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Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

„The capitalist offensive“ report by Comrade Radek.

Kolaroff: The Session is now opened. Four well qualified comrades have reported on the Russian Revolution. I do not think there will be any delegations who espouse any other point of view. If there are, naturally we shall give them the floor and open a discussion. If it is merely a matter of declaration of Solidarity, the Congress had had the occasion, several times, of making excellent demonstrations of its solidarity with the Russian proletariat and the Russian Revolution. The Presidium has therefore decided that it will not accord the floor to any delegations if they simply wish to express their solidarity, and merely to give to those delegations who wish to present another point of view than that developed and defended by the reporters.

Does any delegation ask for the floor under these conditions?

As no one wishes the floor, we shall pass on to the next point in the agenda: The Capitalist Offensive. The reporter is Comrade Radek.

Comrade Radek: Comrades, all the debates on tactics which we have carried on here and which we shall still conduct revolve really around one question, namely: the capitalist offensive against the proletariat and the measures of defence to be adopted by the proletariat. Whether we discuss the fighting capacity of the French Communist Party or the United Front, or the Workers' Government, the

basic tactical question always involves the capitalist offensive.

In discussing the capitalist offensive we have confined this question within two narrow limits. Firstly because under the capitalist offensive first prominence has been given to the lowering of wages and the lengthening of the working day, and secondly because the entire history of the world revolution has been divided into two mechanically separated phases., i. e. the proletarian offensive and the capitalist counter-offensive. I think therefore it will help us to better understand the position and the attitude which the Communist International should adopt if we briefly review the development of the world revolution in its concrete forms. I will endeavour at the risk of being too cursory, to recall the most important facts to your mind.

The Russian Revolution which we discussed in detail on the previous point of the agenda has been recognised by the proletariat as an event of international moment. There is no doubt, however, that the world bourgeoisie taken as a whole has understood better than the proletariat that the Russian Revolution was the first act of the international proletarian offensive. To become convinced of this it is sufficient to read the secret memoranda submitted by the leaders of the Central Powers to their governments in 1917 and the beginning of 1918. I refer here to the

memorandum drawn up by Count Czernin to show that immediately after the March Revolution and prior to the October Revolution the leaders of the Central Powers very well understood that after the war in which, owing to the bankruptcy of the social democracy, the various bourgeois cliques were fighting their own battles on the backs of the passive masses of the people the Russian March Revolution will have made a breach in the capitslist front and that a new factor would appear on the stage of world politics. Ludendorff in his reminiscences describes how the military position of Germany at that time compelled them to allow the Bolsheviks to pass through Germany although they understood the danger of so doing and how later on he regarded it of supreme importance to suppress the Russian Revolution. It was the ill fate of world capitalism that its internal conflicts compelled it to give the Russian Revolution a breathing spell and thus enable it to organise itself.

Comrades, after the defeat of Germany and Austria resulted in the crowns of the Hapsburgs and the Hollenzollerns rolling in the gutter, a situation was created in which the proletariat exhausted by the war and morally depressed by social democratic policy was compelled to take power because there was no other factor that could make the attempt. Much irony has been expressed at the illusions under which the Communist International laboured at its inauguration with regard to the world situation. The former leaders of the Centre and present members of the Second International spoke of how optimistic and short-sighted we were when we founded the Communist International and based its policy on the victory of the world revolution. I will read you a document written almost at the same time when the first Congress of the Communist International met, by Lloyd George. This document was kept in secret until the former Prime Minister of Italy Signor Nitti revealed it in his book "Peaceless Europe", published this year. In this secret memorandum addressed to the leaders of the Versailles Conference Lloyd George says the following:

"The situation to-day has quite changed. The Revolution is still in its swaddling clothes.

The cruellest terror still reigns in Russia.

Europe is filled with revolutionary ideas. A feeling not of depression but of passion and revolt reigns in the breast of the working class against the conditions of life that prevailed before the war. The whole of the existing system, political, social and economic is regarded with mistrust by the whole of the population of Europe. In some countries, like Germany and Russia, this unrest is leading to open revolt and in others like France, England and Italy, it is expressed in strikes and in a certain aversion to work. All signs go to show that the striving is as much for social and political changes as for increase in wages."

Under the pressure of a proletarian offensive Lloyd George regarded the conditions of life prevailing in 1914 as inhuman. We will now see that he later changed his opinion.

"A considerable part of this unrest should be welcomed; we shall never achieve a lasting peace if we aim at reestablishing the conditions of life that prevailed in 1914. If we do, we stand the risk of driving the mass of the European population into the arms of the radicals whose basic idea is that the renaissance of humanity lies in the complete overthrow of the present social system. In Russia these people have secured victory on this basis but the cost of such a victory has been terrible. Hundreds of thousands of the population are no longer among the living. Railways, towns, the whole edifices of the Russian State has been ruined, although in many ways they have succeeded in retaining the following of the mass of the Russian people and what is more important, they have succeeded in organising a great army which appears to be well led, well disciplined, and the greater part of which is prepared to sacrifice their lives for their ideals.

If we allow another year to pass, Russia inspired with fresh enthusiasm will forget its needs for peace because it will be the only country that has an army at its disposal which has confidence in the ideas for which it fights."

After this brief description, which is

worthy of being brought to the knowledge of the vast masses of the people, Lloyd George then goes on to describe the real danger which then confronted the capitalist system. This description can serve as an indictment against the social democratic parties in general and the German Social Democratic Party in particular. He goes on to say:

"The greatest danger that can arise at the present moment would be that Germany may attain a position in which it would place its fate in the hands of the Bolsheviks, putting its wealth, its spirit and its superb powers of organisation at the disposal of these fanatics whose dream is to conquer the world for Bolshevism by force of arms. This danger is no mere phantom. The present German Government is weak, it commands no respect and little authority and yet holds; its breakdown would mean the coming of the Spartacus, for which Germany is not yet ripe. But the argument which the Spartacists know how to use and the effect of which never fails is that it alone is capable of liberating Germany from from the intolerable conditions into which the war has plunged it."

He then says further:

"If Germany goes over to the Spartacists it is inevitable that it will bind its fate with that of the Bolsheviks. If this should happen, the whole of Eastern Europe will be swept into the maelstrom of the Bolshevik Revolution, and in the course of one year nearly three hundred million men led by German generals and trained German instructors, equipped with German guns and German machine-guns, will be formed into a mighty army ready at any moment to resume the attack upon Western Europe."

Comrades, this picture drawn by the cleverest leader of the European Bourgeoisie, was not drawn merely to frighten Clemenceau and the other Statesmen. It is a true portrayal of the position as it was in this second phase of the proletarian revolution at the beginning of the German Revolution. World capital met this position by taking up a defensive position in the West and opening the first capitalist offensive in the East.

If you study the strike statistics of 1919—I will not quote them here—you will see that the waves of attack of the proletariat arose not in Germany but in England and America. In 1919 the English workers forced wages up to a point higher than at any time during the war when its labour was absolutely necessary to save European capitalism. While during the war they secured an increase in real wages of seven shillings per week, in 1919 alone they secured increases of one pound a week. They secured reductions of hours of labour from three to four hours a day for seven million persons. The eight-hour and in some cases even a shorter day was introduced in 1919 and affected from 60 to 80 per cent of the English workers. The demand for the nationalisation of the mines was met by the British Government by the appointment of the Sankey Commission which in principle accepted it. In America not only was one strike followed by another, but what is characteristic of the situation in this classic land of individualism, the nationalisation of the railways was seriously discussed.

Among the whole of the Western line of industrial capitalism the bourgeoisie kept to the defensive for fear that greater resistance on its part might drive the workers of Europe and America into the arms of Communists."

In Germany the bourgeoisie spent milliards in order to keep prices down and thus to appease the dissatisfaction of the workers. "Socialism is on the march" cried the Social-Democrats and the government established a "Socialisation Commission" in order to create the impression that the workers could achieve their ends by peaceful means.

