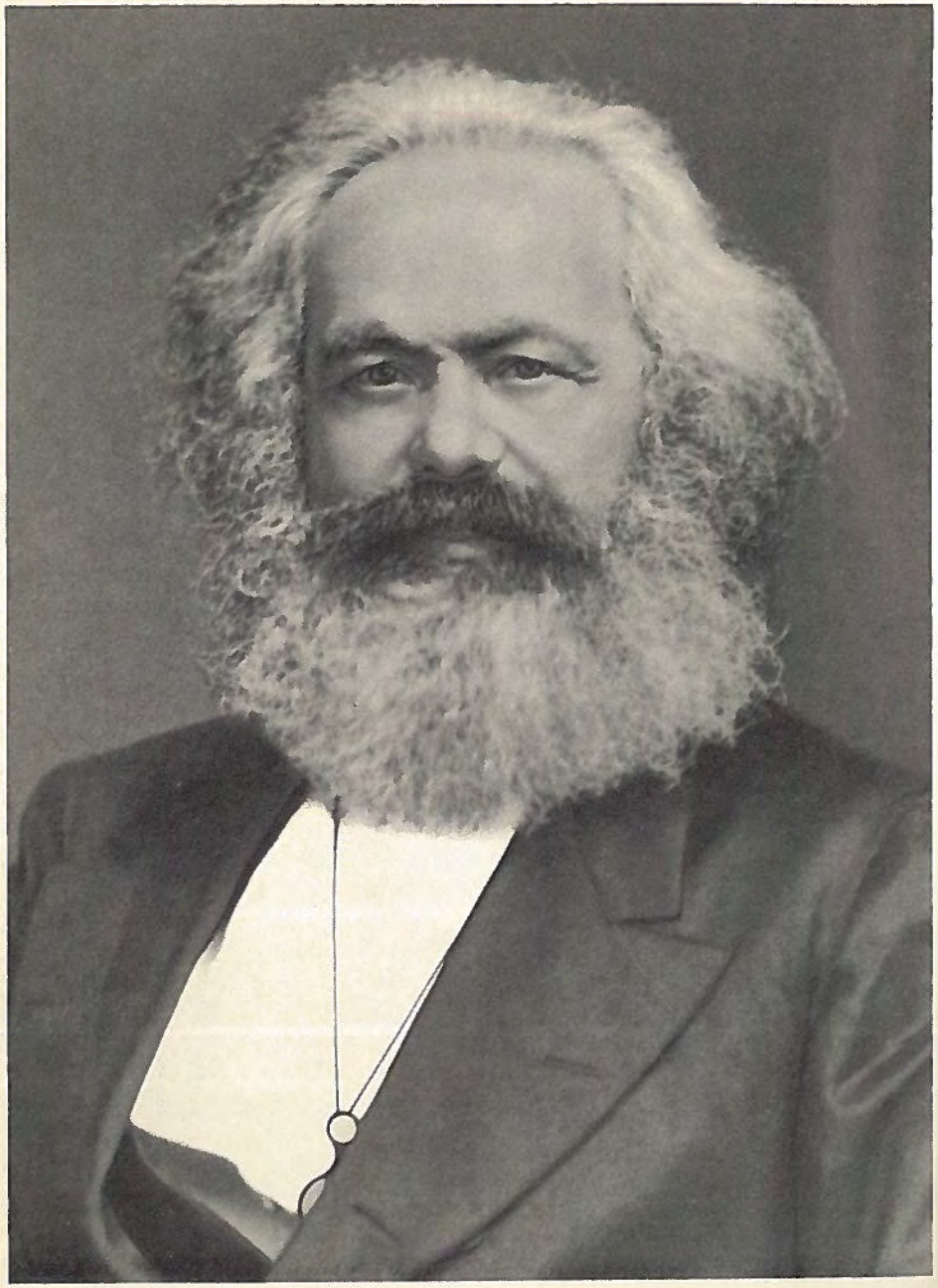
OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Workers of All Countries, Unite!



K. Marx

F. Engels

V. I. Lenin

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OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛ
Краткий исторический очерк
На английском языке

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, ushered in by the October Socialist Revolution, the international labour movement is faced with new great revolutionary tasks. The struggle to achieve these tasks is linked inseparably with the manifold revolutionary activities of the Third, Communist International.

The Communist International, the organisation of which was sponsored by Lenin, was the historical successor of the Communist League and the First International led by K. Marx and F. Engels. It inherited the best traditions of the Second International.

The Communist International initiated the present-day international communist movement, which it led for nearly a quarter of a century, fostering the unity and cohesion of the communist parties and educating them in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology, international solidarity and high principles. The Communist International and its sections were always at the centre of all the most important social battles of their time, their most active participants. They strove to rally the working class for the struggle against the bourgeoisie, for the establishment of proletarian rule, for the victory of socialism.

The Communist International came into being as a natural expression of the growing internationalisation of the proletariat's class struggle in the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, the splitting of the world into two systems—socialist and capitalist—and the challenge between them; as an expression of the historical need to find, in the new situation, the most effective forms of interrelationship and mutual aid among the revolutionary vanguard of the different national detachments of the proletariat. The Communists always remembered Marx's words to the effect that "disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts".*

The historical rise of the working class and its heroic struggle against capitalism for the establishment of proletarian rule and the building of socialism are basically international in character.

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* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. II, Moscow, 1969, p. 17.

The internationalism of the working-class movement is determined by the very nature of the proletariat's world-wide historical mission, by the conditions of its embodiment, by the peculiarities of the replacement of the capitalist formation by the socialist formation. Capitalism overstepped its national boundaries and united the national economies into an integrated system of world capitalist economics, which began to take shape as a system of exploitation of all the world's working people by the international bourgeoisie. Wherever capital penetrated it created a class of wage workers, who were ruthlessly exploited and oppressed. The experience of the class struggle brought home to the workers of the different countries that they had a single enemy—the world bourgeoisie, a single aim—the overthrow of the exploiters and the transition to socialism, a single means of achieving this aim—a consistent and heroic revolutionary struggle against the ruling classes, a single source of strength—organisation, a single ideology—Marxism-Leninism, and a single essential condition of struggle—international solidarity. Capital is an international force, and to win the fight against it, to accomplish the transition to socialism in any country, international brotherhood of the working people, mutual aid and loyalty to its international duty by the proletariat of all countries is essential.

