

Executive of the Communist International has overthrown and destroyed the authority of the party executive. Despite this, we have not merely accepted the decision, but have published it, and have conformed to it. We have conformed to it, comrades, because we are convinced that the majority in this congress will decide to take such steps so that we in Czecho-Slovakia may be permitted to work and to fight on. That this Congress, by a majority, should accept a program which is not fit for a proletarian organization, but is rather suited to a veteran society, is unbelievable.

We shall permit this kind of opposition no longer. It shall no longer be allowed that fundamental party power shall be broken and that this Party which has certain tasks to fulfill shall let itself be hindered in so a frivolous a manner in the performance of its duties. (Lively applause).

Kolarov.—Before passing on to the translation of Comrade Neurath's speech, there are several announcements to be made to the Congress.

The Belgian Delegation wishes to be represented on the Negro Commission and has appointed Comrade Overstraeten to act in this capacity. Any opposition? Carried.

The South American Delegation wishes to be represented by Comrade Penel Argentine in the French Commission, Comrade Pientos in the Spanish Commission, and by Comrade Stirner of Mexico in the North American Delegation. Any opposition? Carried.

The Presidium moves that Comrade Rakovksy be included into the French Commission. Any opposition? Carried.

The following commissions will meet to-night:

The French Commission at 6 p.m. in this Hall.

The Czecho-Slovak Commission at 7 p.m. in one of the Kremlin Halls.

The Negro Commission at half past nine in the Grand Paris Hotel.

The next Session of the Congress will be held at 11 a.m. sharp to-morrow.

The Session adjourned at 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> p.m.

# BULLETIN

## OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

No 4.

Moscow.

13th November 1922.

### Fourth Session.

Sunday 11th November (morning).

#### Contents.

Chairman: Kolarov.

Discussion on Report of Comrade Zinoviev (continued).

Speakers: Becker, Radek, Duret, Bordiga, Graziadei.

Session opened 11.45 a.m.

Kolarov.—I declare the Session open, and call upon Comrade Becker to address you.

Becker—Germany: The German Party is highly praised in the report of the Executive. However, comrades, we do not feel very happy over it. We are of the opinion that being considered one of the good boys of the large family of the Communist International means—that our next foolish action shall be punished all the more severely. Therefore for that reason we would like to emphasise our shortcomings here.

In carrying out the United Front tactics in Germany, we must take into account two tendencies which impede us in this work. With us these tendencies are not, as in Italy and France, guided by a theory of avowed opposition to the tactic of the United Front. As I have already said, we have only tendencies. I think it will be of interest to those countries, which are about to put the tactic of the United Front into practice, to know the real nature of these tendencies, as they are sure to come across them in their work.

These tendencies—which affect not only the leaders—arise out of the fact that a large number of party members, instead of performing their task as

communists to remain the active factor, and holding aloft the banner of the class struggle even in the difficult situation when the proletariat is indifferent and inactive, give way to pessimism. A section of these masses has become slack and indifferent, reveal no initiative and have lost hope of anything coming out or even using the daily needs of the proletariat as a starting point for our agitation.

During the last few months a section of our members has partly got over this mood. Nevertheless, this mood is still the basis of these tendencies and affects the leaders of the Party. In analysing the political situation, these two tendencies draw correct deductions, but they do it in such a way as to encourage passivity and pessimism. Comrades, this applies to the left tendency as well as to the right. Moreover, a number of other factors are affecting our leading comrades, and prevent some of them, mostly those of the left tendency, from taking advantage of the various opportunities that present themselves to carry out the tactic of the United Front, and induce them to exaggerate the perils of opportunism. They even induce them to put obstacles in the way of these tactics. The right

tendency affects those comrades who for some reason or other are passive by nature, and are not therefore as energetic as they should be. Our experience in Germany has been that as soon as we begin to put the United Front tactics into practice, the social democrats at once follow our example. In this connection it has even happened that social democrats were the first in the field in demanding united action. Due to that passivity in some of our leading comrades it frequently happened that the social democrats forestalled us and took from us the lead in the policy of the United Front.

Comrades, during the United Front actions in connection with the Rathenau crisis, both tendencies showed signs of hesitancy and timidity. The comrades of the right tendency were very timid in their negotiations with the opposition leaders; they seemed to be afraid that the rapprochement with the latter would not last. This timidity even resulted in the Party not asserting itself as it should have done.

The left tendency, too, showed a great deal of vacillation. I should like to remind you of the Berlin incident. Comrade Fischer, who spoke yesterday, knows that at the time of the Rathenau crisis the Berlin Organisation distinguished itself by a "Silent Demonstration", a demonstration without any speakers. Whatever one may say, the fact cannot be proved that this was a sign of weakness and vacillation on the part of the left elements of the Party. In all joint demonstrations, we must see to it that we play the principal rôle. In answer to the statement made by Comrade Fischer yesterday that the German Party exaggerated the importance of the negotiations with the opposition leaders, I am obliged to say that I did not observe such a tendency in the Party. On the contrary, I spoke of the right passive tendency which was not only passive during the negotiations, but even showed too great reserve in initiating the negotiations. I am of the opinion that we should have had such negotiations much more frequently, as they would have given us an opportunity for revealing the social democratic leaders in their true colours and inducing the masses to repudiate them.

Comrade Fischer also said that the Party missed a good opportunity for breaking off the negotiations in connection with the Rathenau crisis. She quoted as another example of the vacillation the so-called left elements. At that time we had no reason whatever to break the negotiations. On the contrary, it is in our interest to throw on them the onus of breaking off negotiations, whenever they refused to accept the demands submitted.

Comrade Fischer said ideas prevalent in the Party on the United Front were equivalent to amalgamation with the social-democrats. I am ready to admit that such tendencies still exist in the minds of some of our comrades. But an important part is to know if the Party as such is in favour of such tendencies. In this respect I must say that, far from encouraging such tendencies, the Party is combating them. As in all former actions, and, probably, all future actions, the factory committee movement has had undesirable elements. Factory committees and trade union officials have sabotaged the policy of the Party for fear that they would lead to the Amsterdam gentry splitting the trade unions. We got rid of all such elements. The presence of elements with opportunist tendencies in connection with the United Front tactic, is by no means a proof that the Party supports them.

There is also another phenomenon which you will experience in all the countries, viz, the mechanical conception of the application of the United Front tactic. It happens that after an action, after a great betrayal by the social-democratic leaders in one or other of the United Front actions, very good comrades immediately betray a desire to put an immediate end to united action and negotiations with the social-democratic leaders. They declare that henceforth they will work for the United Front from now on. In answer to such mechanical conceptions we have said: If you can rouse the masses to activity to be able to say in two months' time that we need no longer negotiate with the social-democratic leaders because they have not the masses behind them, we shall not negotiate. We have applied these methods with great success in the factory committee movement, and

at the same time organised the Front among the masses themselves.

Comrades, another question which is also of the greatest importance for the non-German comrades, is that of the Workers' Government. The question which led to wrong conceptions among our French comrades is of special importance. I mean, the question of supporting a socialist government and the question of the Workers' Government in the various States of Germany.

Comrades, to begin with, we have never considered the possibility of establishing a workers' government (either in the Reich or the States) as a result of parliamentary grouping but as the result of successful mobilisation of the masses for the everyday demands. We have not been too hasty in propagating these ideas, and in fact actually we have not propagated them because the situation was not ripe for it.

The chief difference between a socialist and a workers' government in a particular State consists in the fact that the workers' government in that State would have to act as the advance guard in the struggles of the entire German working class.

Radek (greeted with applause).

