country and counter-revolutionary intervention from without, in conditions of encirclement by the hostile capitalist powers, the working people of the USSR, led by their glorious Party of Bolsheviks headed by the brilliant leaders of working mankind, Lenin and Stalin, transformed a backward, wretched country into a foremost, powerful socialist state.

Whereas in 1913 Lenin, in characterising the unbelievable backwardness of tsarist Russia, pointed out that as regards modern means of production the country's economy was *four times* behind England, *five times* behind Germany and *ten times* behind America; today the Soviet Union occupies *first place* in Europe and *second place* in the world as an industrial country as regards the output of industrial production. No one can now deny the enormous achievements of socialist construction, the tremendous growth of industry and the record harvests of collectivised agriculture. It is a fact, is it not, that such a stormy advance of economic development has taken place in the USSR as has never been known by capitalist society? Whereas the development of industry of the capitalist countries during the period

1890–1913 showed an average growth in production of 5.8 per cent a year, and during the period 1913–1936 only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, in the Soviet Union in 1936 alone the growth in industrial output totalled 28 per cent. Whereas in 1936 the industrial output of capitalist countries exceeded the 1913 level by *one-third*, in the Soviet Union it increased by more than *seven times*.

In the sphere of agriculture a great historical victory has been achieved. At the time when the agriculture of capitalist countries is not emerging from the protracted agrarian crisis as the result of which the sown area is decreasing, a great number of products being destroyed and the level of all production steadily lowering,—in the Soviet Union, in place of a backward, scattered economy there has been created the most advanced and biggest socialist agriculture with 99 per cent of the area sown by the peasants collectivised. Thanks to the collective farm order, poverty in the village has been destroyed and there are no longer peasants who have no land, no horses, no implements. More than 20,000,000 poor peasants who formerly lived a poverty-stricken existence have joined the collective farms and are today leading a well-to-do cultured life. Socialist agriculture is yielding record harvests unprecedented in the history of the country. In 1937 there was harvested nearly 7,000,000,000 *poods* of grain while the best years before the revolution gave four to five billion poods.

Under capitalism, wherever there is an increase of the wealth of the few, there is an increase, at the other end of the pole, of poverty and misery for millions of working people; the boom periods are inevitably followed by severe crises which destroy the productive forces and bring in their train unemployment, hunger and poverty. The socialist system, on the other hand, does not know of crises, does not know of unemployment and poverty.

Irrefutable facts clearly testify to the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system, not only in the sphere of economics, but also in the sphere of everyday life and culture, science and art, in the sphere of the relations between the peoples. Only the bought apologists of capitalism can dispute this superiority. And only hopeless cretins who not infrequently call themselves socialists, and political charlatans who distort Marxism, venture still to prove that the working class is incapable of undertaking the historic responsibility of guiding the fate of its own people and of the organisation of the national economy; that the proletariat, which is “inexperienced” in the state and economic affairs, cannot get on without the bourgeoisie, who are “experienced” in these affairs.

Twenty years of the existence of the Soviet Union provide splendid confirmation of the words of Comrade Stalin uttered in 1927 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution:

The undoubted successes of socialism in the USSR on the front of construction have clearly shown that the proletariat *can* successfully govern the country *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie, that it *can* successfully build up industry *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie, that it *can* successfully guide the whole of the national economy *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie, that it *can* successfully build socialism despite the encirclement of the capitalist state.

Herein lies one of the most important lessons of principle of the great October Socialist Revolution for the working class of the capitalist countries, a lesson which needs to be particularly underlined on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary.

## 2

Much has been done by the proletariat of the capitalist countries in supporting the first proletarian revolution in the history of mankind. Had it not been for this support the Soviet workers and peasants

would have shed their blood to a still greater degree and would have had to sacrifice still more in order to defend the gains of the socialist revolution. Nonetheless, however, it must be said outright that the working classes of the capitalist countries have not succeeded in thoroughly fulfilling either their duty towards the first socialist revolution, or towards their own liberation. Not only have they remained under the power of capital, and in Italy and Germany have fallen victims to the barbarous bondage of fascism, but they have involuntarily assisted in increasing the difficulties, privations, sufferings and sacrifices of the vanguard unit of the international proletariat.

But what would the world have looked like, if the proletariat of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, after the October Socialist Revolution, in the period of 1918–1920, had not stopped half way in their revolutionary advance? What would the world have looked like had the German and Austrian revolutions of 1918 been carried through to the end, and had the dictatorship of the proletariat been established in the heart of Europe, in highly developed industrial countries, as a result of the victory of the revolution? A revolutionary bloc of the West-European proletariat and the working class of the Soviet Union would not only have facilitated a hundredfold the liquidation of the counter-revolutionary intervention and civil war, but would have immeasurably hastened on the building of socialism in the land of the Soviets. The fascist dictatorship would not have existed either in Italy, Germany, Austria or other countries. There would have been no offensive of fascism upon the working class and the democratic peoples. There would not have been the present difficult trials of the Spanish and Chinese peoples. Mankind would not now be faced with the ominous menace of a new world slaughter.