International proletarian solidarity, which develops in proportion as social relations become more and more complicated and the class struggle builds up on a widening front, comes up against various kinds of separatist and nationalist tendencies and assumes various organisational forms.

The diversity of these forms and their choice in the given historical situation depend on the level of the revolutionary movement, the alignment of forces between the working people and the exploiters on a national and international scale, the scope and character of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the degree of maturity of the working class's national vanguard and other circumstances.

The first international organisation of the revolutionary proletariat was the Communist League. The great aim of the working class—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the building of a communist society—was first formulated clearly and explicitly in the programme of this League—the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The League's inspiring call—"Working Men of All Countries, Unite!"—became the battle slogan of the international proletariat. With the deepening of the class struggle and the expanding motive forces of world revolution this motto was developed and

enriched. "Workers and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!"—such was the slogan under which the revolutionary forces of the world joined the struggle after the October Revolution.

During the period of consolidation of capitalism in the principal countries and under the impact of the workers' and democratic movement, which had received a new impetus, there arose the need for new and improved forms of organisation of proletarian solidarity. The year 1864 saw the inauguration, under the leadership of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, of the First International. The founders of scientific communism carried on an active struggle to build up a fraternal union of the working class of different countries. They considered it one of the most important aims of the International "to make the workmen of different countries not only *feel* but *act* as brethren and comrades in the army of emancipation".* The Paris Commune—the first attempt in history to create a state of the working class and of all the working people—was the great work of the First International.

During the period of its existence the First International considerably strengthened the international solidarity of the European and American working class, "laid the foundation", in Lenin's words, "of an international organisation of the workers for the preparation of their revolutionary attack on capital",** "laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism".***

At the close of the 19th century, with the spread of Marxism, there began a new upward swing in the labour movement and workers' parties were formed in a number of countries. Engels took part in founding the Second International, which did important work in uniting and rallying the workers and disseminating Marxism. Gradually, however, opportunism gained the upper hand in the political and doctrinal activities of the Second International. The period of comparatively peaceful development of capitalism, the growth of the working-class movement and the participation in it of members of non-proletarian strata, the emergence of a labour aristocracy and labour bureaucracy, which introduced the idea of compromise into the labour movement—all this took place "at the cost of a temporary drop in the revolutionary level, a temporary strengthening of opportunism, which in the end led to the disgraceful collapse of this International".**** Thus, the collapse

* *The General Council of the First International 1864-1866. Minutes*, p. 341.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 306.
*** Ibid., p. 307.
**** Ibid., p. 306.

of the Second International was an outcome of the totality of historical processes which took place at the turn of the century. But there already existed and operated in the labour movement a different, truly revolutionary tendency, the most consistent vehicle of which was Bolshevism, which arose in Russia under Lenin's leadership. Bolshevism carried on an active struggle against reformism and helped to strengthen and rally the revolutionary, internationalist trend in the world labour movement.

Social-chauvinist degradation of most of the parties of the Second International could not destroy the objectively existing tendency towards international solidarity which is at the very heart of the proletarian movement. Even during the hard years of the imperialist world war the Left revolutionary groups maintained international contacts and widened their international ties. At the centre of this tendency towards unity among the Left elements of Social-Democracy stood the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, which held high the banner of proletarian internationalism and campaigned for the establishment of a Third International.

The October Revolution, which led the way to the world proletarian revolution, the sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism, the increasing antagonisms between labour and capital, between the imperialist countries and the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonial territories—all this led to the deepening of the world revolutionary crisis. There began an epoch of proletarian revolutions, an epoch of powerful upswing of the national liberation movement, an epoch of direct assault upon capitalism and mankind's transition to socialism. Under these conditions, international solidarity among the national contingents of the working class, close contact and mutual assistance among their vanguards, and co-ordination of working-class effort in the fight against the common enemy—international capital—became more important than ever.

All these historical circumstances increased the need for a qualitatively new, truly revolutionary organisation of the working class both within the national framework and on an international scale.

The Communist International was precisely such an organisation of a new type, which absorbed the best traditions of the world revolutionary movement, developed and enriched them, and gave them a new organisational form.

Lenin, who has gone down in history as the acknowledged leader of the world communist movement, was the organiser of the

Communist International, of which he was the leader during the early years of its existence.

Lenin built up theoretical and political evidence proving the need for setting up the Communist International. He showed that this necessity was conditioned by the new historical circumstances engendered by imperialism, by the advent of a period of direct assault upon capitalism, by the heightened role of international brotherhood of the workers in achieving both their national and international revolutionary aims and by the vital need for challenging the theory and practice of reformism with a truly revolutionary theory and practice.

Lenin began his titanic activity towards the establishment of the Communist International by consolidating the revolutionary wing in the international labour movement. This work reached its highest degree of intensity during the first world war, when the working class, as a result of the treachery of the leaders of the Second International, was rendered leaderless ideologically, organisationally and politically.

Lenin tackled the great historical task of reuniting the international threads of workers' brotherhood with his characteristic energy and clearness of purpose. He worked hard to restore to the workers' movement the Marxist ideological and doctrinal foundations which the renegade leaders had abandoned. Lenin rallied around him the Left groups, which gradually accepted his ideas and together with the Bolsheviks formed the international core which became the embryo of the Communist International.

Lenin evolved the basic principles of the modern communist movement, which endowed it with immense vital force and which have lost none of their significance to this day.

Lenin LAID THE IDEOLOGICAL AND DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, equipped the communist parties with a knowledge of the special features peculiar to the development of society in the new historical epoch—the epoch of imperialism and the transition from capitalism to socialism, and revealed the distinctive objective and subjective conditions of the revolutionary struggle in that epoch.