At the same time the bourgeoisie began its first offensive against Soviet Russia which we know as Entente Intervention. Thus the first clash of arms between the world proletariat and the world bourgeoisie consisted, not only in that the Russian proletariat, made the first breach in the world capitalist system, but that it alone fought in this breach while the proletariat in Western Europe confined itself to fighting for an improvement in its position. As an isolated detachment of the Central European proletariat, the Hungarian proletariat undertook a relief

offensive to ease the position of Soviet Russia and emancipate itself. In this attempt it was defeated and the Hungarian Soviet Republic was destroyed.

Comrades, Soviet Russia not only repulsed the attack of world capital, but in 1920, at the junction between the two main epochs of the development of world revolution and at the turning point of two economic periods, it passed from the defensive to the offensive. There is no need for me to conjure up phantasies about what the world situation would have been if the Russian proletariat had been victorious at Warsaw. I have only to recall the fact that, simultaneously with this advance of the Russian proletariat, the first large section of the Western European working class commenced its offensive: The Italian workers occupied the factories in Italy. It is worth while to ponder for a moment over the consequences of the extension of the frontiers of the first proletarian State across the Vistula and the capture of power by the proletariat in Italy. It would have put the agrarian countries in East and South Europe between the vice of two proletarian States placing them at the disposal of the industrial proletariat of Europe. When we to-day wish to realise the significance of a defeat of Soviet Russia and of the Italian workers in 1920 we must ponder over the possibilities that lay in the situation that prevailed at that time.

The collapse of the military offensive of Soviet Russia against Warsaw and of the proletarian offensive in Italy had different causes. Soviet Russia proved itself weak militarily while the Italian working class proved itself weak politically. There is not the slightest doubt that these defeats marked a turning in the history of the first phase of the world revolution. Rudolph Hilferding subsequently declared with the greatest enthusiasm that it was the independents who gave the bolsheviks their battle of the Marne. The learned representative of Austro-Marxism who now fills the post of the representative of German capitalism abroad has no reason at all to ascribe the defeat of Soviet Russia to himself. The Red Army was flung back, not as a result of this volubility of the German leaders of the Centre, but by the bayonets of the army of the

Polish landlords and by the guns of French imperialism to which the Second and the Two and a Half International are not yet affiliated. The collapse of the Red Army offensive at Warsaw and of the Italian workers, which introduced the second phase of the development of world revolution, coincided with the close of the period of apparent prosperity which had made possible the concessions made by world capitalism to the Western European workers in 1919—1920 and marked the beginning of the world economic crisis.

I now come to this phase. The modification is based upon a fact which eventually will mean the downfall of capitalism but which has temporarily strengthened the position of world capital to a great extent, and that is the crisis which capitalism has developed—the fact that world capital, thanks, on the one hand, to the results of the war, which are only just now making themselves felt economically, and on the other hand as a result of the Versailles Treaty, has arrived at the limits of its expansion. The economic crisis has started in all countries and the importance of this economic crisis in its relation to the policies of world capitalism in its opposition to the proletariat, can be explained in the simple words which a leading organ of English Capitalism, "The Westminster Gazette", the mouthpiece of Mr. Asquith, uses in its summing up of the situation:

"The working class can be quite sure of this, that no power on earth can save them from the lowering of their standard of living, so long as there are starving men struggling among themselves for the right to live. The existence of such people implies a condition under which any standard of living may be lowered".

This appeared in the "Westminster Gazette" at the beginning of the economic world crisis and it described the fundamental fact which has enabled capital to strengthen itself the world over. While millions of workers in the industrial countries of western Europe—I shall speak later on Germany especially—are unemployed, the fighting power of the workers is weakened. The simple fact that there is a possibility of using the unemployed workers against the employed workers damages the trade unions' capa-

city to undertake an offensive and weakens generally the militancy of the workers.

I will not adorn my subject with statistics; it is very dull to listen to figures. The Executive has ordered a complete report on the position of the capitalist offensive in all countries, to be compiled by Comrade Z. Lader, who is well qualified for the work. Unfortunately, this report has not yet been published as it was delivered too late. We shall, however, publish it in all languages. I shall quote from this report a few figures which will show the remarkable changes which have taken place.

In England, in 1918, there were 1250 strikes, in which 1,100,000 workers took part. These strikes lasted 6,730,000 days. In 1919 the number of strikes increased to 1411. 2,500,000 workers participated, and the strikes covered 34,000,000 days. In 1920 there were 1715 strikes. The number of strikers however, was somewhat smaller, but they still amounted to about 2,000,000, and the strikes covered 27,000,000 days. The result of these strikes was that from six to seven million workers gained wage increases amounting to seven million pounds a week. The shortening of the work day was secured, in 1919, for 6,500,000 workers to the extent of six hours a week. In 1920, half a million workers gained reductions in their working hours to the average extent of 3½ hours weekly. As a result from sixty to eighty per cent of the workers worked only 8 hours or less.

In 1921, 118,000 workers struck. The wages of 8 million workers were reduced to the extent of 11 million pounds a week. In 1922, up to the month of August 7½ million workers received wage reductions amounting to 3½ million pounds weekly, while only 18,000 workers received wage increases and only to the extent of 3,000 pounds a week. But English capitalism was not content with these results. No isolated journalist, but the responsible organ of the Federation of British Industries, quotes the following from the "Economist."

"It will possibly be necessary to go still further. The workers must be prepared to accept a wage which, if business does not improve, will mean a

lower standard of living for them than that which existed before the industrial depression, or even before the war. Furthermore, so that this wage reduction may be carried out without disturbances, it is desirable that the movement be as broad and as united as possible." (February 11, and March 11, 1922).

We see the same process generally taking place in America. The capitalists will not be content with the reduction of wages and the lengthening of working hours all over the world. The struggle is fermenting against those rights which the trade unions had gained. In America the Open Shop Campaign proceeds apace. The trade unions must be forced to give up their right to occupy the workshops only with organised workers and to keep out the unorganised, a right which they won only after years of struggle. During the strike of the railway workers this year, we could see that the highest court in America used the same tactics as were used in England in the Taff Vale decision, which was later overthrown by the British workers. The American trade unions are counted responsible for all damages incurred in the struggles against the economic interests of the capitalists.

In England we see the struggle to eradicate the Workshop Committees. A leader of the British capitalists expressed this in the following words: We must know clearly whether the owners or the Soviets are going to run the factories. And, at the same time, the English Conservative Party started a campaign against the Labour Party by proposing in Parliament to forbid the trade unions from using their funds for political purposes. I will not mention examples from other countries, such as Sweden, Holland, Norway and Switzerland, as they present us with no new features. I shall speak on the German question on another occasion. It is clear that we have here a great and deliberate economic political scheme on an international scale, which is a direct result of the World War. During the war international capital formed the plan of meeting the post war crisis by the integration of various economic areas. The Middle European plan was the principal aim of German imperialism, on the one hand,

and, on the other hand, we had Wilsonism which was nothing more than the plan for the creation of great imperialistic districts where the booty could be divided up among the victors, and the economic results of the war thus evaded. The Central European plan of the Germans was broken, together with German Imperialism itself. The Wilson plan, the creation of a great Anglo-American Empire, was the real foundation of the League of Nations. However, this scheme also fell through, owing to the rivalries of capitalist national groups.

Then Versailles introduced another plan. This was to saddle the defeated countries with the expenses of capitalistic reconstruction. This plan was defeated owing to the opposition of Soviet Russia and the financial impotence of Germany. Under these circumstances world capital had no other means of securing capitalist reconstruction than the burdening of the broad masses of all countries with its cost. When we said, during the war, that the only defeat in the world would be that of the working class, our words are proven true by the capitalist class, which says: The reconstruction of capitalism is only possible at the expense of the workers. This method is the plan of international capital. The worse the economic situation becomes, the clearer is it that world capitalism, contrary to its condition at the end of the Napoleonic war is not in a condition to overcome the world crisis.