Comrades, when the Executive brought in their report, we all trembled with fear of the storms which would be roused by the opposition of the Right and Left wings against the position of the Executive. The Right wing, in so far as there is one, has not yet spoken. Comrade Varga has endeavored to prove, in his amiable manner, that he does not belong to the Right, and we take his word for it. Therefore I find myself compelled to deal with those points of view which are supposed to be held by the Left, although I believe that in the present condition of the international proletariat, the danger with which we are threatened comes not from the Left but from the Right. (Hear, hear!) The danger from the Right consists principally in this, that it is particularly difficult in a period when there are no popular revolts, to pursue a Communist political policy. During a crisis, every worker feels instinctively the necessity of revolutionary action, and the Party is then the leader rather than the driving force. In a preparatory period such as the present—bet-

ween two waves of revolution—Communist work must consist in a thorough intensive preparatory education of the Party; for, owing to the youth of the Communist Parties on the one hand and their social-democratic past on the other, it is by no means easy to connect the mass character of the party with its Communist character. If we take for example the situation in the French party and in the Norwegian party, the two most typical parties of the Right wing of the Communist International, we find that in the debates upon the condition of these two parties lies the severest labours of this congress. So that if I deal with the two comrades of the Left who have just spoken, it is not that I consider the danger of the drift towards the Left to be grave, but because no one has yet spoken for the Right.

I shall begin with Comrade Vajtauer, the representative of the Czecho-Slovakian opposition. Comrade Vajtauer's speech was patterned largely upon that of Comrade Fischer. Comrade Fischer's speech dealt with the faults of the party. Comrade Fischer analysed these faults, correctly or incorrectly, but no one who heard her speak could possibly have obtained the impression that the speaker was not a member of the party. It was clear to all that the speaker belonged organically to the Party, and was not an outcast of the German Communist Party.

But the speech of Comrade Vajtauer created quite a different impression. As Party members, we understand more or less what the Left or opposition of the Czecho-Slovakian party is, although it is difficult to understand it theoretically. When Comrade Neurath tried to explain the theory, my friend, Comrade Bukharin, who by no means belongs to the Right, was in such a condition that we had to take him by the arm and lead him fainting from the hall. (Laughter) Yet it was the wrong political attitude to take this phenomenon frivolously and deal with it as a subject for ridicule. The Czecho-Slovakian Left is worthy of earnest consideration, not because prominent and experienced proletarian elements of the Party, such as Comrade Stark, are part of it, but because it denotes a very definite danger. There are 600,000 unemployed in Czecho-Slovakia, and, when the

tendency suddenly appears in the Party which produces the following slogan: We are faced immediately with a struggle for power when such a tendency does appear, the question is not whether they have formulated their ideas clearly or obscurely, but whether, in this critical situation of the party, a portion of the membership is unsatisfied with the position of the party. They believe that the party does not fight with sufficient energy, and, even if this section is small today, yet with 600,000 unemployed there is always sufficient material for this opposition nucleus to formulate a tactic which will drive the party into premature struggle. On these grounds, I say, we must deal with these matters seriously. But I must add that the opposition has not made our work any too easy. When Comrade Vajtauer, whom we have only had the honour of knowing in the Communist and labour movement for the last two years, expresses the distrust of the proletarian Asheron, when he claims to speak in the name of the proletarian opposition (as the Czecho-Slovakian Left calls itself), and when he comes here after his glorious revolutionary activities, he declares that Smeral and the majority of the party Executive have entered into a conspiracy with the bourgeoisie and Masaryk, and that the Czecho-Slovakian bourgeoisie have demanded from the Communist Party the head of Comrade Vajtauer as a condition for the formation of a coalition. When Comrade Vajtauer says that in Kladno we have an untried leader like comrade Muna when as a matter of fact Muna performed his revolutionary duty when it was somewhat more difficult than when Vajtauer gladdened the Communist International with his activities; when Vajtauer in the name of the opposition says that under the leadership of Muna the party instigated strike-breaking in Kladno—when he insinuates such things and then adds "Choose between me and these traitors" and adds, "if what I am now doing is anarchism then I say let us be anarchists" we reply to him, "A little moderation, Comrade Vajtauer!" And we also say: When you come here and say "Yes, I am for discipline if you elect me", then we will certainly speak with this opposition but before parleying with them

we shall say to them: if you wish to have your proletarian opposition represented here, then at least have it represented by people who, even if they are not proletarians—and not everyone has the happiness to be born a proletarian—bear some responsibility for the fate of the proletarian party.

Now, comrades, to our subject! What has Comrade Vajtauer said? He has interpreted Smeral's dream. In other words he said that Smeral would like to be a cabinet minister. He has not said it definitely. He has used the method dictated by Vajtauer's anarchist past. He did not say that on such a day Smeral said so and so, from which I concluded that he wishes to be a cabinet minister. He has interpreted the dream of Smeral. This has its reason. Vajtauer used to occupy himself with the scientific interpretation of dreams. Now he has introduced this method into the Communist International. (Laughter) So that the question now arises: What shall the Executive of the Communist International do with these interpretations of dreams? They can only put them into a dream calendar.

The following facts are in possession of the Executive of the Communist International. Until March of the present year the opposition had a majority in the Executive. That is the first fact. The second fact is this last July a session of the enlarged Executive took place in which we discussed the question of the Czecho-Slovakian party. After a good deal of labour Comrade Jelik proposed a resolution: declaring that there are no differences in principle in the Czecho-Slovakian party. That was in July and in September the party was in danger in the dreams of Comrade Vajtauer. Comrade Smeral selling himself; and the comrades surrounding Zinoviev frivolous people because they would not believe this dream. (Interruption: "An especially the International.")

Vajtauer's terrifying threat to lead this International for a special International is not a new threat. The representatives of the K. A. P. spoke here during the III Congress, and I wish that you could read the last article of Comrade Gorter. After the K. A. P. had spoken Gorter declared that every strike was a counter-revolutionary act, and he

that everything we do is towards the Right and that the task of the Communists is to stand still and say: "Nothing is of any use except the revolution." If comrade Vajtauer adds his voice to that of Comrade Gorter, and they declare themselves to be their own special International, we shall be able to face this tragedy with characteristic Communist courage, even perhaps if a third were to add himself to the pair.

If one does not wish to take Comrade Vajtauer's speech humorously, one is compelled to speak to him so that he would not dare to speak a second time in such a manner in a congress of 52 Communist parties. We cannot deal thoroughly with the Czecho-Slovakian question at this phase of the debate. This matter will be examined with the greatest care in the Commission, and those warnings with regard to the state of the party which this comrade has made will be gone into with the utmost thoroughness; for we say frankly, when two honest proletarians raise their warning voices, we have no right, in the present period of the great danger coming from the Right—to pass it by in silence, or with a jest. The Executive must submit that the result of their previous work with the Czecho-Slovakian party shows that, in the main, the policy of the Czecho-Slovakian party has been right; therefore we have said to those comrades of the opposition who have raised the banner of rebellion: You have acted wrongly, but, as we do not wish to cast proletarians carelessly overboard, even if they put up senseless criticism, we will try once more to come to an understanding with you. Therefore we have suspended decision on the Czecho-Slovakian party. When Comrade Neurath says you have abolished and shattered the authority of the Executive I say that if we have abolished it we cannot shatter it. If we had shattered it we could not abolish it. But the hope remains that this authority will leave this hall stronger than ever, if after the work of the Commission it is shown that the Executive has done everything to make a good fighting party out of the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party. No one can maintain that it is already such. Comrade Vajtauer said that Comrade Zinoviev has said: "Follow the example

of good Comrade Smeral; he is a most exemplary youth". I don't know whether he said it. But I place Comrade Smeral much higher than many comrades of the Left. I am convinced of his good will to assist the aims of this congress, and I have no trace of mistrust of Smeral such as many comrades express, despite the fact that I have sharply opposed him. But I know one thing, a model Communist Party does not exist in any country yet, indeed to train a model boy he must be systematically birched at the Congress not only on the grounds of the wisdom gained through the Russian Revolution but also on the ground of the experience gained in the revolutions in the West. There is no model Communist Party which one can produce through our revolution. It can only be produced in the heat of civil war, and Czecho-Slovakia has not yet had this experience.