On the basis of a generalisation of historical experience and a study of the struggle of the international working class and the national liberation movement of the peoples Lenin creatively developed and enriched Marxism, raised it to a new level; a new phase of Marxist science took shape—that of Leninism.

The great teacher and leader of the world's proletariat enriched the Marxist doctrine of the party with the experience of the

revolutionary struggles in Russia and throughout the world. He concretised this doctrine in conformity with the epoch and EVOLVED THE ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. The most important features of these principles are: democratic centralism, ensuring unity of will and unity of action on the part of the communist parties; development to the utmost of their activity, initiative and self-dependence; strictest party discipline, based on consciousness among the communist ranks, on the ability of the vanguard to express the interests of the masses, to get closer to, and, in the words of Lenin, to merge with the broad masses of the working people, first and foremost that of the proletariat, and also with the non-proletarian masses; internationalism, including international proletarian discipline and self-discipline, in achieving the aims of the revolutionary struggle, the realisation by every party of its historical responsibility for the success of its activities within the national framework, for the destinies of the communist movement as a whole; the practical application of revolutionary mutual aid in forms most effective and expedient in the given conditions.

The political and organisational principles of the Comintern worked out by Lenin enabled it to successfully perform its vanguard role in the international communist movement and ensured its revolutionary fighting efficiency and political maneuverability. These principles became widespread and acquired a basic significance for all the communist parties.

LENIN LAID DOWN THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. He equipped the communist parties with the methodology for determining this strategy and working out the tactics, bearing in mind their diversity in the different countries; he showed the need for changing the political line in keeping with the changing phases of the struggle and the emergence of new historical conditions. Lenin took an active part in drafting the most important decisions of the Communist International.

Of paramount importance for the Comintern, for the framing of the policy, strategy and tactics of the communist parties, were the following aspects of Lenin's teaching:

(a) a searching and thorough-going analysis of imperialism as the highest and ultimate stage of capitalism on the eve of the socialist revolution;

(b) a characterisation of the struggle between the two opposing systems of capitalism and socialism and of the transition from

capitalism to socialism as the sum and substance of the new epoch;

(c) scientific substantiation of the general tendencies and characteristic features of the world socialist revolution in the epoch of imperialism; the conclusion that the victory of socialism in any one country was possible; the theses about the bourgeois democratic revolution evolving towards the socialist revolution, about the proletariat's allies at different stages of the revolution, and the significance of the national liberation movement for the development of the world proletarian revolution;

(d) definition and concretisation of the general laws governing the transition from capitalism to socialism, substantiation of the role of the proletarian state in the transitional period and the variety of its forms, analysis of the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, its mechanism, the content and historical significance of socialist democracy.

The activities of the Comintern under Lenin's leadership constitute a remarkable chapter in the history of the communist movement. The Communist International set itself the task of acting as an international organisation embodying the theory and practice of Leninism. The Comintern taught the communist parties Leninism, made use of every possible means and channels for its dissemination, developed and enriched it by collective effort, and applied it creatively in dealing with the urgent problems which life put forward.

The history of the Comintern is a history of the formation and rapid development of the modern communist movement, a history of the political growth and maturity of the communist parties, of the elevated standard of their Marxist-Leninist knowledge, which is taking place in a fierce struggle with the opportunists of every stripe, a history of the communist movement's transformation into the most important political force of the present age.

The Comintern has played a leading role in uniting the revolutionary forces under the banner of Marxism-Leninism and forming the communist parties in all continents. The Comintern was the first really world-wide communist organisation in the history of the labour movement. Under the leadership of the Comintern the communist movement advanced beyond the bounds of Europe and America, began to spread rapidly in Asia and Africa, emerged upon the world scene as a powerful accelerator of historical progress, and exercised growing influence on the world's social and political life.

The Comintern rendered the communist parties great assistance

in determining their revolutionary line and strengthening them ideologically and politically; it helped them overcome the legacy of social-democratism, throw off the burden of reformist illusions and prejudices and come out onto the historical highroad of service to the cause of the working class, and the struggle for the triumph of socialism.

The process of formation and consolidation of the communist parties lasted a whole historical period. It involved a number of serious difficulties largely of an international nature which had to be overcome; a collective effort was required to find the correct solution to a number of fundamental issues. These common tasks of the communist movement were dealt with within the framework and under the leadership of the Comintern.

The formation, development and successful activity of the communist parties met with furious resistance on the part of the Right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy, who adopted an aggressive anti-communist attitude. The growing influence of communism in the labour movement came up against the opposition of the Centrists and anarcho-syndicalists. The defence of a revolutionary line in the labour movement could be successful only through the united action of the communist parties under the leadership of the Comintern.

Later on there appeared the danger of factional division within the communist movement itself. The Right opportunists, the "ultra-Leftists", the Trotskyites and sectarians tried to impose on the communist parties an anti-Leninist political line; they tried to wreck the unity of the communist movement and created obstacles in the way of improving its fighting efficiency. The opportunists' factional struggle was international in character and they could only be defeated by the joint, purposeful effort of all the communist parties. The Comintern stood at the head of the struggle against revisionism and petty-bourgeois revolutionism in the world communist movement. Under its leadership, the opportunist factions operating at that period were defeated ideologically, politically and organisationally. All this tended greatly to strengthen the communist parties, enhanced the prestige of the communist movement in the world arena, contributed to the growth of their political maturity and self-dependence, and heightened their vanguard role in the revolutionary struggle.

The Comintern did a tremendous job in disseminating and developing Marxist-Leninist theory, in linking the international labour movement with Marxism-Leninism. It supplied answers, collective in form, Marxist in substance, and creative in character, to many cardinal problems that faced the communist movement, and made an important contribution to the framing of the political strategy and tactics of the communist parties of the different countries.