If you will read the memorial which Robert Owen addressed to Metternich, you will find that he poses the following questions: Will England overcome its economic breakdown; which question he answers himself by saying that England introduced machinery after this crisis. Thus productivity was increased so that England was in a condition to master the crisis and develop industrially into a first class power. World capital is at present in a position where it requires tremendous wealth and material for its reconstruction. With a tenth part of the Italian war costs, Italy could be freed to-day of its coal debt to England and the United States; but, this tenth part is not to hand.

The second method for the overcoming of the crisis would be the expansion of

the export market; but this is impossible. On this ground the capitalist offensive is not a matter of temporarily taking advantage of the weakness of the working class, but is a will-developed plan intended to extend over a decade.

Should the offensive fail, then the workers, at least those in the leading European countries, will overthrow the power of capitalism. This issue is one of life and death to the workers. The struggle cannot be fought to a finish simply by means of a strike, on the part of the workers, or, on the part of the owners, by means of lock-outs, lowering of wages, or lengthening of the hours of labour.

This leads me to the question as to what form the political offensive of capitalism will assume.

Comrades, many of us were severely rated when, at the Berlin Conference of the three Internationals and, in general, during the whole course of our agitational work, we maintained that part of this offensive consisted in the demand of world capitalism for the abolition of the decree which nationalised the factories in Russia, etc. The connection between Stinnes' campaign for power and the offensive of world capitalism against the proletariat has never been clearly understood. Seeing that this aspect of the question has hardly been discussed, and that it is of the greatest importance in its relation to the economic victory of capital, I propose to enlarge somewhat upon the theme.

If world capital is determined to throw the worker back to his pre-war level of existence, if it is determined to force the worker to their knees, then it is obvious that the leaders of world capital will have to devise tactics that will combine the national struggle against the working class with the international struggle. The prerequisites for the carrying out of the plan underlying the capitalist offensive were disclosed at Genoa and at the Hague. In England it proved possible to nullify the attempts of the workers to nationalise the main branches of industry. During the last year, the English workers have no longer been fighting to secure the nationalisation of the mines; they have simply been fighting upon the wages question. Even upon this field

they were defeated. In the United States, the vestiges of the nationalisation movement were swept away. In Germany there was a great hubbub among the socialists in the year 1919, when it was proposed to arrest the advance of the workers; to day the sale of the State railways to private owners seems imminent. The only State in which industry is in the hands of the working class is Russia.

Consequently the campaign against Soviet Russia, the campaign which aims, by the power of the financial boycott, at compelling us to surrender our factories, is not fought by the capitalists simply because they have an eye to the possibility of making large profits in Russia. This campaign is an essential part of the capitalist offensive. Nay more, the capitalist world-wide offensive demands the solution of the German problem in the following sense. First of all, capitalism must be saved upon German soil, and, secondly, German capitalism must supply the means for the capitalist reconstruction of the Entente countries. German capitalism, whose policy is most crudely embodied in Stinnes, looks for a way out of the difficulty, and as far as theory is concerned has found one. That which takes the form of the sale of state property, the sale of the mines and the railways, on the strength of which huge loans can be secured on the United States and British markets. This will work in with Stinnes' financial plan for the disburdening of industry and the burdening of the broad masses as a means for the reaccumulation of German capital. At first the sight it might appear that the problems here involved were a purely German affair, having nothing to do with the general campaign of world capital.

It sufficed, however, merely to note the relationships between this policy and French policy to realise that much greater issues are involved. The militarist section of the French bourgeoisie and a part of the industrial section are contemplating a continuance of the anti-revolutionary offensive. What they have in mind is, the occupation of the Ruhr region, the creation of a buffer State on the Rhine, the annexation of the Ruhr coal and coke to the French industrial area, thereby separating South Germany from North Germany, the formation of a

French vassal State which shall connect Austria and Bavaria with France by way of the Rhenish buffer State. On the other hand, there is a section of the French great industrialists which entertains very different plans. They think of forming a Franco-German steel and coal syndicate. For one part, this will give the French the means requisite for reconstruction; for the other part, it will enable Stinnes to carry through his policy in the teeth of the extant antagonistic forces in Germany, and will thus safeguard France against the danger of militarist adventurers. The French press and the satellites of French world policy have often enough disclosed what is at stake. Neither in Germany nor in France can capitalism be saved without the realisation of Stinnes' plans, which comprise a cutting down of official staffs, the discharge of superfluous workers, an intensification of the labor process in Germany coupled with a lengthening of the working day.

Stinnes, however, is unable to carry all this through on his own. When he mooted the plan of transferring the State railways to private hands, he encountered stubborn resistance. For this reason, Stinnes' design had to be reinforced by an ultimatum from the French Government to the German. What the German social-democrats could never stomach when it was served up to them merely by Stinnes, the German Social-democrats and the German workers would be prepared to swallow if its acceptance were indispensable to the maintenance of peace with France.

You may be certain of this much, comrades, that, should the plan fail to be realised, the insuperable obstacle will not take the form of resistance on the part of the social-democrats. In existing circumstances, if an insuperable obstacle be found, it will be the resistance offered by British capitalism, which would be seriously menaced by the formation of a Central European iron and coal syndicate at the very time when it is endangered by the rivalry of United States capitalism. Let me emphasise this, that the opposition to Stinnes' plans on the part of the German workers is not at present likely to be effective. Should the scheme fail, it will be because of the opposition of the counter-revolution.

...the whole trend of national capitalist economies, is not merely the expression of a German plan. Read the speeches delivered by Mussolini even before the victory of Fascism; read the Fascist program. Let me cite a few passages which throw a clear light upon the socio-political aspect of the problem. When you read Mussolini's fiscal program, when you study his economic and political plans, you will see at work in Italy the very same forces that are embodied in Germany in the personality of the most prominent representative of large-scale industry and heavy industry.

In the Fascist program we read: "Revision of social legislation in so far as this hinders production; the readjustment of taxation upon a simpler, more rational, and a more fruitful basis." The nature of this basis will become plain when you continue your reading of Mussolini's program: "We must at length have courage to give open expression to the following anti-demagogic truth. It is the workers to-day who are least burdened with taxation, though they earn more than the greatly overtaxed members of the middle class. Nor must we forget that to hamper production with an enormous direct tax upon capital is tantamount of the indirect taxation of the lower class; and it is a particularly disastrous form of indirect taxation, for hindrances to the capitalist economy entail unemployment and reduced wages for the workers. Nothing could be more mischievous than the demand that the rich should be taxed in order to spare the poor."

Turning to France, we need merely glance at Caillaux's book, "Whither is France Going," or at the same writer's articles and those of other French experts in the reconstruction number of the "Manchester Guardian," to see that the whole policy centres around the greatest possible taxation of the workers and the exemption of the possessing classes to a degree which goes far beyond the demands of the taxophobic bourgeoisie in earlier days.

Comrades, these plans of the bourgeoisie must find expression in suitable political measures. That is why, throughout Europe,

we witness a movement towards the right. The fall of Briand after the Cannes conference, and Poincaré's rise to power, looked at from without, was mere change in the personnel of the representatives of one and the same nationalist coalition. There can, however, be no doubt that the political change was the expression of a determination to pursue an energetic counter-revolutionary policy that would put into the hands of the most active section of the capitalists an initiative that was not being exercised by French capital in general.