I now turn to the speech of Comrade Fischer. Comrade Fischer, in the course of her speech, mentioned numerous omissions in the Rathenau action, which we also here in Moscow, in the Executive, noted when we received the first detailed news with regard to this development. When voices are raised in the party saying:—"In real mass action there should be no secrets in the masses, and under no circumstances should any understanding with the social-democrats be undertaken of which our comrades are not publicly informed in detail," when voices are raised in the party, saying: "the Communist standpoint on every occasion, and no weeping over the hopes of Rathenau and crying of 'Republic, Republic, Republic!' if that is said we can only say that we wish that this were not merely the voice of the opposition but the sentiment of the entire party. (Hear, hear!)"

Only one who is, so to speak, a sworn advocate of every party position can say that the German party has made no mistakes in the beginning of the Rathenau action. A couple of times, when the "Rote Fahne" arrived here, Comrade Zinoviev said: "Devil take them! What have they got to do with this republic? What have they to do with this Rathenau? Is there not a word of criticism of these things?" And that was our general feeling. Because of its fear of isolation, the party approached too closely to social-democracy.

In the criticisms of Comrade Fischer had been confined only to this, then she would have been quite right, but her criticisms went much further. For instance, Comrade Fischer declared among other things that she was not opposed in principle to negotiating with the leaders. Now was she in favour of it, but these things ought to be done with discrimination. This is very well, but her tactics, her criticism of the Party after the action in the Central Committee consisted not only of these commonplaces. Her opposition amounted to one thing—You are too much concerned about your own virtue. (Quite so!)

Comrade Fischer said, the railway strike was a brilliant action carried out without the aid of the leaders; we went to the masses over and over again telling them the same things that they themselves were saying, all the time shouting "Masses, masses, masses!" No leaders participated in that strike. In the second action the leaders already took part, and although she is not opposed to it in principle, this was a source of evil. Interruption: "The Congress of the Factory Councils." I am coming to that.

Comrades, what did actually happen? When we get into the confounded position of having to negotiate with the leaders, the opposition with Comrade Ruth Fischer at their head waxed extraordinarily nervous. I have experienced it throughout the conferences of the three Executives. Every day that passed without our breaking up the negotiations with the others, was considered by her as lost; with the Rathenau crisis it was the same; every day the opposition demanded either ultimatum—or a break up! The reason of this is the purely mechanical conception of the comrades of the Left. Our tactics of the United Front cannot be reduced to a fixed scheme. On the whole we know one thing now: We are the weaker side. The greatest obstacle will be put in our way to the masses; social-democracy seeks to isolate her workers from us. Whenever the pressure of the masses increases, the social-democrats have to deal with us. When conducting such negotiations it is not to our interest to break up until we have compelled them to draw the great masses of workers into the movement, or after it has become

clear to everybody that the social democrats want no action. A premature break just to avoid the spending of another hour or half an hour in the company of these people, would show that we consider ourselves weaker than we really are. Had the Party Press taken a clear stand from the very outset, it would have repeated to the masses all the while "yes, we are dealing the social-democrats, but if you will not take care the social-democrats are certain to betray you", then we could calmly continue negotiating until the very moment when this betrayal should have been fully manifested. But instead of seeing to it that the party take a definite stand in the matter you have only been pulling it by the sleeve hindering it all along and you do not let the party negotiate. This is a nervous and strained attitude which can render no good service to the party. Taking it all in all we enter into negotiation being aware that they will deceive us every time they can. To save our reputation we must tell the masses beforehand. But we must not break up unless we are in a position to do by ourselves what they refuse to do together with us. During our informal talks in the Executive regarding the Rathenau crisis I every time put this fundamental question: Could the Party risk a single-handed fight against the monarchists? I think that if the Party had gone into action alone, the mistake would have been far greater than all the others that have been committed (Quite true!) For we have had the experience of the Kapp "putsch", which has shown that the social-democrats were only waiting for the opportunity to throw in their lot with the monarchists against us, and it was not a mistake but a merit that the Party prevented this.

At the same time we say to the Party: Under such circumstances let not the idea settle forever in your minds that we are to remain weak for evermore. (Quite true). We may—as a matter of fact win the masses and grow strong at once in the very midst of such united action. The tactical art in such a situation is to proceed with caution and to avoid premature breaches, but always to be ready for them and preparing the masses by political agitation and by the conduct of the entire matter.

On the whole I must say — repeating what Comrade Zinoviev has already said last year in his thesis on the United Front that the tactics of the united front involved the gravest dangers. The dangers are as follows: We are living in a period of transition of a new wave of revolution. In the meantime however there is no present opportunity for revolutionary action, and a sort of twilight mood may easily creep in among the ranks of the Party; a sort of lonely feeling may urge some Communists to walk arm in arm with Scheidemann along Unter den Linden. In such a mood the Party leadership and the Party Press may easily be drawn into the social democratic policy. Such a danger is present, and when any action is undertaken, you must bear in mind not so much the danger of walking alone down the street as the graver danger that the Communist Party may disappear among the masses by its hob-nobbing with the social-democrats.

With regard to the emphasis a very apt word in the question of a Workers' Government, I merely wish to of Comrade Fischer. She has spoken of the danger of trimming Communism after the western style. Of this danger I would like to say a word or two. When Comrade Zinoviev at the extended Executive session said that the workers' government was to us a pseudonym for Proletarian Dictatorship—so he was quoted here by Comrade Mayer—I think that definition was not right and that it was due to the misgiving which has been characterised here by Comrade Fischer as trimming to the western style. To many Comrades the idea of a workers' government sounds like a sweet lullaby. They say: Dictatorship—the devil knows when that may come, at all events it is a difficult thing to carry on agitation under the banner of dictatorship; I will rather talk of "workers' government, this sounds so sweet and innocent.

Nobody knows what it means. May be something will come out of it. At any rate it does not sound so dangerous.

This should be done away with by our method of agitation. A workers' government is not the Proletarian Dictatorship, that is clear. It is one of the possible transitory stages to the proletarian dictatorship. The possibility of such a

transitory stage is due to the fact that the working masses in the West are not so amorphous politically as in the East. They are members of Parties and they stick to their parties. In the East, in Russia, it was easier to bring them into the fold of communism after the outbreak of the revolutionary storm. In your countries it is much more difficult. The German, Norwegian and Czecho-Slovakian workers will more readily declare against coalition with the bourgeoisie, preferring a coalition of labour parties which would guarantee the 8-hour day, and an extra crust of bread, etc. A Workers' Party usually arises in this manner either through preliminary struggles or on the basis of a parliamentary combination, and it would turn aside the opportunities of such a situation in stubborn doctrinaire fashion.