The policy forged and sponsored by the Comintern and aimed at winning over the majority of the labour masses to the revolution, at linking the struggle for peace and democracy with the struggle for socialism, the policy of a united workers' front as an important factor in the fight against the bourgeoisie, the idea of a workers' and peasants' government as a transitional stage towards the socialist revolution, the fruitful and highly effective conception of a united workers' and broad popular anti-fascist front, the policy of a united anti-imperialist front aimed at strengthening the revolutionary movement among the oppressed peoples and allying it with the proletarian revolution—such were the great landmarks of the Leninist policy, strategy and tactics of the world communist movement, which gained it enormous victories, the recognition of nations, and world influence.

The Comintern unremittingly taught the communist parties the fine and difficult art of political leadership of the masses and of the revolutionary movement, the ability to rally the masses behind them, to creatively apply the tenets of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the class struggle.

The fighting efficiency of the communist parties, the Comintern taught, depended largely on the communist party, as a unit, regarding itself as the highest form of class association of the proletariat tactfully carrying out its leading role in regard to other working-class organisations; on the communist parties unremittingly studying Marxism-Leninism and observing the unity of theory and practice in all their activities. It is important in principle for the communist parties, when devising political slogans and rallying the masses to the struggle, to take into account the concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement, the specific conditions of the internal and external situation, and to draw upon the experience accumulated by the communist parties of all countries. The heightened leading role of the communist parties depends on their being able to combine high principles and revolutionariness with the greatest flexibility, with strategic and tactical maneuverability, with the ability to master all forms of the class struggle both in legal and illegal conditions, to link the day-to-day demands of the proletariat with the basic tasks and aims of the socialist revolution. In keeping with Lenin's precepts, the Comintern taught the communist parties to critically analyse their own activities

and educate the Communists by revealing and overcoming their own errors.

By its decisions and advice to the communist parties the Comintern contributed to the Marxist-Leninist growth of the Communists and helped to enforce strict discipline based on the principles of democratic centralism as provided for in the Statutes of the Comintern. It cultivated in Communists a sense of responsibility for the destinies of the class struggle, a sense of revolutionariness in the periods of both offensive and defensive battles with the bourgeoisie.

One of the major historical services rendered by the Comintern was that it trained a galaxy of outstanding leaders, courageous, sturdy champions of the working-class cause, politically mature and ideologically steeled. In the course of joint revolutionary actions, in the process of collective creative activity, during the framing by joint efforts of a political line and tactics of struggle, there emerged experienced, theoretically well-schooled leaders of the communist parties, capable of linking theory and practice, able to deal not only with national but with international issues of the revolutionary movement from a Marxist-Leninist angle.

The build-up of Marxist-Leninist cadres was of paramount importance for the coming of age of the communist parties, for their transition to a new stage of development, to complete self-dependence at a time when there was no longer any central leadership on an international scale and each party had to determine its own political line and lead the revolutionary struggle in its own country in accordance with the general line of the world communist movement.

The Comintern played a notable part in educating the rank and file of the communist parties; it was largely responsible for the appearance upon the world scene of a mass political leader of a new type, whose name was COMMUNIST. In keeping with Lenin's precepts and under the leadership of the Comintern there took shape those political, ideological and moral features of a Communist, who acquired tremendous prestige among the popular masses and played an outstanding role in the historical destinies of humanity. It was due to the Comintern's influence that there was cultivated in Communists a spirit of consecrated devotion to the cause of the working class, ideological conviction and crystal honesty towards the party and the people, unbendable will, courage and heroism in the struggle for socialism, an ability to take the interests of the party as their own personal interests. The ideological, political and moral image of the Communist has embodied the finest traits of the revolutionaries of all past times and is the prototype of the man of the communist society.

The ruling classes of capitalist society, frightened by the growth of the communist movement, have come down upon it with all the might of their political, administrative, repressive and ideological machinery. Anti-communist slander, ferocious terror, concentration camps, fiendish torture and mass executions—everything was used to fight the communist movement. But the Communists stood their ground. They repulsed all the attacks of the reactionaries and are strengthening and extending their positions from year to year.

Backed by the first land of socialism—the Soviet Union—the Comintern rendered tremendous moral, political and material assistance to Communists, saved many thousands of activists and leaders from extermination. Such was the case after the defeat of the revolution in Hungary in 1919, during rampant fascist and reactionary terror in Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, Yugoslavia and Germany, after the defeat of the Vienna proletariat in February 1934 and the suppression of the Spanish Republic in 1939.

The leaders and active members of the communist movement educated by the Comintern have played and are still playing a prominent role in the revolutionary struggle, in the national liberation movement, in the building of socialism, in all progressive movements of modern times.

The Comintern has gone down in the history of man as the leading centre of the revolutionary movement, as the steadfast and consistent organiser of the struggle for the cause of the working people. The Comintern stood at the centre of all the sharpest conflicts of the age, in the front ranks of the world's progressive forces. It regarded the world revolutionary process as a single whole and orientated the communist parties towards mutual aid and co-operation.

The Comintern played an important role in defence of the Soviet Union, in the struggle against fascism, against the threat of war, and in rallying the international revolutionary forces. At various periods after the death of Lenin the activities of the Comintern suffered from serious shortcomings and sometimes from mistakes of a sectarian nature. But these failings and mistakes cannot negate the great historical services which the Comintern rendered in establishing and consolidating the communist parties, in rallying the world's revolutionary forces, mobilising them for the struggle against fascism and war, the struggle for peace, national independence and socialism.

2—270

The history of the Comintern is an object of keen ideological strife. Bourgeois and reformist historians try to denigrate the activities of the Comintern. There are people in the labour movement and even among members of communist parties who try to dismiss the outstanding services rendered by the Comintern and focus attention on mistakes and wrong decisions. Such an approach to the history of the Comintern, however, leads to a distortion of historical truth and prevents rather than helps the experience and traditions of the communist movement from being made use of in the present-day class struggle. What is more, criticism of mistakes and of one or another wrong decision of the Comintern is used in some cases as a pretext for direct attacks upon the basic principles of the communist movement, first and foremost the principle of internationalism, which unites and binds the revolutionary forces of the world today. No Leninist-Marxist, no internationalist can condone such a distortion of the Comintern's history.