Again, if you think over the political significance of the parliamentary elections in Britain, if you read the speeches made by the Conservatives and study Lloyd George's answers, your first impression will be that you are listening to the chatter of a lunatic asylum. Lloyd George has pursued a conservative policy, and the conservatives are advocating the same program. As far as outward form is concerned, there has been no change. The real meaning of the reaction is, however, manifested in two ways. It is shown first of all in Bonar Law's slogan "Peace in the Land." It is shown secondly in the fact that the Conservative Party, shaking itself free from liberal influences, gains power as the most ruthless section of the conservative forces in Britain. Although no more than a very few of the Die-Hards are actually participating in the Government, there can be no doubt that directly the situation grows critical this ultra-reactionary section of the conservatives will gain supreme control. The object is to integrate the forces of the bourgeoisie, to save what can still be saved out of the general ruin. Bonar Law's first act was an attempt to abolish the Ministry of Labor, with a declaration that the State ought to interfere as little as possible with economic life. There we have pendant to Mussolini's declaration that as far as economics are concerned he is an "old liberal" in the strict sense of the term; the state must have nothing to do with economic life. Of course, this means that capitalism is to be allowed to make an unrestricted use of its powers against labor.

Comrades, this policy is pursued, far more consciously by counter-revolutionary conspiratorial organisations. It is a depre-

sing feature of the situation that, when we examine clandestine literature of the counter-revolution, when the circulars and minor writings issued by counter-revolutionary circles come under our notice, we are compelled to admit that they are enormously better informed concerning their doings. (Very true!) Although the counter-revolution is legally dominant in Europe, there is also an illegal counter-revolutionary activity which is the expression of the most conscious elements of the counter-revolution. It is only by their deeds that we can learn the plans of those who are thus deliberately working on behalf of the counter-revolution. There can be no doubt whatever that the German counter-revolutionaries, led by the rich peasant class, are in close relations, with the Russian monarchists, with Horthy's Hungary, and with Mussolini, and that with the French militarist party they have ties that will one day come to light. If we study the moves of the right wing of the counter-revolution, we see that the counter-revolutionaries are aware of the following facts:

The counter-revolutionaries know perfectly well that in Central Europe there are three possible foci of the proletarian revolution: industrial Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, and Italy. This is why they propose to erect barriers between Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, and Italy. Attempts to create a counter-revolutionary stronghold in Bavaria go hand in hand with attempts to place Austria entirely at the disposal of the counter-revolutionaries. The Geneva Treaty, the abolition of the Austrian parliament, the doing away with the militia (the weak remnants of proletarian armed forces in Vienna), have made a beginning. At the moment when the counter-revolution openly established the Wittelsbachs upon the throne, a link with Austria will be formed by way of Tyrol, and the régime of Horthy's Hungary will be extended into central Europe. The victory of the Fascists in Italy represents the deliberate development of this policy, but is partly a spontaneous outcome of the situation. I regard it as of importance that the Communist International should understand the Fascist victory and its essential significance. You will allow me, therefore, to enlarge upon the matter at somewhat greater length than the impor-

...tance of it warrants. I hope that Comrade Berdiga, who is more intimately acquainted with the facts, will amplify, if ultimate, or, if need be, correct, my statements.

In my opinion the victory of Fascism is something more than a mechanical victory of the Fascist army. I regard it as the greatest defeat which socialism and communism have sustained since the opening of the epoch of the world revolution. It is a greater defeat than the overthrow of Soviet Hungary, for the victory of Fascism is the outcome of the temporary spiritual and political bankruptcy of Italian socialism and the whole Italian labour movement. The contention that the Fascists represent the bourgeoisie counter-revolution needs no proof; whatever breaks up labor organizations and stabilises bourgeois power is counter-revolutionary. But if we content ourselves with the trite statement that the bourgeoisie has gained a victory in Italy, we renounce the task of trying to understand something that will perhaps, even within the next few months, be of the utmost importance to our movement in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia. (Very true!)

What we have to ascertain is, how was the victory of Fascism rendered possible, upon what was it based, and what precisely does it represent in the European counter-revolution? Enough, perhaps, to ask: Is Mussolini, socially and politically, of the same calibre as Stinnes and Bonar Law? Or is he something of a different kind? Although Mussolini's program so closely resembles the programs of Bonar Law and Stinnes, I think that Mussolini represents a phenomenon of a different order, and I think that this difference is of great importance.

Let us recall the facts. What were Fascists and how did they originate? The lower strata of intellectuals returned from the war — the chemists' assistants, the elementary school teachers, the veteran surgeons, and so on—who had all played a social part in the war. (In Italy, the intellectuals have always played a more important part than in other lands. When we remember that before the war there were about seventy unattached university lecturers who were members of our Italian brother Party, we shall realize how large is the strata of intellectuals in Italy.) They returned from the war in

discouraged nationalists, for, despite the victory, Italy did not receive all that the nationalist program had demanded — the Adriatic had not become "an Italian lake". They returned to a land where economic ruin was complete, and there the State was not in a position to care for them. They witnessed the growth of a revolutionary labour movement. They were hostile to this labour movement, not only because it was a labour movement, but also because, as interventionists and members of the pro-war faction, they had an old quarrel with the Social-Democratic Party. And the Socialist Party did everything to alienate these strata, and not them alone, but the disabled as well. When we read that many socialist communes left the disabled in the lurch in the year 1919, refusing them aid because they had been in the war, and when we realise that the Socialist Party was incompetent to turn to practical account the widespread feeling that something new was in course of preparation and that it was impossible to continue in the old rut, we find little difficulty in explaining the birth of Fascism.

Remember that at the elections in December 1919, Mussolini secured only 4,000 votes in Milan, although he was in favour of the control of parliament by workers' councils, distribution of land among the peasants and the gradual nationalisation of industry. The Fascists were partly with d'Annunzio in Fiume, and partly scattered through the country in small groups. Meanwhile the revolutionary wave was spreading; not only were there strikes, but also a complete disintegration of bourgeois Italy.

Socialism became more powerful, but threw away its chances. In the correspondence of a bourgeois periodical in Germany, I find the following statement regarding Mussolini's decision to seize power. The interviewer had asked Mussolini: "Will you take the risk of seizing power illegally?" Mussolini had answered: "Legally or illegally I shall secure power."

The socialists were defeated because they did not follow up words with deeds. Mussolini felt that his militarist organisations and the great masses he had attracted to his side would turn against him unless he seized power. It was the

incompetence of the Socialist Party to lead the masses to battle that engendered the power of Fascism. When the workers occupied the factories, when the Italian bourgeoisie was so impotent that Giolitti, the Fox of Cuneo, said: "I cannot send the soldiers into the factories, for if I do I shall be murdered in the streets", and when, with the aid of the Italian reformists the workers had subsequently been persuaded to leave the factories, the Italian bourgeoisie was no longer afraid, and it plucked up heart to assume the offensive.

The question now arises why was this not done by means of the State apparatus, the carabinieri, the bourgeois law-courts, and the bourgeois parties. Because the bourgeois parties are disintegrated! They led the war; they ruined the State and the economic life of the country; the soldiers, the officials, and the petty bourgeoisie no longer heed their words. But the Mussolinis, the nationalist petty-bourgeois intellectuals, represent a new will-to-power. The Fascists come forward with a new faith, saying: "Socialism was not competent to bring anything new, but we are going to mediate between the workers and the capitalists; we are going to compel the capitalist to satisfy the needs of the workers. But you workers must work. You must build up the nation".

Rosa Luxemburg once said that the best defenders of the bourgeoisie are those who have illusions. Only the petty bourgeoisie can still retain its illusions, and since Italian socialism has proved an illusion, the Fascists can oppose to it the petty-bourgeois illusion. They attacked the workers' organisations, and the latter did not know how to defend themselves. In the larger towns, the great industrial centres, the masses still held together. But in the lesser towns and the villages, where the workers were scattered, they fell a prey to Fascism. First of all Fascism gained the mastery over their organisations by force of arms, and then the Fascists became their leaders. Even though in the industrial centres the masses of the workers are not really convinced adherents of Fascism, there can be no doubt that in the rural districts and in the small provincial towns the workers have been won over to Fascism, not only

by force of arms, but also to some extent by the demagogic arts of the new movement. The most notable effect of its attack was the growth of reformism.