Now, the question arises: shall we recline upon this soft cushion and take a good rest, or shall we rather lead the masses into the fight on the basis of their own illusions, for the realisation of the program of Workers' government? If we conceive the workers' government as a soft cushion, that is bound to government bankrupt and we ourselves politically beaten; we would then take our place beside the social-democrats as a new type of tricksters. On the other hand, if we keep alive the consciousness of the masses that a workers' government is an empty shell unless it has workers behind it forging their weapons and forming their factory councils to compel it to hold on to the right track and make no compromise to the Right, making that government a starting point for the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. Such a workers' government will eventually make room for a Soviet government and not become a soft cushion, but rather a lever for the conquest of power by revolutionary means. I believe one of the comrades has said: The workers' government is not a historic necessity, but a historical possibility. This is, to my mind a correct formula. It would be absolutely wrong to assert that the development of man from the ape to People's Commissary must necessarily pass through the phase of a workers' government (laughter). Such a variant in history is possible, and

in the first place it is possible in a number of countries having a strong proletarian and peasant movement, or where the working class overwhelmingly outnumber the bourgeoisie, as is the case in England. A parliamentary labour victory in England is quite possible. It will not take place in the present elections, but it is possible in the future, and then the question will arise: What is the Labour government? It is no more than a new edition of the bourgeois-liberal government, or can we compel it to be something more? I believe Austen Chamberlain was right in saying: "If a Labour government comes, into power in England, it will begin with a Clynes administration and end in a government of the Left Wing, because the latter can solve the unemployed problem."

Thus, comrades, I believe that the Executive on the whole has taken the right attitude in this question, when on the one hand it warns against the proposition of either Soviet government or nothing, and, on the other hand, it warns against the illusion which makes the workers' government a sort of parachute.

Comrades, the questions which we shall have to discuss further will be the detailed outlining of our plans of campaign. You will say a plan of campaign was given by the extended executive session on the united front. This indeed is our immediate course. I believe that the experience of the present year should convince even the blind that there is no other course open to us. The way of the united front is a more difficult one than our policy of 1919 when we said: let us strike. It is altogether much easier and pleasanter to strike all together. But when we are lacking the necessary strength to do it and this way is necessary, it has to be followed, while retaining consciousness of the dangers that lurk from the right, and at the same time in the firm assurance that this road will not harm us, but the social-democrats. It is for this further reason that the Second International is making such hysterical efforts to destroy the bridges ahead of us. We have acted not on the desire to merge with the Scheidemanns, but in order to stifle them in our embrace.

(Loud applause).

Chairman: The next speaker is Comrade Duret, the representative of the tendency in the French Communist Party which opposes the tactics of the united front. This comrade has asked us to allow him an extension of time to enable him to develop his point of view. The Presidium does not object. Are there any objections? None. The Presidium allows the speaker three-quarters of an hour.

Duret: Comrades, I speak here on behalf of the tendency which has become known as the French opposition to the tactics of the united front.

I have asked for more time because I think that on the whole the International is not sufficiently informed and enlightened as to what we really are.

It is an indisputable fact that at the time when the tactic of the united front was put on the order of the day, a large majority of the French Communist Party took a stand against this tactic, and for my part, it cannot be gainsaid that this opposition, this refusal was a wholesome movement on the part of the French proletariat.

It should not be forgotten, that France is the country of socialist betrayals par excellence; it is a country of electioneering. This was the reason for this movement, this refusal, this revolt on the part of the French workers, who did not see at the start the whole import of the tactics of the united front, considering it only as a conciliation with the reformists who have just left the party. It was a happy symptom which marked a desire for revolutionary action on the part of the French proletariat.

But the ideological disputes that have arisen over this healthy movement of the French proletariat were not always of the same character. You know that the centrist tendency which has now become reconciled to the united front, and possesses the largest faction of the party, was at that time entirely opposed to the united front, but the manner in which it acted and the reasons which it gave were not at all revolutionary, but purely opportunist. It was also claimed that the party was good enough as it was, and there was no need to change its methods in order to modify the existing situation.

The group to which I belong, and

which was very weak at the time, maintained quite a different position.

It was also opposed to the tactics of the united front, but for reasons diametrically opposite to those of the centre. While the centre said: we are opposed to the united front because we are a good Communist Party, we said: we are opposed to the united front because in France there is no Communist Party to speak of; it is Communist in appearance, but reformist at bottom.

What are the reasons for our attitude? When the centre was against the tactics of the united front, it was because it was at the same time against the principle of the daily struggle for the immediate demands of the working class. In an article by Soutif, in the "L'Internationale" of February, entitled "Worthless Arguments," we read the following about the arguments of the Executive upon this subject: "Why should we fight for immediate demands, for reforms, while we know that the bourgeoisie will not give us anything except what we shall wrest from it by force. If we possess sufficient force to obtain reforms from the bourgeoisie, we will have enough force to capture the power and establish the proletarian dictatorship."

These words came from a member who strongly represented the views of the centre and the majority of the party. It was against this attitude that we took up the opposition.

We have done so in the theses published in the Bulletin Communiste and in an article that I have written in reply to that of Comrade Soutif.

We take it to be the task of the French Party to win the majority of the working class for the Communist idea and to conduct the daily fight for the immediate demands, as a sheer necessity for the French Communist Party.

In our theses, while disputing the tactics of the united front, we declare that we would unmask those who, under the mask of fighting against those tactics, were merely following the policy of the least resistance who wanted to pass as immaculate revolutionaries by means of revolutionary phraseology.

In order to thoroughly explain our attitude on the question of the united front, and the manner in which we tackled this

question in France, I have to make an analysis of the united front itself, and in this connection, I had to refer to the speech made by Zinoviev at the first meeting of the enlarged Executive.

What were the fundamental reasons which prompted the Communist Party to launch the watchword of the united front.

Zinoviev said: "there was a certain period of revolutionary depression throughout Europe. The masses after the war were in a state of fatigue. They did not march behind the Communist banner when the party called upon them to capture political power. Their only concern was to ensure their daily bread. Thus they fell under the spell of the reformist organizations. These were objectively favourable conditions to the development of the reformist ideas.

But the capitalist offensive has caused the masses to enter the arena for the fight for their daily demands, and for unity in this fight.

This watchword may be viewed from two different aspects. One aspect is reactionary and dangerous to the Communist Party. The other is revolutionary and should be beneficial to the Communist movement."

The dangerous aspect indicated by Zinoviev is the attempt to create one big proletarian party out of all the existing parties.

The revolutionary aspect is the grouping of all the proletarian organisations for united action. This revolutionary attempt wants to put the great majority of the working class in opposition to the forces of capitalism, which should be backed by the Communists. They should show that they are not responsible for the scission and that the entire responsibility falls upon the reformists.

"Furthermore" — Zinoviev continued — "the masses are afraid of the perilous adventures into which the Communist Party wants to draw them; it is for this reason that the masses hesitate to follow when the party gives the order.

In creating the united front, in taking the lead in this movement, we must demonstrate to the masses that the Communist Party is not a party of adventurers, and through this demonstration get the masses to join in the fight."

I believe I have reproduced more or less faithfully the thesis of Zinoviev.

I would like to examine the particular way in which this analysis of the situation applies to France, and in order to make my argument comprehensive, I would like to survey before you the present situation as compared with the situation in Germany, to which, I believe, Comrade Zinoviev has often made references.

What are the essential differences between these two situations? While in Germany the great majority of the proletariat is organised either politically, or economically, the great majority of the proletariat in France is unorganised.

While in Germany we can speak of the masses as being under the influence or belonging to reformist organisations, in France they are under no influence whatever and are distrustful of all political organisations without distinction of label.

It is for this reason that we think that the problem of the united front has a different aspect in France from what it has in Germany.

In France there is no such thing as a mass party. Furthermore throughout the historic development of the French movement one never comes across any great political mass parties; one finds rather certain groupings of ideas, certain groups of militants centred around a certain idea, around a certain banner.