The activities of the Communist International are of paramount importance in the history of the international revolutionary movement of the working class. The decisions of the congresses of the Comintern and its Executive Committee are charged with rich ideological content. Basically, the activities of the Comintern are a model of service to the cause of the working people, an admirable vehicle for the ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

The experience of the Comintern, stripped of mistakes and later accretions, its revolutionary traditions, are an asset that belong to the world communist movement, to all its revolutionary forces. This experience and these traditions have been taken over by the communist parties in their struggle for peace, democracy and national independence, their struggle for socialism.

Chapter One

FORMATION OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. THE COMINTERN—THE VANGUARD OF THE WORLD'S REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

(1919-1920)

THE HISTORICAL PREREQUISITES OF THE COMINTERN'S FORMATION

Changes in the Labour Movement During the War

The formation of revolutionary parties of a new type and their amalgamation in the Communist International were a historical necessity conditioned by the requirements of the proletariat's class struggle in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. The question of founding a new, truly revolutionary International was first raised by Lenin at the very beginning of the First World War, immediately after the collapse of the Second International.

The war, which started in the summer of 1914, was a predatory, imperialist war on both sides. It served as a severe historical test for all existing trends in the international labour movement. It ruthlessly laid bare the ideological and political bankruptcy of the Second International and revealed the full depth of the opportunist degradation which the majority of the Social-Democratic parties had undergone. On August 4, 1914, all the German Social-Democratic M.P.s—members of the strongest and most influential party in the Second International—joined the bourgeoisie and junkers in voting for war loans in the Reichstag. The socialist parties of Austro-Hungary, France, Britain, Belgium and a number of other countries also came out in support of "their" governments in the unjust imperialist war. The opportunist leaders thus openly sided with "their" national bourgeoisie. It was a gross betrayal of the interests of the working class. By flouting the anti-war decisions of the Second International the opportunists dealt a crushing blow to the unity of the international labour movement, for unity with "their" bourgeoisie meant the disorganisation and splitting of the working class on both a national and international scale.

The imperialist war brought to a head the crisis within the labour movement and laid bare the canker which had long been festering in the relatively peaceful period of capitalism's development. The objective conditions of this period nourished the opportunist tendencies. The monopoly bourgeoisie used their superprofits to buy some of the workers and their leaders, thus creating a whole social stratum in the form of a labour aristocracy and labour bureaucracy. Together with the petty-bourgeois fellow-

travellers of the proletariat, this stratum of bourgeoisified workers, wholly middle-class in their way of life, earnings, and mentality, became the mainstay of the bourgeoisie within the working class and the main source of opportunism. The parties of the Second International succumbed more and more to opportunism. Under the influence of the Left forces the Second International in the years preceding the war had adopted correct resolutions, but the practice of its Right leaders was accommodated more and more to the interests of bourgeois policy.

The crisis in the labour movement showed up opportunism in its true colours as an ally of the bourgeoisie. The old Kautskian theory of opportunism as "a legitimate shade" of a united party alien to "extremes" had become a deception of the working class. "Today, following 1914," Lenin wrote, "unity of the proletarian struggle for the socialist revolution demands that the workers' parties separate themselves completely from the parties of the opportunists."*

During the war three currents were formed in the international labour and socialist movement: the social-chauvinists, Centrists, and revolutionary internationalists.

The social-chauvinists, or undisguised opportunists, proclaimed the need for "civil peace" between the classes and "defence of the fatherland" in the predatory war, thus openly helping the ruling class to drive the workers into the imperialist slaughter for the sake of the bourgeoisie's profits. Most of the well-known leaders of Social-Democracy took a social-chauvinist stand, among them Ebert and Scheidemann (Germany), Adler (Austria), Renaudel, Guesde and Sembat (France), Hyndman (Britain), Plekhanov (Russia), Bissolati (Italy), Vandervelde (Belgium) and Branting (Sweden). In France, Belgium and Britain the social-chauvinists became members of the bourgeois governments. In all countries they sided with their national bourgeoisie and became the class enemies of the proletariat.

Centrism, as a political phenomenon, was objectively the secret agent of social-chauvinism within the labour movement. The Centrists, or secret opportunists, were against the war in words, but in deeds stood for unity with the social-chauvinists, upheld their influence among the masses, and saved the Right leaders from moral and political bankruptcy in the eyes of the workers. At a time when the social-chauvinists were dragging the labour movement to the Right, Centrism, whose ideologue was Karl Kautsky,

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 111.

the Second International's most outstanding theoretician, came to the fore during the war as the main obstacle that prevented the exposure of social-chauvinism and the adoption by the proletarian masses of a revolutionary stand. "Undisguised opportunism, which immediately repels the working masses," wrote Lenin, "is not so frightful and injurious as this theory of the golden mean, which uses Marxist catchwords to justify opportunist practice, and tries to prove, with a series of sophisms, that revolutionary action is premature, etc."* Typical exponents of Centrism were: Kautsky, Haase and Ledebour in Germany; Adler in Austria; Longuet and Pressemane in France; MacDonald and Snowden in Britain; Martov and Trotsky in Russia; Turati and Modigliani in Italy; Hillquit in the U.S.A. and Grimm in Switzerland.

The vital interests of the proletarian masses were expressed by the trend of revolutionary internationalists. They alone remained true to socialism, carried on a revolutionary struggle against "their" imperialist bourgeoisie, and challenged social-chauvinism and Centrism.

The Serbian socialists used the rostrum of parliament to condemn the predatory war and chauvinism when they voted in the *skupština* against war loans on July 31, 1914. The stand taken by the Serbian socialists was highly commended by Lenin, who held it up as an example of allegiance to the basic principles of the international revolutionary proletariat. On August 8, 1914 a strong protest against the imperialist war was voiced in Russia from the rostrum of the Fourth Duma. The Bolshevik deputies not only voted demonstratively against war loans, but carried on vigorous revolutionary propaganda among the masses. They showed everybody what the behaviour of spokesmen of the revolutionary proletarian party at the decisive hour should be. On December 2, 1914 the example of the Bolsheviks was followed in the German Reichstag by Karl Liebknecht. This courageous proletarian revolutionary was the only man in the Reichstag to say "nay" to the imperialist war.