At Lghorn the reformists were quite a small group. At the last trade union Congress 500,000 votes were cast in favour of a coalition with the bourgeoisie. There can be no doubt that reformism suffered a reverse during the war. But owing to the fact that the proletariat did not know how to defend itself against Fascism, a considerable section of the proletariat followed the reformists who promised to defend them from evil by a coalition with the bourgeois government! The bargain was, however, a disastrous one. The negotiations of the reformists with that part of the bourgeoisie which feared the victory of the Fascists (which did not, however, believe that the Fascists were competent to carry on the administration of the State) was one of the reasons why the Fascists hastened to bring about the downfall of the Soviets.

Comrades, when Fascism has now gained the victory without the slightest resistance on the part of the working class, we may say that we have reached the nadir of developments in Italy.

I have refrained from attacking individual comrades on account of these developments. We must not, of course, go so far as the Roman senate, which sent greetings to a beaten commander; we must say this, that if our comrades in Italy do not understand, if the S.P.I. does not understand the causes of the victory of Fascism and the causes of our defeat, the rule of Fascism is likely to be long-lasting. For the struggle against Fascism demands some thing more than the formation of an illegal organisation; it demands something more than the courage characteristic of Italian Communism; it demands, in addition, the political defeat of Fascism. Only if the Italian Communists prove able to inspire the workers, notwithstanding these defeats, with faith in the victorious energy of socialism, will they be able in the near future to resume the struggle against Fascism.

The Fascists represent the petty bourgeoisie, which has come to power with the support of the bourgeoisie, and which will be compelled to carry out, not the

program of the petty bourgeoisie, but the program of capitalism. Consequently this crude counter revolution is the weakest of the counter-revolutionary forces in Europe. Mussolini comes attended by a great train of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, and the first thing he stumbles against is a deficit of seven milliards. His program is to be one of thrift, of the restriction of bureaucracy, but behind him stand hundreds of thousands of place-hunters. He sets in motion an army of black hundreds, and on the day when the king receives him to ratify his appointment as premier, Mussolini says; "Demobilise; there is only one army henceforward." But these people are not travelling up and down Italy for love of Mussolini. They have been living upon their profession of White condottieri. They will demand a reckoning, should Mussolini now try to support himself solely upon the regular army, and to dismiss his hundreds of thousands to their homes. Mussolini and the Fascists, when they were helping the bourgeoisie to overthrow the working class, absorbed into their ranks all the counter-revolutionary bourgeois elements. We recognised in Fascism two wings, an agrarian, and an industrial. In the inevitable struggle between the northern Italian industrial bourgeoisie and the southern Italian agrarians, there will be conflicts which will disintegrate Fascism. Mussolini represents the policy of the master class; he represents opposition to democracy. (But inasmuch as he has involved in his policy broad democratic, he has a democratic wing).

The seeds of death are contained in the very thing upon which the strength of Fascism depended. It is because the Fascists are a petty-bourgeois party, that they have a broad front, that they have been able to show so much enthusiasm in attacking us. But precisely because the Fascists constitute a huge petty-bourgeois party, they will not be able to carry out the policy of Italian capitalism without revolts in their own camp. A few years ago, Comrade Serrati protested against our agrarian program. Now the revival of the Italian Party will depend on whether we know how to organise the peasants against Fascism. If our Italian friends, the communists, want to be a pure and little Party, let me tell them that a pure and little Party can

very easily find itself behind prison walls. There they will be able to devote themselves to the pure culture of the spirit. But, if the Italian Communist Party wants to become a power, it will have to organise the proletariat and petty-bourgeois masses against Fascism. Theoretical resolutions anent the united front will not suffice; nor will theoretical disquisitions concerning Fascism; nor even will the reforms of a small band of communists. We must voice the cry of the masses for liberation.

Comrades, in view of the capitalist offensive, whose intensity is increasing along the whole political and economic front, and whose climax has certainly not yet been reached, the question arises: What prospect of success has such an offensive? Are we faced with a wave of counter-revolution which is the reflection of the revolutionary wave, as happened in the year 1849? Is the cycle of revolution and counter-revolution completed? This is the fundamental question. The answer to it provides the foundation for our future tactics. To enable us to answer it, it suffices to recall that the victory of the counter-revolution in 1849 had as its basis the economic revival which set in with the opening of the Californian gold fields. I need not dilate upon this matter, for it is discussed in the third volume of Marx posthumous papers. The European counter-revolution was victorious because the forward impetus of capitalism gave profits to the bourgeoisie and compelled it to compromise with the agrarians, and because it provided the necessities of life for the rising working class, so that the thoughts of the proletarians were turned away from revolution.

The wave of counter-revolution which is now spreading round the world can best be characterised by saying that it is not the outcome of a period of general economic revival, but represents an attempt to effect the forcible arrest of economic decay. You need only glance at the situation of the British government to see that the counter-revolution, far from bringing salvation, actually renders the situation worse. Look at these simple facts. British capitalism is faced with the problem of unemployment at a time when there is an insoluble Near-Eastern crisis,

at a time when United States competition in on the upgrade and when the market for British goods is being increasingly restricted, at the time when the fall of the mark is catastrophic and when the position in India grows steadily worse. The conservatives will attempt by forcible measures to delay the course of development, but they will only succeed in speeding it up. They will hasten the coming of chaos. In this respect, Lloyd George is perfectly right when he says that the conservatives will shatter the whole framework—although from his bourgeois standpoint he is just as glad as the conservatives at the defeat of the Labour Party.

If we examine the policy of the French reactionaries, we see that incontestably it has for the time being strengthened the position of France, but at great cost, so that we may say that France and Britain are fighting one another in the East. The Entente and the peace of Europe have only been saved because these two Powers pulled up at the very brink of the gulf of war. But a compromise between British and French imperialism has become all the more improbable now that in Britain the ultra-imperialists have risen to power—call themselves Francophil though they may.

As far as Germany is concerned there can be no doubt that, to do away with the Wirth government and to establish a Stinnes government, would greatly intensify the oppositions.

The counter-revolution cannot bring bread and peace. We have therefore to do now with a counter-revolutionary wave, with an offensive, which has no prospect of victory however ruthless it may be. Its duration depends upon the question, how far we shall be in a position to undertake a counter-offensive. The social basis of this counter-revolution is certainly narrow. It lacks the élan, it lacks the affiliations, and it lacks the foundations, which would render possible a long and victorious campaign.

It is thus, comrades, that we reach the third part of our problem. We come to the question of the counter offensive of the working class. Even we communists are not entitled to claim that we were prompt to understand the signs of the times. Last year, when the capitalist

offensive was already in full progress, we were still disputing among ourselves as to the offensive of the proletariat. Nevertheless, it is certain that we were the first to understand the signs of the times, that we were the first to initiate the counter-offensive of the proletariat. The matter really began with the Open Letter in Germany in January, 1921. But that this was only an empirical step was shown by the events of March in that year, which would have been impossible had we carefully thought out our position. Since the Third Congress we have been considering the problem more systematically. By advancing the tactics of the United Front the Communist International has proved that it is able, not merely to lead the proletarian advance, but to conduct the defence of the workers.

What is our plan for defence? To clear up this matter will simultaneously provide the solution of our tactical problems. The period of the proletarian onslaught was distinguished by the fact that larger and ever larger masses advanced to the attack upon capitalism. Think of the mood of the proletariat in Germany during the year 1919, when not only communist and independents but many of the Scheidemann party in the workshops were convinced that socialism was on the march, and believed that it was only in respect of methods that they differed from the communists. Consider that in 1919 in Britain, socialism for the first time became a serious matter for discussion among the masses, and that in 1920, during the summer, a mass strike was imminent in Britain for the support of Soviet Russia. In view of these facts there can be no doubt that the most characteristic feature of this epoch when the workers were advancing to the attack was that they were fighting for power. The characteristic of the present epoch is that, although the crisis of world capitalism continues, the broad masses of the proletariat have lost faith in the possibility of the conquest of power within any time they can foresee. They have been forced to adopt a purely defensive attitude.