We also see in France a certain trend towards unity, and Zinoviev was right in saying that the development of the capitalist offensive would be a great stimulus towards unity. But in France this desire for unity manifests itself in the syndicalist domain rather than in the political field, because the masses do not consider the political party as representing certain factions, but as a sort of huge electoral organisation pursuing exclusively electioneering aims. It is for this reason that the French masses show a tendency for grouping themselves into political organisations.

We and our friends have thought that in France there is a trend towards unity, an attempt to create a bloc of the working class in opposition to the bourgeoisie, but this would not be a bloc of political organisations forming an infinitesimal minority of the working class. If the

united front is to be brought about in France, it will be under the form of factory committees or workers' councils, or similar organisations, which would rally the great majority of the proletariat and which would effect the concentration of the proletarian forces against capitalism.

If in France the masses are justly mistrustful of the Communist Party it is because the Communist Party has never accomplished anything from the point of view of action by the masses, and has never demonstrated itself as the vanguard of the proletariat.

As Zinoviev has pointed out, the situation was such that there was no possibility for action. Those who advocated the united front in France were mistaken when they said that there was no possibility for revolutionary action.

When the employers of a country begin an offensive against all the demands of the workers, the Communist Party has to play a big part in uniting the proletarian forces against the power of the bourgeoisie, and can easily transform all these spontaneous and isolated actions into a grand systematic movement.

The tactics of the united front may be conceived in two different ways:

1) By extending an invitation to a reformist organisation somewhat in the following style: we want to start such and such an action, and we recommend militant and determined action by the masses, such as strikes, etc...

This was the tactic in vogue long before the creation of the united front; it was the tactics of the open letter, frequently used in Germany.

2) By addressing ourselves to reformist organisations, but without strict insistence on the orders and forms of the action. An appeal is made somewhat in general terms, proposing to employ methods of action which, properly speaking, are not the habitual methods for a Communist Party. But in course of the actions it endeavoured to prove that the method is not sufficiently revolutionary, and in this manner the attempt is made to go beyond the boundaries of the action that has been started. In other words, the attempt is made to transform a reformist pacifist action into a revolutionary action.

I should say that the second way could

be used by Communist parties that are strong, conscious, and organised, but not by parties which are Communist only in name.

It is for this reason that we have fought against this second interpretation of the united front.

It happens that regrettable deviations have taken place even in Germany. I asked the French delegation what would have happened if the same tactics had been adopted by a party like ours, which is incapable of revolutionary action and which follows in the wake of organisations that are capable of giving the order and starting the action.

If we desire to do daily work among the working masses, carry on a daily struggle for the demands which would unite us closely with these masses, we should not put ourselves in accord with disruptionist social organisations.

I will now consider another point. Let us pause for a moment to consider the likely effect of an action by a political party of the proletariat upon large unorganised masses. In a country like Germany, where the majority of the workers are organised, when the political party issues an order it is capable of getting the large masses of the proletariat behind it. It was on this basis that the German Party last year developed the theory of the offensive.

Under the present circumstances an order issued by the Party cannot sway the masses unless it possesses a revolutionary impetus. The movement of the masses in France ought to be in the nature of an elemental movement. Such a movement would not be brought about any easier by an agreement between the socialist party and the Communist Party, because it is only the Communist Party that starts the fight.

There is another side to the tactics of the united front which, regardless of all my efforts, still passes my understanding. I am speaking of the question of the workers' government.

Comrade Talheimer has used five or six pages to explain to me what is meant by a workers' government. But I am hardheaded. I failed to understand. Comrade Radek had made an attempt at explaining the same subject in more ample fashion, but still I fail

to understand. It seems that I will have to give it up as a bad job.

But I am making a tremendous effort to learn and I am asking in all seriousness, what is a workers' government. We are told that this is not the proletarian dictatorship, but that it is an intermediate stage between the proletarian dictatorship and the present order of things.

We are told at the same time that a workers' government does not rely upon parliament. I will ask then: on what does it rely? You will probably tell me that it relies upon the masses. But "the masses" that is a vague expression, and one would want a more explicit statement, we want to know whether one is to understand it as an organisation of the masses or the workers' councils. If we are to understand that the workers' government is to rely upon the workers' councils and factory committees, then a workers' government would simply mean the complete power of the Soviets, the complete power of the workers' councils. In that case I fail to see the essential difference between a workers' government and a proletarian dictatorship. If, on the contrary, this workers' government is to rely upon a parliamentary majority, then it is quite a different thing. In that case a workers' government takes quite a different aspect, and it is absolutely political.

Comrade Zinoviev has told us: "the slogan of the workers' government is not a universal one. It is not one for all countries. It is a historic possibility." I believe that he also said that a workers' government is associated with the existence of workers' councils.

How are we to explain the slogan of workers' government as launched by Blum and Frossard in France? Everyone is aware of the fact that there are as yet no workers' councils in France, and that the majority of our militants, even leaving out of consideration the large unorganised masses, do not yet understand the meaning of workers' councils.

Radek (interrupting): Thanks to the Party.

Durot: Evidently. But you should give our group the credit of being the first to start the fight in this sense.

Lauridan (interrupting): And what

about the United General Confederation of Labour.

The Blum-Frossard slogan of workers' government was interpreted by a comrade of the Left, our comrade Planchon of the Federation of the Seine who moved the amendment to the Frossard-Souvarin motion. He declared that the slogan would from now on be able to arouse the masses, was the Blum-Frossard slogan of the workers' and since there are no workers' councils in France, the Blum-Frossard government would have in the meantime to rely upon a parliamentary majority.

I believe that this way of understanding the workers' government is a deviation from the Communist and revolutionary point of view.

We were told that the Blum-Frossard slogan of workers' government should not be considered as an immediately realisable slogan, but as one that would be able to attract the French working masses to mass action. It should be something in the nature of the ancient social myths described by Sorel. It should be something like the social myth of the "General strike" as described by the same wizard.

The value of a slogan for a political movement, for a movement of the masses of a given country, should be judged by the influence which it would exercise over the policy and the tactics of the working masses.

In what manner?—In the most concrete manner. If the Blum-Frossard slogan on workers' government were launched in France after the interpretation of Planchon, it would lead purely and simply to furnishing a new support, to lending a new force to parliamentarism. There are no workers' councils in France. The workers' government would have to rely upon a majority. We would have to fight with might and main to obtain a parliamentary majority of socialists, not of Communists but of representatives of the people generally.

We can see what this leads us to: this leads us to electioneering and to a revival of parliamentarism. It is for this reason we declare that the Blum-Frossard slogan of workers' government in the actual present situation of the French Party would be dangerous and would

lead to a resurrection of reformism which is still latent in our Party.

I am speaking of the reformists who are still in our Party: This is one of the reasons why we have opposed the tactics of the united front.

The united front should be a call for action. One must clearly understand what is meant by action in the Communist Party. Action in the Communist Party means just the writing of articles.

Several Voices: Well said: We make speeches in parliament, but we retain the methods of the old unified Socialist Party of the pre-war days without any change whatever.

The burdens of the past are still weighing upon a great number of the Communist Parties of Western Europe, but they lie even heavier upon the French Communist Party. Obviously we do not wish to repudiate elections. We do not wish to repudiate the methods of peaceful fighting. But whatever methods of fighting we adopt they can have no influence and no force unless they give rise to action by the masses that we wish to consider all the forms of the proletarian struggle. We must so contrive our actions that they become the actions of the working masses, of the large masses of the proletariat.

Those in the French Party who recognise mass action are still the minority, and we know that if the tactics of the united front were to be accepted with the interpretation that has already been given in France, i. e., as a sort of electioneering tactics, it would, be directed about all against the best revolutionary elements of the French Party.