The social-chauvinist stand adopted by the leadership of the parties of the Second International and the split of this organisation into warring parties who had made common cause with their imperialist governments, signified the complete ideological and organisational collapse of the Second International, its dissolution and death as an international organisation of the proletariat. It was not the Bolsheviks and Lenin who split the Second Interna-

* Ibid., p. 257.

tional, as the anti-communists assert, but the opportunists, the social-chauvinists, who betrayed the working class and thereby destroyed the unity of the international labour movement.

The world proletarian movement was faced with the alternative of either abandoning its historically necessary revolutionary aims and switching over to a position of compromise with the bourgeoisie, or breaking decisively with social-chauvinism and setting up a new international revolutionary organisation capable of defending the class interests of the proletariat and continuing the internationalist traditions handed down by the great teachers of the working class, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

The break-up of the Second International and its betrayal of Marxism, of the interests of proletarian emancipation and the cause of international proletarian solidarity confronted revolutionary Marxists with the urgent problem of creating a new, revolutionary International.

By this time conditions for the creation of an international proletarian organisation were ripe. These profound objective and subjective conditions arose as a result of the sharpened contradictions of imperialism and the development of the proletarian class struggle. A determining factor here was the advent of a period of general crisis of capitalism and of proletarian revolutions. Lenin proved incontrovertibly that imperialism was the prelude to the socialist revolution, that the uneven, leap-like economic and political development of the imperialist countries led to an intensification of capitalism's basic antagonisms. Hence, the inevitability of profound revolutionary movements of the masses, the appearance of weak links in the world chain of imperialism, and the possibility of their severance by proletarian revolutions. Lenin came to the conclusion that the world was drawing close towards pitched class battles and revolutionary upheavals.

The coming socialist revolutions and the pressing need for leadership of the revolutionary battles made it imperatively necessary to unite the proletarian revolutionaries into a militant organisation on both a national and international scale. This task, stemming from the essential needs of the class struggle in the new epoch, was all the more important considering that, although Marxist revolutionary groups existed in various countries, there were no revolutionary Marxist parties in any country, apart from the Bolshevik Party in Russia, capable of leading the masses to revolutionary battle.

"To the Third International," wrote Lenin, "falls the task of organising the proletarian forces for a revolutionary onslaught

against the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries for the capture of political power, for the triumph of socialism!"*

A very important precondition for the creation of a new international revolutionary proletarian organisation is to be found in the ideological, tactical and organisational principles of the communist movement formulated by Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In his fight against the opportunists of diverse trends, Lenin elaborated the teaching of Marxism, which he enriched with new conclusions drawn from the practice of the struggle of the revolutionary working class both in Russia and throughout the world. In his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, On the Slogan of the United States of Europe, The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution,* in his articles on the national and agrarian questions and numerous other writings, Lenin developed the Marxist theory of the class struggle and of socialist revolution as applied to the epoch of imperialism. On the basis of a profound scientific analysis of the antagonisms of imperialism Lenin drew the conclusion that the victory of the socialist revolution initially in several or even in a single given country was possible. This conclusion, first formulated in 1915, was a brilliant discovery in Marxist science. It mapped out new perspectives for the international proletariat, and gave free scope to the initiative of the working class in the various countries.

Lenin drew conclusions of a fundamental nature showing the need for a stable alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the importance of democratic demands in the revolutionary struggle, the tendency of the democratic revolution evolving towards a socialist revolution, and the integration of the struggle for socialism with the national-colonial movement. The revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries, Lenin pointed out, would unite with a number of democratic and revolutionary movements for national liberation in the oppressed countries. Lenin also developed the Marxist theory of war, the state, the proletarian party and its role.

The theoretical deductions of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, which were tested and enriched in the course of the class struggle under the most complex and diverse conditions, formed the chief planks in the ideological, political and organisational platform of the Comintern, the foundation of its strategy and tactics.

The vital need for new revolutionary guidelines was soon keenly

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 40-41.

felt by the leading workers in the capitalist countries, who realised what a baneful effect the policy of the social-chauvinists and Centrists was having. The will and strivings of these workers were expressed by the revolutionary internationalist parties and groups.

The trend of revolutionary internationalists consisted of the Russian Bolsheviks headed by Lenin, the Bulgarian Tesnyaks headed by Blagoyev, Kirkov and Kolarov, the German Left (Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring), the Serbian socialists (Filipović, Popović, Katzlerović), the Polish Left Social-Democrats (Hanecki, Warski), the Lettish Social-Democrats (Berzin), the Dutch Tribunists (Pannekoek, Wijnkoop), the Left socialists of Sweden, Norway, Italy, Austro-Hungary, France, Britain, U.S.A., Argentina, Denmark, Switzerland and other countries. The position of the Left Social-Democrats in the West, from the point of view of Leninism, was not sufficiently firm and consistent. But they understood the main task—that of fighting chauvinism in their own country—and acquitted themselves of this task with selfless dedication.

The appearance in the labour movement of revolutionary internationalist parties and groups, who fought against their bourgeoisie and the social-chauvinists, was another important precondition for the formation of the Communist International.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks closely followed the ripening of the necessary conditions for the creation of a new, revolutionary International and carried on an active struggle to rally the Left, genuinely internationalist elements in the international labour movement. Practical steps in this direction were undertaken shortly after the outbreak of the war under the motto of struggle against the imperialist slaughter. The Bolshevik Party came out against the imperialist world war in an organised united front, showing an example of courage, staunchness and devotion to the cause of socialism and proletarian internationalism. As a result of their long years of unremitting struggle against opportunism the Bolsheviks in their dire hour of trial showed themselves equal to the historical task that faced them. November 1, 1914, saw the publication in Switzerland of the Manifesto of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. penned by Lenin under the title of "The War and Russian Social-Democracy". This document presented a comprehensive programme of revolutionary struggle against imperialism, war and opportunism. The Bolsheviks put forward as the main slogan the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This slogan was based on the experience of the Paris Commune and was an elaboration of the Basle Manifesto adopted at

the congress of the Second International in 1912. It was directly opposed to the social-chauvinist slogan of "civil peace" with one's own bourgeoisie.