At the time when the Russian workers and peasants overthrew the landlords and capitalists, all the necessary objective conditions were at hand in central Europe for the European and particularly the German proletariat taking the path of the Soviet workers and peasants. But this did not take place. It did not take place mainly because the decisive word at that time in the leadership of the mass organisations of the proletariat belonged to the leaders of the Social Democratic Parties, who had been in coalition with their own imperialist bourgeoisie from the outbreak of the war.

In their effort at all costs to preserve the shattered foundations of bourgeois society, they widely utilised the influence of the ideology and policy of *social-demokratism, reformism*, in order to deceive the majority of the working class, by spreading the conviction among them that the workers would be led to socialism not by the further development of the revolution, but by its rapid liquidation. By their *coalition with the bourgeoisie* they *split* the working class movement, weakened the proletariat, isolated it from the peasantry and the small townspeople, and thus helped the bourgeoisie to gather their forces and to undertake the offensive against the revolutionary workers and peasants. The political cowards and deceivers of the proletariat who were at the head of the mass organisations of the working class alarmed the workers with the prospect of sacrifices, privation and economic ruin. They assured them that they would be led to socialism not by the path of *Bolshevism*, by the revolutionary practical application of the teachings of Marx and Engels, not by the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that a peaceful and painless transition to socialism would be ensured by the path of *social-demokratism*—the path of coalition with the bourgeoisie and the preservation of the bourgeois system.

Now the results of the twenty years are before us. Who will deny that the sacrifices and privations borne, for instance, by the working class and working masses of Germany throughout the whole of the

post-war period and, particularly, in the conditions of the savage regime of the fascist dictatorship~ are a thousand times greater than all the possible sacrifices and privations that would have been demanded by the victory of the proletarian revolution in 1918?

Instead of the promised peaceful, painless transition to socialism, social-democratism, by its entire capitulatory and splitting policy, cleared the way for the victory of fascism.

*Had it not been for the social-democratism of Turatti and Daragona in Italy the victory of the fascism of Mussolini would not have been possible. Had it not been for the social-democratism of Ebert and Noske in Germany the victory of the fascism of Hitler would not have been possible. Had it not been for the social-democratism of Renner and Bauer in Austria the victory of the fascism of Schuschnigg would not have been possible. Nothing can now conceal this truth, which is also irrefutably confirmed by numerous now well-known documents from the post-war political history of Europe.*

In the conditions of the unparalleled revolutionary crisis at the end of the imperialist war, the reactionary social-democratic leaders split the working class, disarmed it ideologically and politically, hindered the development of the proletarian revolutions that had matured, saved the domination of capitalism and thereby made the working people a target for fascism. At the same time *Bolshevism*, true Marxism, united the working class, created an inviolable alliance of the workers and peasants, destroyed capitalism, ensured the victory of the socialist revolution, and led to the building of socialist society on one-sixth of the globe.

And Comrade Stalin was a thousand times right when he wrote ten years ago that: *"It is impossible to put an end to capitalism, without having put an end to social-democratism in the working class movement."*

Herein lies the second most important lesson of principle for the proletariat of the capitalist countries in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution.

### 3

During the twenty years, the working masses in the capitalist countries, especially during the world economic crisis, experienced much, suffered much and learned much on the basis of their own bitter experience. The final and irrevocable victory of socialism in the USSR on the one hand, and the lessons of the temporary defeats inflicted on the working class by fascism, especially in Germany, on the other hand, *have undermined* the former influence of social-democratism not only in the working class, but also in the ranks of the Socialist Parties themselves and the trade unions under their political leadership. In the social-democratic camp there has begun a process of departure from the positions of *reformism*, of departure from the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and of the transition to the position of struggle jointly with the Communist Party against fascism, to the position of united action of the working class and of the anti-fascist People's Front. This process has already found clear expression in the establishment of the united front between the communists and socialists in France, Spain and Italy, and partly in a number of other countries.