Comrades, we fight against the idea of a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and are right in doing so. But we fail to note that what is on the agenda is not a co-

alition of the social democracy, of the labour parties with the bourgeoisie, but the exclusion of the labour parties and even to some extent of the liberal parties from all bourgeois governments. Even in face of this fact, most of the workers remain passive. How could we otherwise explain that, after Görlitz, where the social democracy declared itself ready to enter into an alliance with Stinnes (which to every worker plainly signified a capitulation of the social-democracy), although there was a little stirring in workers' groups here and there, there was no storm of protest from the German working class as a whole. The feeling that the power of the working class is vanishing was perhaps the main cause of the ease with which the union between the independents and the social-democrats was brought about. (Very true! From the German comrades). That is why the independents, who were opposed to a coalition with the bourgeoisie, are ready to join forces with the social-democrats, in the hope of retaining some last vestiges of power.

Such being the situation, when among the masses of the workers there is no longer any vigorous thought of fighting for power, and when the great majority of the workers are oppressed with a feeling of impotence, the conquest of power is not an immediately practicable aim. This is a historical fact. If, in relation to every question, even such a question as the State regulation of the care of the teeth, the communists say such things as that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat will painless dentistry become general (laughter), such reiterations may have a propagandist value,—but they do not countervail the fact that our own comrades, the communist workers are convinced that at the present moment there is no chance of undertaking the fight for power—however certain it may be that, sooner perhaps than many persons imagine, numerous States will be shaken by a direct struggle for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It follows from these considerations that, even if we are not thinking of the tactics of the United Front, even if we do not make it our political aim to link up with the broad masses of the workers, we must none the less make it our first business

to fight for those things which seem most immediately pressing to the masses of the workers: wages, hours of labour, housing, and all the other concerns of daily life of the working class.

Communism does not mean that a communist is to bury his head in the sand saying: "It does not become so good a communist as I am to trouble about such things." If we wish to keep those workers whom we have already won over to our cause marching under the communist banner, we must concentrate our campaign upon these questions. The fight for the dictatorship will only arise out of the extension and intensification of the struggle for these lesser matters. In the factory and the workshop, and during every strike, the worker feels that he cannot fight on behalf of these immediate problems except shoulder to shoulder with his mates.

He sees more than this. He sees that the masses of the workers are united on such points, irrespective of party. Inasmuch as the workers feel this, the policy of the Communist Party has to furnish them with an answer to the question: "What does the Party propose to do in view of the fact that the workers are united in their demands despite all differences of political outlook?" Comrades, if we had not known how to appeal to the masses on behalf of a united front for the proletariat, our forces would have shrunk to a mere remnant. That which under present conditions enables our workers to remain in the Communist Party, and even enables the Communist Party to enroll new levies, is not merely our aim, not merely the growing recognition among the vanguard that the dictatorship of the proletariat is indispensable, but also the feeling that we are the unifying element in the Party.

Never was I more keenly aware of this that at the close of the year 1920, when I was in Berlin after the unity congress, and talked matters over with the comrades. Under the watchword of the dictatorship of the proletariat, we have detached from the social democracy all those who, on the ground of the experiences of the revolution up to now, are prepared to accept the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers who were not prepared to accept

this idea could see nothing but the split. Our comrades felt that with this propaganda of final aims (which the circumstances of the moment had thrust into the background as far as the consciousness of the masses was concerned), with the propaganda of a split, they could not attract new and extensive masses of the workers—however indispensable the need for such propaganda.

They felt that it was necessary to talk with the workers of matters about which the latter were thinking, of matters of which the workers feel, of what the workers suffer when they are unemployed and hungry. The idea of the united front is for the working class forces for the struggle against the sufferings inflicted upon the workers by the decay of capitalism.

The second question was: "If the United Front is necessary, how are we to establish it? Are we to attempt it by turning to the masses of the proletariat and asking them to fight with us under the communist flag? Are we to say to the workers that we reject any idea of negotiating with the trade unions and the leaders?"

A moment's thought will show the absurdity of any attempt to establish the United Front in such a way. Although the social-democratic workers were convinced that their Party was opposed to the dictatorship, they believed that the Party represented their interest, and that is why they continued to belong to it. If these masses of the workers are convinced that Scheidemann, Grassmann, Renaudel, and Jouhaux are willing to fight for the eight-hour day, they will answer to our demands for the united front: "You are quite right, we must fight. But have you talked the matter over with Scheidemann, Renaudel, and Henderson?" Should we answer: "But Scheidemann is a traitor", we must bethink ourselves that if they agreed with us in such a view they would be fighting on our side. This judgment of ours is what divides us from them. If, therefore, we want a United Front, we must negotiate with the leaders of the Second International notwithstanding this opinion of ours. The difference between the Second and the Third International does not consist in the fact that we advocate the dictatorship of the

proletariat, and they do not; but in the fact they are unwilling to fight, even for a little bread for the workers. When we have compromised them in the eyes of the masses, when we have proved to the workers that these leaders will not fight, and have shown why they will not, then the way to the United Front will have been cleared from beneath.

Many Comrades will say: inasmuch as we know this, it is not our business to strengthen the illusions of the proletariat in order subsequently to destroy them. But what is at issue is not the strengthening of illusions, but their refutation. We must refute them with deeds, not words. There are queer customers in our Party who seem terribly afraid that the social democrats will not allow themselves to be exposed, and will perhaps show fight. I should think every sane person among us would rejoice if only the social-democrats would show fight, if the social-democrats reproach us, saying: "You come to us, with a dagger hidden under your cloak; you want to take us by the hand that you may have a chance of taking us by the throat", we reply: "That depends on yourselves. Show that you can fight, and then we shall at least be able to go a little way together". But we do not anticipate anything of the kind.

We did not come to the conference of the three executives in order to suggest a dance which might show that we could dance and that the others could not. We came in the hope, if at all possible, to organise the United Front of the proletariat from above, so that it might be made possible for the working class at least to defend positions already held, if not immediately to adopt a counter-offensive. The plan broke down. It broke down for other reasons than the question of the world congress of labour. If you analyse the situation you will see that it broke down because the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals counterposed a plan for capitulation to our plans for defence.

Comrades, the Russian question played a great part in this matter, and for this reason I have to dwell upon it. The social-democrats, I mean the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, made of us the following demand on the

Russian question. (I give the substance of their demand, without the gloss they put on it). They said: Legalise the mensheviks and the social-revolutionaries, and then we will support Soviet Russia. What does this mean? Soviet Russia is fighting to retain the factories, and the land in the possession of the Workers' State. What is the program of the mensheviks and the social-revolutionaries? The mensheviks have expounded their program with perfect clearness in articles by Martoff and Dan. They want to return to capitalism to do away with nationalised production. Martoff formulates this standpoint as follows: "Away with the obstacles to the development of capitalism in Russia."

Thus the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals were willing to support Soviet Russia if Soviet Russia would legalise the parties which wished to enforce a capitulation upon Soviet Russia, and which to some extent hoped to secure this by means of an alliance with Entente capitalism. At the Genoa Conference we felt that these persons, thanks to their stupidity and blindness, were unable to see anything at all, were unable to recognise that Soviet Russia was fighting to prevent the International working class being thrust back to the starting point of the revolution, being thrust back to the year 1914, when all over the world the factories were in capitalist hands, and when no proletarian State had as yet come into existence. But the present attitude of the mensheviks, of the Party of the Two-and-a-Half International, has shown that this was something more than stupidity and blindness; their definite program is to intensify the struggle against Socialism in Russia, for, as Martoff said, if Soviet Russia is beaten, a defeat will have been inflicted along the whole front.