Lenin's slogan was received with rancorous hostility on the part of both the Russian and the foreign opportunists. "To turn the world war into a civil war would be madness,"* wrote the German social-chauvinist Eduard David, polemising with the Bolsheviks. "Practically, there is only one issue—the victory or defeat of your own country", Kautsky echoed the social-chauvinists.

"Indeed, if one were to forget socialism and the class struggle, that would be the truth," Lenin answered them. "However, if one does not lose sight of socialism, that is untrue. Then there is another *practical* issue: should we perish as blind and helpless slaves, in a war between slave-holders, or should we fall in 'attempts at fraternisation' between the slaves, with the aim of casting off slavery?

"Such, in *reality*, is the 'practical' issue."**

"In wartime—the struggle for peace, in peacetime—the class struggle,"*** declared Kautsky. This attitude was sharply criticised by the German Left as well as by the Bolsheviks. Rosa Luxemburg wrote with sarcasm that the historic appeal of the *Communist Manifesto* thanks to Kautsky received an important amendment and took the following shape: "Working men of all countries, unite in peacetime and cut each other's throat in wartime."****

From the slogan about turning the imperialist war into a civil war there followed another political slogan—the defeat of "one's own" government in the imperialist war. It was opposed to the social-chauvinist policy of "defence of the fatherland" and applied to all the belligerent countries.

The Centrists put forward the slogan of "neither victory nor defeat". Outwardly this differed from the chauvinist stand of "defence of the fatherland", but in fact it was merely a variant of it. The advocates of the "neither-victory-nor-defeat" slogan virtually sided with the bourgeoisie and the social-chauvinists in their disbelief in the possibility of international revolutionary action by the working class against their governments and in their unwillingness to promote such action. "Whoever is in favour of the slogan of 'neither victory nor defeat'," wrote Lenin, "is consciously or unconsciously a chauvinist; at best he is a conciliatory

* E. David, *Die Sozialdemokratie im Weltkrieg*, Berlin, 1915, S. 172.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 182.
*** K. Kautsky, *Die Internationalität und der Krieg*, Berlin, 1915, S. 40.
**** *Die Internationale*, Heft 1, April 1915, S. 8.

petty bourgeois but in any case he is an *enemy* to proletarian policy, a partisan of the existing governments, of the present-day ruling classes."*

Lenin took great trouble also to expose the pacifist call for peace proclaimed by the Centrists in all countries.

The Bolsheviks explained to the masses that the benefits which they were expecting from peace were impossible without a socialist revolution. "An end to wars, peace among the nations, the cessation of pillaging and violence—such is our ideal," wrote Lenin, "but only bourgeois sophists can use this ideal, divorced from a direct and immediate call for revolutionary action, to seduce the masses."**

The slogan calling for a new, Third International was first put forward in Lenin's manifesto. "The proletarian International has not gone under and will not go under," he wrote. "Notwithstanding all obstacles, the masses of the workers will create a new International.... Long live a proletarian International freed from opportunism."***

The Zimmerwald Movement

The crisis engendered by the war caused great confusion at first among the workers. In most countries the workers found themselves following the lead of the social-chauvinists, deceived as they were by the show of fictitious unity between opportunists and revolutionaries within the same party, or else they succumbed to some extent to the chauvinist moods kindled by the bourgeoisie. It was not until the beginning of 1915 that a gradual cleavage became apparent within the old Social-Democratic parties, with the proletarian masses steadily moving away from the social-chauvinist leaders towards the Left, towards revolutionary ideas and attitudes, towards the revolutionary leaders.

The horrors of the war, the killings, famine and ruin, apart from the sufferings which they inflicted upon the masses, made them gather their strength, steel their will, ponder on the real causes of the war and gradually come to a clear revolutionary understanding of events. The anti-war movement among the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 279.
** Ibid., p. 293.
*** Ibid., pp. 33-34.

workers was a striking manifestation of this profound leftward shift of the masses. It took shape ideologically and organisationally in the autumn of 1915 at the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald (Switzerland) and became known as the Zimmerwald movement.

The Zimmerwald Conference was held from September 5 to 8, 1915, and was attended by 37 delegates from 12 European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Switzerland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) and by one observer.

Politically, the Conference was heterogeneous, only 8 delegates from 7 countries taking a consistent revolutionary-internationalist stand. These delegates formed the Left Zimmerwald group at the Conference. The group took shape ideologically when it moved its own draft resolution and manifesto, and then organisationally, when it elected its Bureau headed by Lenin. Other members of the Bureau were Zinoviev (representing the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.) and Radek (representing the Executive of the Polish Social-Democratic Party). The Zimmerwald Left comprised representatives of the Bolsheviks, the Polish Rozlamists (Social-Democratic opposition), the Lettish Social-Democrats, and the Left elements in the Social-Democratic parties of Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Germany. It was later joined by the Left socialists of the Netherlands, Serbia, France, Bulgaria, Austria and the U.S.A. This rallying of the revolutionary internationalists into the Zimmerwald Left group was considered by Lenin to be the greatest achievement of the Conference.

The other 29 delegates formed the Right wing of the Conference, known as the Zimmerwald Majority. The tone here was set by the Kautskyites, who took a Centrist stand. The Zimmerwald Right comprised also pacifists who vacillated between revolutionary reformist tactics, and some inconsistent internationalists. They shared a common reluctance to see, or failure to recognise, the need for a complete break with social-chauvinism in order to wage a successful fight against imperialism and the war.