The further development of this process is being facilitated and speeded up by the entire course of the events of recent years, which imperatively faces the working class with the *most important shock task* of at all costs barring the road to fascism in the bourgeois-democratic countries, of overthrowing

fascism in the countries where it is in power, and of defending world peace against the fascist warmakers. This process of the departure from social-democratism is being speeded up by the correct application by the Communist Parties of the main lines laid down by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

As a result of the influence of the victory of socialism in the USSR, as the result of the development of the People's Front movement, of the growing influence of communism in the ranks of the working class movement, there will, without doubt, be an increase in the number of Socialist Parties and organisations which *give up bankrupt social-democratism, which wage a struggle together with the Communist Parties against the common class enemy and which stand for unity with the communists in a single mass party of the proletariat.*

Such a unification has already taken place between the socialists and communists of Catalonia. It is being prepared jointly by the Communist and Socialist Parties of Spain. The necessary preconditions for it are also maturing in France as a result of the joint struggle of the communists and socialists in the United Confederation of Labour, and in the ranks of the anti-fascist People's Front, and also thanks to the beneficent influence exerted by the establishment of a United Confederation of Labour over the whole process of the consolidation of the forces of the French proletariat. The new pact between the Italian communists and socialists is still further strengthening their fraternal relations and the bonds of their joint struggle against the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini. Mutual understanding and accord are increasing between the communists and socialists in Germany in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship of Hitler, despite all the machinations and intrigues of the diehard leaders of the foreign executive of the Social-Democratic Party.

It may be said with confidence that by the twentieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution, the working class of the capitalist countries is *closely approaching the liquidation of the split* in the world working class movement which was brought into being by social-democratism. There are still many difficulties and obstacles of an ideological, political and organisational character in the way of liquidating this split. There are difficulties connected with the very history and traditions of the working class movement in the different countries, difficulties which are not so easy to overcome. But the main thing is that the ruling classes of the capitalist countries, which are profoundly interested in the division of the forces of the working class movement, are doing and will continue to do everything possible to prevent the unity of the working class movement being established. For their benefit, the reactionary leaders of the Socialist International are expending furious energy in order to turn back the wheel of history. Even in the fact of the monstrous Germano-Italian intervention in Spain, the ferocious onslaught by the Japanese fascist militarists on China and the exceptionally acute menace of a new world imperialist war, these leaders are doing everything possible to wreck every attempt at joint action by the international organisations of the workers in defence of the Spanish and Chinese people, in defence of peace.

But there are no such difficulties and obstacles on the path to unity in the struggle against fascism and war as the working classes cannot overcome, if they are filled with the firm determination to unite their forces and fulfil their historic mission.

The existence of the land of socialism, that powerful buttress of the struggle of the international proletariat, the buttress of peace, liberty and progress, *is a tremendous factor in the liquidation of the*

*split in the ranks of the world working class movement.* By their example, their labour heroism, their Stakhanov movement, their devotion to their socialist fatherland, their merciless struggle against the enemies of the people, Trotsky-Bukharinite spies, diversionists and agents of fascism, the working people of the Soviet Union exert enormous influence on the bringing together of the split forces of the world working class movement. The sympathy and love of the working people of the capitalist world for the Soviet Union, the land of victorious socialism, are steadily on the increase. And this fact acts as a most powerful antidote against the splitting work carried on in the ranks of the working class by the open and masked agents of the class enemy.

The land of victorious socialism, which is playing such an outstanding part in uniting the international proletariat, is rallying all sincere supporters of the workers' cause still more closely around the USSR. In the present international situation there is not, nor can there be any other, *more certain criterion*, than one's *attitude* towards the Soviet Union, in determining who is the *friend* and who the *enemy* of the cause of the working class and socialism, of determining who is a *supporter* and who an *opponent* of democracy and peace. The *touchstone* in checking the sincerity and honesty of every individual active in the working class movement, of every working class party and organisation of the working people, and of every democrat in the capitalist countries, is their *attitude* towards the great land of socialism. You cannot carry on a real struggle against fascism if you do not render all possible assistance in strengthening the *most important buttress* of this struggle, the Soviet Union. You cannot carry on a serious struggle against the fascist instigators of a new world blood bath, if you do not render undivided support to the USSR, a *most important factor* in the maintenance of international peace. You cannot carry on a real struggle for socialism in your own country, if you do not oppose the enemies of the Soviet State, where this socialism is being fulfilled by the heroic efforts of the working people. You cannot be a *real friend* of the USSR, if you do not condemn its enemies—the Trotsky-Bukharinite agents of fascism.

The *historical dividing line* between the forces of fascism, war and capitalism, on the one hand, and the forces of peace, democracy and socialism on the other hand, is in fact becoming the *attitude* towards the Soviet Union, and not the formal attitude towards Soviet power and socialism in general, but the *attitude* to the Soviet Union, which has been carrying on a real existence for twenty years already, with its untiring struggle against enemies, with its dictatorship of the working class and the Stalin Constitution, with the leading role of the party of Lenin and Stalin.

Herein lies the third most important lesson of principle for the proletariat of the capitalist countries in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution.

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