We will be told: You recognise the masses; you want to lead the proletarian masses under this slogan into the streets but you know that the reformists do not march. They are not averse to a common action with us, provided that action is pacifist, parliamentary with joint meetings and joint petitions. When it comes to mass action, they do not march.

Should we adopt mass action for the French Party which is not yet truly Communist Party, it will have to shoulder the responsibility for the defeat of the action.

If we adopt the tactics of a united front without any guarantees, it would lead

new strength to the reformist and opportunist elements of the party.

One must regretfully admit that the reformist and opportunist elements are becoming increasingly numerous in the party as well as in the International.

The disintegration of the Two and a Half International had its good sides; but it also had its bad sides. One of these bad sides is that a large number of the militants who formerly belonged to the Two and a Half International will now pass over bag and baggage into the Communist Party.

We already see in this hall our dear Comrade Serrati, true merely as a guest, but probably soon he will be one of our large family. After Serrati, others will come.

They will come into the Communist movement, bringing into it the old prejudices, the old methods of fighting, and their social-democratic methods. This should make us realise that the evil is not on the Left but on the Right. Comrade Radek has already said it. It is always the Left that has to bear the brunt. The Centre never says anything, neither does the Right; yet, in practice, they always do their little job of opportunism.

The fact that the Paris Congress formulated certain criticisms against the Left should not prevent this Congress from effectively protecting itself against the deviations of the Right. Comrade Radek has already made that judicious observation.

While the situation was still such that one could foresee revolutionary upheavals, the so-called inopportunism of the Left was a tendency that had to be killed.

Yet the opportunism of the Left, as long as it does not resemble the Dutch school and does not completely detach itself from the masses, is quite innocuous.

On the contrary, it was the opportunism of the Right which has bolstered up the German social-democratic Party. If a congress fails to take measures against opportunism of the Right, it increases the power of the reformist elements which are still in the International.

We should have a clear-cut statement of our position with regard to the daily demands of the working class. In what

manner should we fight for its daily demands? I believe that the International must take it clearly understood that in fighting for the daily demands, the Communists have no right for a single moment to refrain from criticising the objective value of these reforms. While fighting for a reform, the Communists must make it plain that this reform can in no way ameliorate the lot of the working class. It must be shown that the very reform might be taken back by the capitalist class if the system be left unshaken. It should also be made clear that the Communist movement should not become entirely absorbed in the struggle for certain reforms, but, when the fight for a reform has started, the Communist movement should try to draw the whole of the working masses into the fray. It should strain every effort to lead the struggle and transform it into a fight against the very basis of modern society.

It is for this reason that we sensed in the theories that were professed in France by Treient to the effect that, in the present period, to wrest a reform from the bourgeoisie is the same thing as to make a revolution; that to obtain a reform is the same as to blow up the whole structure of bourgeois society. We thought these theories dangerous for the workers' movement both from the practical and the theoretical point of view.

Comrade Zinoviev accused me of starting a campaign for the convening of national congresses before the International Congress, adding that I should have been cured by the French Communist Party. In this I beg to differ, because it is only after the Party Congress has been held, that the Party reveals itself in its true light and you know then what to expect of it.

The situation is clear: we know now in what manner we have to address the French Party.

For my part, the Paris Congress did no harm to either French Communism or to the International.

As you know, our tendency has fought against certain forms of the tactics of the united front.

Nevertheless, in the name of all my friends, I declare here that we are all ready to respect and to enforce all the decisions of the IV Congress of the Inter-

international. If the IV Congress of the International will order us to carry out the tactics of the united front, and tells us in what form we must carry it out, we will do our best to do so.

But we know that in the French Communist Party there are certain elements who have accepted the tactics of the united front for the only reason that to them it is the first step which leads them to the re-establishment of unity. Against these elements we will also fight. Between ourselves and these element it will be a life-and-death struggle. If the French Party accepts the tactics of the united front, it should purify itself, it should exclude from its midst all the reformists and the confusionists.

It is only under this condition that it will become a true Communist Party worthy of the III International (Cheers). Bordiga.—Comrade Zinoviev referred conformingly to certain fundamental points laid down by the Third Congress with which the Italian Party is in full agreement.

The first point deals with the interpretation of the Capitalist situation; and declares that the present crisis is not transitory, but involves the decay of capitalism itself, and in the final crisis.

The second point states that in order to make revolutionary victory possible in a situation like this the C. P. must extend its influence over wide masses. This can be done by participating in their struggles for their every day interests.

The Italian Communists neither in theory nor in practice have followed the putschist method and never laboured under the illusion that power can be captured by a small revolutionary party. They do not accept, however, the formula of the "majority" of the working class which is vague and arbitrary. It is vague because we are not told whether it refers to the proletariat alone or includes also the semi-proletarian sections of the politically conscious workers organised in the Trade Unions. This formula seems to us arbitrary, since nothing can make us believe that the revolutionary attack depends merely upon the numerical relation of forces.

Our opinion on the tasks of the International and on Comrade Zinoviev's views on this subject is—that the International

has not yet solved the great problem of tactics in a satisfactory manner. As a rule the Left Wing is always revolutionised by its faith in the coming revolution. Well, I am a little more pessimistic on this point than Comrade Zinoviev.

If a capitalist crisis is a necessary prerequisite of revolution, it must be also admitted that the conditions for the development of a strong Communist International and for its influence on the masses are to a certain extent weakened, by the direct influence which the capitalist crisis exercises on the economic organisations of the working class, the Trade Unions and similar organisations, which may be called the natural and primitive organisations of the working class, which are more directly affected by the economic situation. A more direct method of winning over the masses is to intensify our trade union activities. The economic crisis and unemployment render this task very difficult. The solution which the opportunists propose for the problem of the liberation of the proletariat is a capitalist revival. In fact the classic solution would be that during the period of capitalist prosperity, the revolutionary party should be made as strong and influential as possible, so that, in the time of crisis, it may be able to direct the economic organisations in their daily activities along the lines of revolutionary action. This is precisely what the opportunists were hindering. Nevertheless, the Communist International continues to consider the revolutionary mobilisation of the world proletariat as its chief task.

The obstacles the solution of this problem presents are great, though not insurmountable. I am of the opinion that notwithstanding the exceptions in the present situation of certain countries, the economic situation as a whole is going to get worse, leading to unemployment and to the numerical weakening of the trade unions.

Discontent will grow, not only among the proletariat, but also among the semi-proletarian classes owing to the danger of future wars. To organise this chaotic discontent into something capable of a revolutionary struggle is the great task.

The International is endeavouring to find the solution of this problem in the

very conditions created by the Capitalist offensive. Hence, the tactics of the united front.

Accepting the idea of this tactic as a whole, we make certain reservations concerning the rôle of the International as guide of the proletariat. These reservations are based upon certain considerations of which I am going to speak. We regard the winning over of the masses as our fundamental aim. But this does not at all mean that this end can be achieved by a process of forced marches. It may come to pass that the Party, without experiencing any growth in numbers, will nevertheless carry on its activity in such a way as would enable us to ultimately win over the masses to our side. Zinoviev said that certain sections of the International increased their influence over the masses in spite of the diminution of their numerical forces.

Thus the conquest of the masses must not necessarily depend on the oscillations of the statistical index. It is a dialectic process which is above all determined by the development of social conditions, and our tactical initiative can only accelerate it within certain limits, or rather under certain conditions which we consider as a necessary prerequisite. Our tactical initiative can only influence the psychology of the proletariat, using the word psychology in its widest sense, as applied to the conscience, the state of mind and will to fight on the part of the working masses.

Our revolutionary experience teaches us that there are two factors which play an important part in this connection, namely, a complete ideological clarity within the party, and a strict continuity of its organisational structure.