What was the attitude of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals as regards the defence of the simplest and most urgent interests of the proletariat in western Europe? When we spoke of the fight for the eight-hour day, or of the fight against the reduction of wages, they did not answer with a straight refusal. They said: "We cannot work with you unless you dissolve the R.I.L.U. What does that mean? It meant that the re-

formists will not work with the communists until the communists abandon the struggle against the trade union bureaucracy, which in Britain on Black Friday betrayed the miners, which has surrendered the 8-hour day all over the world, which is not merely retreating on all fronts but has actually capitulated. The socialist, the political significance of the failure of the negotiations in Berlin is this: We came with plans for a united defence; the others demanded that the Communist International and that section of the working class which supports the Communist International should renounce the idea of fighting at all. That was the socialist significance, as was made plain in the matter of the World Congress of the Workers. The leaders of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals were not willing to fight. That was what frustrated our attempt to establish the united front from above.

Comrades, the question we now have to face is this: Shall we abandon the struggle? Shall we give up our attempts to establish the united front, not only from beneath, but also from above? Our answer is: Not only shall we not abandon this plan, but we are now going to put our backs into its realisation. The position of the social-democratic leaders is such as to make them realise very well that the beginning of this struggle must have as its first outcome a breach of the coalition with the bourgeoisie; that they will be compelled to leave the coalition before they are thrown out; and that then, when Stinnes, Bonar Law, and Poincaré, are all in power, they will be compelled by the masses of their own supporters (now that the situation has cleared) to take up arms. We know, of course, that they will fight tooth and nail against being forced into such a position, but it is our business to see that they are forced. When, last May, they were able to sabotage the first attempt to establish a united front, they succeeded because it was not then in our power to lead a vigorous agitation among the masses on behalf of the idea. When our Berlin organisation was unable to bring deputations to the Reichstag from five hundred factories, it was plain that however much noise the "Red Flag" might make, Wels need not turn a hair.

Things went somewhat better in the Rhineland, in Elberfeld, but a provincial agitation is less effective than a metropolitan movement.

In France, the French comrades sabotaged this policy; although without its adoption they will sink to the level, not merely of a political sect, but of a sect of "politicasters"!

In Italy our friend Bordiga has conceived the masterly idea of adopting the United Front in the trade unions but not in political life. In that event, if we were to talk of the united front, we should have to admit that we had not attempted to install a unified communist front, but had merely made a step or two, in that direction.

If our pressure has not been strong enough, we must increase it. Nevertheless we may fail at first to compel the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals to march with us, especially now that they are joining forces. But this does not mean that we ought to abandon negotiations with the leaders. We must concentrate our energies upon the countries where we can exercise most pressure. Of course we do not know whether these tactics will be effective on the international scale. If they do not succeed, so much the worse for the Second International, whose death-warrant it would imply for failing to recognise that it must detach itself from the bourgeoisie under pain of falling with it into the abyss. The task is a big one, and will take much time, but there is no other way of rallying the masses under the banner of communism.

In the concluding portion of my speech, comrades, I propose to deal briefly with the watchwords of the struggle.

Agreed, that the starting points of our activities must be the demand for higher wages, the demand for the retention of the 8-hour day, and the demand for the development of the industrial council movement. But these demands do not suffice. Workers who belong to no political party at all can, and do demand, a daily wage of one thousand marks when five hundred marks will not procure them the necessities of life. But they see that to increase their wages in paper money provides no issue from their troubles. To begin with, such watchwords

may suffice; but the longer the struggle lasts, the more essential does it become to proclaim political watchwords, the watchwords of social organisation. When the time is ripe for the voicing of such demands, it is time to move from the defensive to the offensive. As early as the Second Congress of the Communist International we uttered watchwords based upon our general analysis of the decay of capitalism and the tasks facing the proletariat. I discussed them in my report on tactics at the Third Congress. First of all we put forward the slogan: the control of production. This slogan is necessary for the following reasons: It opens prospects for the workers, showing them that the proletariat is competent to deal with the process of economic decay; it gives the workers an outlook towards economic reconstruction, and shows them a way out of the chaos. The fight on behalf of this watchword will lead to the fight for the seizure of the powers of State, for the bourgeoisie will resist to the uttermost every kind of development that can only be secured at their expense.

The Communist Parties must therefore do something more than refer to the watchword of the control of production from time to time in a casual newspaper article or congress speech; they must make these tactics a central feature of their movement. They must learn to make it clear to the workers that unless they seize real power by gaining control of production in the factories and workshops, the economic chaos will grow more hopeless day by day. The watchword of the control of production is a watchword which shows the masses a way out, which gives expression to the leading idea of their struggle in the immediate future. When, in our campaign against taxation, we replace the slogan "tax the bourgeoisie" by the slogan "capital levy," the new slogan is up in the air unless the proletariat has instruments of control competent to give substantial reality to the demand. These questions will have to be very thoroughly discussed in the Communist Parties in connection with the program question. Many comrades believe that the question of the capital levy is a German speciality. There can, however, be no doubt that in view of the progressive depreciation of money in France,

Italy, and many other countries, this matter will become one of the starting points of the proletarian struggle. In this struggle, which brings us into conflict with bourgeois power, we cannot get along without a watchword concerning our relationship to armed power. The demand that armed power should be placed in the hands of organised workers is intimately connected with the defensive struggle of the proletariat and will be voiced everywhere spontaneously.

Now I come to a question which plays a great part in our resistance to the capitalist offensive. It is one, too, which occupied a large part in Comrade Zinoviev's utterances on tactics. I refer to the question of the Labor Government, which is one we have to consider in connection with our resistance to the capitalist offensive. Zinoviev gave a useful classification of the possible varieties of Labor Government, and it is one I am prepared to accept. I merely wish to supplement the classification by referring to the type of workers' and peasants' government which may come into existence in such countries as Poland, Yugo-slavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc. The important point for us in this connection is, rather than classification, to propound the question: What are the masses of the workers, not merely the communists, thinking of when they speak of Labor Governments? I confine myself to countries in which these ideas have already been considered; Britain, Germany and Czecho-Slovakia. In England, think of the Labor Party, communism there is not yet a mass power. In the countries where capitalism is decaying, this idea is intimately associated with that of the United Front. Just as the workers say that the meaning of United Front is that the communists and the social-democrats must make common cause in the factory when there is a strike, so for the masses of the workers the idea of a Labor Government has a similar significance. The workers are thinking of a government of all the working class parties. What does that mean for the masses practically and politically? If we enquire, to what extent it is practically probable that such labor coalition governments will be formed, all sorts of brilliant answers may be given. Some

will tell us that a Labor Government is not an inevitable way, but a possible one. We may talk paradox with Comrade Zinoviev, and say that it is not the inevitable way, but is probably the most improvable way. The political decision of the question will depend upon the fact whether the social-democracy does or does not go to its doom with the bourgeoisie. Should it do so, then the Labor Government can only take the form of the dictatorship of the Communist proletariat. We cannot decide for the social-democrats what their policy should be. What we have to decide is this. When we lead the masses in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, are we ready to fight on behalf of such a labor coalition government? Are we or are we not ready to bring about the conditions essential to its realisation?

That is a question which for the masses would only be confused by theoretical calculations. In my opinion, when we are concerned with the struggle for the united front, we ought to say bluntly that, if the social democratic workers will force their leaders to break with the bourgeoisie, then we are ready to participate in a labor government, so long as that government is an instrument of the class struggle. I mean, if it is ready to fight beside us shoulder to shoulder. Let us suppose that ripe plums were to fall into our mouths. There has been no serious alteration in the position of affairs in Germany. Stinnes has the coal; von Seeckt has the soldiers; Scheidemann has only the Wilhelmstrasse. We, too, are invited to the Wilhelmstrasse, if Comrade Meyer will only be good enough to wear a frock coat (laughter) and will take Comrade Ruth Fischer by the arm and, in spite of her struggles (laughter), lead her with him into the Chancellor's palace. Suppose that such fancies were to become actualities, what would be the effective difficulties in the way of the realisation of the plan? General Seeckt would come along and would throw Comrade Meyer and Scheidemann and Comrade Ruth Fischer into the street, and that would be the end of the Labor Government.