We only say that to allow this condition to be jeopardised, in order to effect a seeming amelioration of the effectiveness of the Party or its adherents, would not be a great step forward on the road to a real conquest of the masses which must consist in rallying the sections of the proletariat around a party capable of revolutionary action. In order to do this our preparatory work must not be in the nature of an improvisation, but must have in it the factors which I have already mentioned, namely—clarity of ideology and a solid organisation.

This conceded, we follow unconditionally the line of the International when it proposes what was already done between the III and IV Congresses (and what our party was the first in doing, even before the return of our delegation from the III Congress) to take advantage of the world situation in connection with the capitalist offensive, to get behind the Communist Party those sections of the working class which are either with the Social-Democrats or are unorganised. We are not going to analyse here once more the causes and the nature of the bourgeois offensive into which the ruling class has been forced by the very fact that the crisis is irreparable. In connection with this there is a special item on the agenda, and when dealing with the Italian fascism, we shall be able to demonstrate the counter-revolutionary tactics of the bourgeoisie.

The capitalist offensive has put forward a number of political and economic questions vitally affecting the majority of the workers, and thus gave to the Communist Party an opportunity to support working class unity of action and demonstrate by actual facts that the other proletarian parties are incapable of defending even the most immediate interests of the proletariat. Thus, the Communist Party was able to hinder the capitalist reconstruction plan, and at the same time to increase its influence over the masses. We said that we realise that there are drawbacks to the application of this tactic owing to the fact that we must be careful not to jeopardise the other factors by which our party influences the masses and carries on the revolutionary education of its adherents, because we must always bear in mind that our Party is not a mechanism to be handled at will, but an organism susceptible to the reaction of outside factors and to modifications depending upon the erection of our tactics. This is why we say that to have a permanent leading body composed of representatives of various parties and delegate to it the power over these parties would be subversive of the very idea of the united front.

Evidently we must be equally prepared for either a refusal or an acceptance of the part of the opportunists to join forces with us. But in any case, the responsi-



...the Communist Party... the United Front... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

The United Front... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

The United Front... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

The United Front... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

...the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

It might be said perhaps that the workers' government is not what we in our hour think it to be. I take this opportunity of saying that I have often heard explanations of what the workers' government is not, but I still want Zinoviev to explain what the workers' government really is.

If it means the establishment of a temporary regime preceding the proletarian dictatorship, I am of the opinion that a proletarian victory does not take a very definite form, one must expect that the process will proceed through re-action towards a bourgeois coalition government, in which the right wing of the opportunists would probably participate directly, and the centrists would disappear from the political scene after having accomplished their role of confederates of the social-democrats.

In Germany, for instance, we see that on the eve of a general industrial crisis, the factory committee movement took up the problem of the control of production. In this there is a certain analogy with the Italian situation of September 1920, which preceded a great proletarian defeat. If a similar revolutionary situation should arise, the German Communist Party must be prepared for the refusal on the part of the opportunist elements to support even the smallest modicum of workers' control. Either the Communist Party will be able to play an independent part from the start, or a counter-revolutionary situation will arise leading to the establishment of a government in which German Fascism would have the collaboration of...

...the Social-Democratic... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

We heard Zinoviev complain about the lack of centralisation and discipline in our international action. We are in favour of the maximum of centralisation and power for the Supreme Central Organ. But to insure obedience on the part of the various sections of an organisation to the initiative measures of the leading centre it is necessary on the one hand to have something more than a solemn sermon or the virtues of discipline and on the other hand the measures themselves must be of such a nature as to command respect...

It is not the formal and minute application of democratic principles and of control on the part of the organised masses, that leads to fusion. We must look elsewhere for a guarantee of Party discipline. Basing our views on Marxian dialectics, that we must bear in mind that our organisation is not a mechanism nor an army, but a complex body. The development of which is both a product and a factor of the historic situation.

Discipline can only be guaranteed if we strictly define the limits within which our methods are to be applied, and if our fundamental resolutions on tactics, and organisational measures are clear and well defined. The Russian Revolution has provided the international revolutionary movement with a basis for the reconstruction of its ideology and a fighting organisation. This is an incalculable benefit which will bear fruit in proportion as the connection between the Russian Revolution and the international proletarian movement is maintained. We condemn as detrimental to our ultimate goal the policy of allowing too much liberty to individual sections in their methods of organisation and choice of tactics; such matters should be left to the leading centre, and not to the national organisations, in spite of the fact that the latter claim to be better judges...

...the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

It is self-evident that if a... the masses... the workers' government... the revolutionary situation... the masses follow...

The regrettable case of the French Party is a most striking example of this. One must bear in mind the remarkable fact that the parties that have gone through a crisis have the majority of the politically organised workers originated from the old Social-Democratic Party. This is exemplified by the events in France, Czech-Slovakia and Norway. I venture to say that there is an erroneous tendency to compare the international of the proletarian parties to a state military organisation. In order to be able to find at any cost adequate means for achieving great revolutionary ends and passing through crisis which it was not within our power to prevent we probably failed to achieve certain solid results, and it is quite possible that at important turning points we shall be faced with embarrassing problems. I am not going to say that such an experience was not to a certain extent in the order of things. All I want to do here is to give you the benefit not of abstract speculation but of the experiences of a party which is forming part of the United Front.

Our International is too frequently considered as something outside the Parties which adhere to it; it has happened that...

these parties or fractions of these parties have entered into public and insolent polemics with the International.

The latter has been reduced to forming for itself fractions within the parties, which ought to be at its orders. This kind of thing seems to be absurd and disastrous.

We find ourselves compelled to liquidate too many questions of organisation and discipline just at the moment when our adversary launches a reaction which renders practically impossible any negotiations or any procedure which may be necessary in such cases.

I will conclude my statement by quoting Zinoviev: "Let us be a real Communist International Party, firmly centralised and ready for the revolutionary struggle."

I should like to say that in such a party no isolated attempts should be made to introduce changes in the organisational structure, and that in a supreme assembly such as this there should never be delegates coming from any constituency without being acquainted with the general rules of organisation.

In the centralised International Communist Party we shall have that true unity of thought and action which is indispensable, which does not tolerate any breaches of Party discipline, but punishes them as acts of treason.

Graziadei. I speak in the name of the minority of the Communist Party of Italy. We do not wish to broach the Italian question now. A commission has been appointed for that purpose. We will wait to present our point of view before this commission which will certainly study all the peculiarities of our political situation. If we still have observations to make after the commission has finished its work, we will demand the floor at the Congress.

For the time being we will confine ourselves to the theses and the order of the day of the Congress.

Comrade Zinoviev's speech is divided into two parts.

Resolutions on the first part have already been put before the Congress. In the name of the minority I wish to declare now that we will vote for these resolutions.

As for the Italian question, we declare that the Communist International in ge-

neral has acted well. Naturally we reserve ourselves the right to discuss the conditions and guarantees without which we will not examine the future relations between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of Italy.

The second part of Zinoviev's speech is the more interesting to us because it deals with the fundamental problems of the policy of the Communist International.

I wish to recall here that the Congress of the Italian Party in Rome proposed certain theses on the question of tactics. The Enlarged Executive of last May declared these theses were incorrect and must be revised.

Actually no revision has taken place.

On the contrary, the comrades of the majority believe that their theses are so good that they have brought them once again before the Congress, through Comrade Bordiga.

I think a long theoretical discussion on the united front would be ridiculous after this slogan has been in existence for a whole year. The United Front is the only means to approach the largest masses of the proletariat.

From this point of view I do not understand Comrade Bordiga's preoccupation, and his demands in the name of arithmetic—what is a majority?