When we are thinking of the struggle against the capitalist offensive, what we have in mind is not a parliamentary combination, but a platform for the mo-

bilisation of the masses, an arena for the struggle. The form the question takes is this. Will the social-democrats be excluded from the coalition by the bourgeoisie; will they continue to rot in the coalition; or shall we help the masses to compel them to fight? Perhaps you will ask why the deuce we should bother what they do? If it only concerned the fate of the leaders of the social-democrats, we should certainly be quite happy to leave them to rot. But when the question at issue is the mobilisation of the social-democratic masses, we must formulate a positive program.

To what extent does such a program conflict with the dictatorship of the proletariat? To what extent does it conflict with the civil war? It conflicts to the same extent to which an ante-room conflicts with the room to which it leads (hear! hear!) If a room is locked, we can make our way into it through the wall, or we can get down the chimney. (Interjection by Urban "Blood has flowed down the chimney.") Comrade Urbans says that blood has flowed down the chimney. This is the first time I have ever heard that the proletariat begins by building barricades on the roof. Even if the bourgeoisie should anywhere leave the government in the hands of the social-democracy and the communists (a historical possibility, as the Hungarian example show), there will follow a period of fierce struggles. But a situation might arise resembling that in which the bourgeoisie found itself on November 9th in Germany—when the bourgeoisie simply vanished. The bourgeoisie might find itself in a position in which it would leave power in the hand of the social-democrats and the Communists in the hope that we should not be able to retain power. Whether we secure it through renunciation on the part of the bourgeoisie, civil war will be the outcome of a Labor Government. The working class will not be able to retain power without civil war.

It is not as if we Communists were to say: "We simply cannot get on without a civil war"—in the same spirit in which Tom Sawyer felt it necessary to free the nigger through a subterranean passage made for the purpose, although the door of the cell was not locked. It is not that we say to ourselves: "I won't accept po-

were except through the civil war; I shan't be happy until I have a civil war". (laughter). The simple point is, Comrade Zinoviev said, that the bourgeoisie can renounce in this case or that, but will not definitely abandon power without fighting.

If the social democrats are incompetent to fight, then we shall simply march over them. Where the Labor Government comes into existence, it will merely be a stepping stone to the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the bourgeoisie will not tolerate a Labor Government even though founded on democratic principles. The social democratic worker will find himself forced to become a Communist, will find himself compelled to engage in civil war, in order to defend his rule. For this reason I believe that, in practice, as things will actually develop, there is little danger of stagnation—in so far, at least, as we are concerned with the realities of the class struggle, and not with the problems of the parliamentary government in remote nooks of the west like Brunswick and Thuringia, where we can perhaps sit in the seats of power without civil war.

As far as we are concerned with the broad front of the proletarian struggle for freedom, the watchword of the Labor Government is necessary to supply us with a directive; it is a watchword that whets the edge of our political weapons. The moment when the workers find themselves simultaneously engaged in the fight for the Labor Government and in the fight for the control of production, will be the moment when our fundamental offensive will begin, the moment when we shall cease to content ourselves with trying to defend what we have, and shall advance to the attack on new positions. Our offensive will begin as soon as the masses of the workers are ready to fight for these two watchwords.

The communists cannot artificially foster this offensive. The great defect of the March action lay in the attempt to substitute for the fighting energy of the masses the readiness of our own party to fight. The readiness of our party for the fight must show itself in the agitation and organisation of the masses. It

is extremely significant of the present position of the labour movement that, even in the countries where we have the best developed parties, our agitation still exhibits an abstract character, that it is not yet instinct with the passion of persons convinced that they are fighting for aims realisable in the near future. All their work produces the impression of pure agitation. If we desire that our debates shall not die of anaemia, and that our congresses shall not resemble party conventicles in which nothing but theoretical evolutionary tendencies are discussed, the parties must pursue in practice a very different policy from that which they have pursued in the past. There must be a change, not merely in political aim, but also in the energy of the struggle.

When we are discussing the capitalist offensive, there is a further point as to which we must be clear. We must effect the foregoing changes before similar changes occur in the demeanour of the non-communist masses. Many of the comrades look upon the matter in this way. They think that the Communist International can only flourish, when the revolutionary waves are raging and when the proletarian masses are storming to the attack.

But the Communist International is not merely the Party for the conquest of power, it is the Party for conducting the fight. It is nonsense, therefore, to say: "These are the piping times of peace, so the Party cannot fight." Such a view would make of the Communist International a parasite upon the proletarian world revolution instead of a combatant on its behalf. The watchword must be, not one of disillusionment and of waiting for the revolution, but one of fighting wherever there is a chance to fight. All our discussions are devoid of meaning unless we understand that we can only form Communist Parties upon condition that their main activity is not to be in the rooms where resolutions are passed and studied, but on the battlefield where our aims find practical fulfilment, in the united front of the proletariat, in the fight along the lines that are made actual by contemporary history. One who can see no difference between

the formation of the united front and the process of unifying and strengthening the Communist Parties, does not understand the alphabet of the Communist International, and does not understand that, just as we must have strongly integrated parties if we are to be the banner bearers

on the united front, so also must we fight valiantly on behalf of the united front of the proletariat if we are to secure the existence of strongly integrated Communist Parties. (Loud Cheers). The session adjourned.

Erratum Bulletin 13.

Page 6, col 2, lines 4 and 13 instead of "Pawlowic" and "Nowakowic" read "Petrowic" and "Stanic."

BULLETIN

OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

№ 12.

Moscow.

20th November 1922.

Twelfth Session.

November 16th, 1922. — 12.30. P. M.

Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

Contents.

Report on Fascism,—Comrade Bordiga. Discussion on Report. The Capitalist Offensive.

Speakers: Bordiga, Smeral, Pullman, Urbans.

The session opened at 12. 30 p. m.

Kolaroff: The session is now open. I call on comrade Bordiga to report on the question of Fascism.

Bordiga: Dear comrades, I regret that the present extraordinary conditions of communications between the delegation and the Party will not permit me to avail myself of all the documents upon this question.

A report was written on the subject by our Comrade Togliatti, but I have not had an opportunity of seeing it. It has not yet arrived, I would advise the comrades who desire to obtain exact information on the subject to read that report when it arrives, for as soon as it is received it will be translated and distributed here.

However, last night I was able to get additional information, as the special emissary of our Party has arrived in Moscow and furnished me with more detailed information on the impressions of our comrades in Italy in connection with the latest fascist events, and with these I will deal in the closing part of my report.

I will deal with the question raised by Comrade Radek yesterday as to the attitude of the Communist Party towards fascism.

Our comrade criticised the attitude of our Party on the question of fascism which is the dominant political question in Italy. He criticised our point of view, our alleged point of view—which is supposed to consist of a desire to be a small party and to limit the consideration of all questions solely to the interests of Party organisation and their immediate importance, without going any further into the larger questions at issue.

I will try to be brief, on account of the time limit, with these few remarks. I will start my report.

The Origin of the Fascist Movement

The origin of fascist movement is traced back to the years 1914—1918, the period which preceded the intervention of Italy in the world war, which was the foundation for this movement was laid down by the groups which supported intervention. From a political point of view, these groups were made up of several tendencies: There was a group on the right, led by Salandra and the industrialists, which were interested in the war and which had even supported the war against the Entente before the decision to fight on the side of the Entente. On the other hand, there were the tendencies of the left wing.