The question of a majority is not purely quantitative. It must be considered from many points of view, different and complementary. It is the business of the political leaders in each country to determine whether the party is already a mass party and strong enough for a given action.

Generally speaking, the United Front is a weapon for the conquest of the proletarian masses. Many comrades have not paid sufficient attention to the problem of time. That is why time is now turning against us.

What forms can the United Front take? With the permission of the Congress, I will say that there are two forms of the United Front. The one is the policy whereby a Communist Party tries to absorb in its organisation groups of workers which formally belonged to the Socialist Parties, and who now accept or think they accept Communist ideas. I recognise that this first form is very dangerous

in striving thus to improve our position, we run the risk of creating a state of affairs which, in time will continue to get worse instead of better.

However we cannot reject a policy just because it may present some dangers. All life is danger. The Communist Party which is a party of struggle, cannot renounce certain methods of struggle just because they present certain difficulties.

In the theses of the Communist Party of Italy we read that the Communist Party, in all countries of the World, can admit members only as individuals. This is what Comrade Bordiga has also said.

This is one of the points of the theses which the minority opposed at the March Congress of the Italian Party. For if these theses were accepted absolutely, for every country and for all time, it would give the impression that the Communist Parties cannot accomplish their purpose, i.e. the conquest of the majority of the working class.

If there are Socialist parties with a working class membership we should hope to gain them to our side. But if we gained them over, we should absorb them in groups, and not individually, because they were already organised in another party and because they bring with them a moral, and some financial, capital. Their political consciousness is the reason why it is impossible to demand that they come to us as isolated individuals.

The question of the absorption of certain sections of the old Socialist Parties has come up in Italy, as it did a year and a half ago in Germany. Was the absorption of the Left wing of the Independents good or bad for the Communist Party of Germany? I believe that, in general the absorption has been very useful to the German Communist Party, even if at times we had to combat the dangers of this operation.

We have a somewhat analogous situation in Italy. The Italian Communist Party had declared that the Socialist Party of Italy had never split. It believed this to the last moment. However the opposition has taken place.

Considering the lack of character of the Italians I do not say that the maximalists have already become Communists. I hope I will never say any thing so foolish. But I do say that the split

between the maximalists and the reformist is an important fact, in contradiction to what the majority of the Party believed and desired, and that this fact raises a most delicate problem of the application of the United Front.

Let us pass to the second form of the United Front the form whereby we do not seek to bring new working class elements, former members of the Socialist Parties into the Communist Party, but whereby the Communist Party, preserving its independence of organisation, attempts negotiations and temporary alliances with other working class parties and with Trade Unions to draw them into common action.

Even in this form of application of the United Front, I believe that the majority of our Party has made mistakes. It is true that the Communist Party of Italy believed in good faith that it was applying the spirit of the United Front in its second form.

I repeat here that the Communist Party of Italy has been among the first to issue the slogan of the United Front, in a very imperfect sense, but before it even became the policy of the International.

What is the mistake which in our opinion the majority of the Communist Party of Italy has committed in its theses on the United Front and in its application in the second form.

There are difficulties in the application of the United front in the second form as well as in the first. Life always presents difficulties. Does not marriage present difficulties? (Laughter) And nevertheless we get married.

We see then that, like marriage, this policy presents difficulties. Bordiga believes that they can be solved mechanically and artificially. He makes distinctions. We do not want a United Front with the parties, but with the Trade Unions, because the Trade Unions are the most natural product of the working class, and because we can act with more freedom there and without compromising ourselves. He forgets that there are just as many difficulties in the Trade Unions as in the Parties. There are Social-Democrats there as well as in the Parties. (Applause).

The distinction of Comrade Bordiga, then, has no basis in reality. We will meet

the same dangers, the same difficulties in the Trade Unions that we would meet in the Parties.

There is of course a natural difference between the Trade Unions and the parties. But the problem of the United Front is both an economic and a political problem. This is why it is impossible to draw distinctions between the Trade Unions and the Parties in the application of the United Front.

Comrade Bordiga said: We oppose the formation of a permanent organ between the Social-Democrats and the Communists. But the United Front does not mean the formation of any such permanent organ. On the contrary, the United Front means a series of ruptures and of new attempts at united action.

The United Front cannot be considered as a permanent alliance with the Social-Democrats. Such an alliance would mean the death of the Communist strategy of the united Front.

Even from the Trade Union standpoint, the restriction of the United Front to Trade unions where there are Communists would be insufficient. There are Trade unions in which we have not a single comrade, as in the Christian and Catholic Unions which are numerous in many countries and in Italy.

To establish relations with the Trade Unions, relations which are necessary in certain cases for the realisation of the United Front, we must deal with their political leaders.

The policy of the United Front has been conceived in Italy in such an abstract doctrinaire fashion, that it has not yet had effect in the daily struggle.

Let us pass to the conception of the workers' government. After participating at the meetings of the Enlarged Executive Committee in May, Comrade Bordiga and I returned to Italy, I did my best then to explain to our comrades what a workers' government was. No doubt it was my inability to explain things, but our comrades understood nothing of my explanations (laughter)

I have never shared the opinion of Comrade Zinoviev who seemed to believe that workers' government was synonymous with proletarian dictatorship.

I observe with pleasure that this conception has been modified by Comrade

Zinoviev himself and by the Executive Committee of the Third International.

In our opinion the problem is as follows:—in every Country where the working class can conquer power the workers' government becomes the form of the United Front.

That section of the working class which is still under the influence of the Social-Democracy does not yet believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat. To induce it to take power, we satisfy ourselves with the formula of the workers' government.

We must consider the historical possibility of the workers' government being a real step between the bourgeois or even Social-Democratic government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In that event it is quite possible that the workers' government may have a parliamentary form.

This possibility is one of the reasons why the conception of the workers' government is so difficult to grasp for many of our comrades. This difficulty is typical in Italy where the anti-parliamentary faction of the Socialist Party has played a prominent role in the formation and organisation of the Communist Party. Many of our comrades are afraid of the idea of a workers' government because they are afraid of a parliamentary form.

This is a great mistake, and I have always said so to the majority of the Party.

It is quite possible that in a country where a large section of the working class is still imbued with bourgeois or semi-bourgeois democratic ideas, a workers' government may find support, for some time, in the Trade Unions, to which we must attach increasing political importance, on the one hand, and on a parliamentary form on the other. We cannot reject the workers' government because it may for a short time take a parliamentary form. This would be a great mistake. In Russia, after the March Revolution, the Communist attempted to increase the political power of the Soviets in which they were still a minority, but they did not abandon Parliament when purely Social-Democratic government was in power. In Germany, after the fall of the Empire

we found Parliament and the Soviets side by side.

Naturally the Communists must always teach the workers that a real workers' government can only be formed as a result of armed revolt against the bourgeoisie, and that this government must be under the control of its class organisations. They must continually teach the workers that if the dictatorship of the proletariat is not attained very soon, the workers' government will not be able to resist the assaults of the bourgeoisie.

Our Comrade Bordiga has demanded an ever stricter discipline from the Communist International. We fully subscribe to this part of Comrade Bordiga's speech. But we earnestly ask of our comrades of

the majority of the Italian Party not to consider discipline merely as a matter of form, but to make of all the tactics of the Communist International a living actuality in the daily existence of the Party (Applause).

The President.—Before we proceed with the translation of Comrade Graziadei's speech, I would like to make a declaration: The list of the speakers is long, and it will be necessary to work more intensely to finish. The Presidium proposes to therefore hold a session this evening at seven o'clock and to leave to-morrow open for the various commissions.

Any objections?

Adopted.

The session closed at 4 p.m.