The chief item on the Zimmerwald agenda was the question of the proletariat's action for peace. The Zimmerwald Left pointed out in their documents that the only way to put an end to the imperialist war was by openly calling and leading the masses of the workers to a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist governments to win political power for the purpose of a socialist organisation of society. The Kautskyites and their adherents, on the contrary, contended that the time for revolution had not yet

come and therefore it was too early to proclaim revolutionary slogans and determine the concrete tactics of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism. In their opinion, the Conference was to confine itself to a general appeal for peace and in no case to embark on the creation of a new organisation opposed to the old International.

Speaking in the debate, Lenin continued to expose the attempts of the Kautskyites, by means of pacifist phraseology, to prevent the workers from facing up to the momentous issues of the day, and showed that in the conditions of imperialist world war one could not speak of peace without relation to the proletarian revolution. The world war had created in Europe a revolutionary situation, and therefore the Conference was in duty bound, he stressed, "to explain to the masses the need for revolution, call for it, create the necessary organisations, and speak fearlessly and most concretely of the various methods of the forcible struggle and its 'technique' ".*

The Zimmerwald Conference, by a majority of 19 to 12, rejected the principled resolution proposed by the Left and declared for a manifesto which failed to concretise the tasks and methods of the struggle. The Conference adopted also a declaration of solidarity with the victims of the war calling upon socialists to follow the example of the Bolshevik deputies in the Duma, the example of Liebknecht and other revolutionary fighters for peace and socialism. The Conference elected a governing body—the International Socialist Commission—consisting of Robert Grimm, Charles Naine, Oddino Morgari, and Angelica Balabanova.

Weighing the importance of the Zimmerwald decisions for the Left wing of international Social-Democracy, Lenin wrote that the Conference was the "first step to the Third International; half-hearted and inconsistent step *towards a split* with opportunism. Possibility of a 'relapse' ".**

The manifesto adopted at Zimmerwald clearly described the world war as an imperialist war and denounced the "defence-of-the-fatherland" idea in that war as being a bourgeois lie. By the efforts of the Left the manifesto gave expression to the idea that peace without revolutionary struggle was an empty mendacious phrase and that the only way of deliverance from the horrors of the war was to be sought in the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

The manifesto stated that most of the socialist parties flouted

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 390.

** Ibid., Vol. 43, p. 489.

the obligations imposed by the decisions of the Stuttgart, Copenhagen and Basle congresses of the Second International, and that the International Socialist Bureau, too, had failed in its duty. At the same time the manifesto did not explain the reasons for this, implying that it was accidental and a failure on the part of individuals. There was no mention of the fact that the leaders of the Second International, as regards "defence of the fatherland", were repeating the same lie as the bourgeoisie.

Though Lenin criticised the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the Zimmerwald manifesto, he considered it necessary to sign it, seeing in it a document that signified a step forward towards an ideological and practical break with opportunism.

The Zimmerwald Conference marked the beginning of Zimmerwald unity—a political bloc between the revolutionary internationalists and vacillating elements including certain Kautskyites against the social-chauvinists. This compromise tended to band together all the opponents of the imperialist war and stimulated the further gathering of strength among the internationalists. Although formally, in its documents, the Zimmerwald Conference did not even pose such an important issue as that of a break with social-chauvinism, the mere fact that an international socialist conference against the war had been called despite the decisions of the official leadership of the Social-Democratic parties, was a serious blow at the social-chauvinists of all countries. Work in the spirit of Zimmerwald weaned the revolutionary workers away from the opportunist leaders, and this meant an actual break by the proletariat with the national bourgeoisie of its own country and the restoration of the international unity of the working class for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

The Zimmerwald Conference filed the first, still only half-conscious protest of the labour masses against the imperialist war. At the same time it touched on the most burning problems of war and peace, gave plenty of food for thought, and provided an impetus to the class-consciousness of the workers, who were crushed by military regimes and stunned by chauvinist propaganda.

The appeal of the Zimmerwald Conference found an ardent response among the revolutionary-minded workers of Europe, America and South Africa. The Secretary of the Socialist local in the town of Fossano, Germanetto, subsequently a prominent Italian Communist, described in the following words the immense joy he experienced on reading the Zimmerwald manifesto: "So things have started! Contacts have been reestablished. The betrayal of the leaders has not been able to kill the feeling of soli-

darity! I was overjoyed!"* Thanks to the activities of the revolutionary Marxist group headed by Codovilla and Ghioldi, the Zimmerwald manifesto became known to the workers of Argentina. To the workers of different countries the manifesto came as a fighting call to action and the word Zimmerwald itself a symbol of the revival of proletarian internationalism.

Together with the Zimmerwald manifesto the documents of the Zimmerwald Left, printed in Russian, German, French, English, Italian, Polish and Lettish were, through the efforts of the Bolsheviks and Left Social-Democrats, promulgated in different countries. The pamphlet *Internationale Flugblätter*, published in November 1915 and containing the draft resolution and manifesto of the Zimmerwald Left was described by Lenin as "the first publication by the *nucleus of Left* Social-Democrats of *all* countries, who have a clear, exact and full *reply* to the question of what is to be done and in which direction to go."**

The Left Zimmerwaldians achieved still greater success with their international theoretical organ *Vorbote*, which was started as a counter-balance to Kautsky's *Die Neue Zeit*. The internationalists of the different countries discussed in their journal a variety of topical questions concerning the theory and practice of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. The journal played an important part in propagandising the ideological and political platform of the Zimmerwald Left and exposing the doctrinal renegadism and treacherous tactics of the social-chauvinists and of the Centrists who screened them.

By the spring of 1916 class contradictions in most of the countries of Europe were considerably intensified and a turning point was reached in the development of the mass revolutionary movement. The huge death toll at the fronts, hunger, need and the high cost of living provoked mass discontent and anti-war feeling both among the workers and the petty-bourgeoisie. Disaffection found its way into the army where cases of fraternisation among the troops of the warring powers became more and more frequent. It was in such a situation that a second Zimmerwald conference was held at Kienthal, Switzerland, in April 1916, which was attended by 41 delegates from 8 countries: Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland and Portugal.

The Zimmerwald Left were stronger at Kienthal than they were at Zimmerwald. They had 10 delegates. On a number of

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* Giovanni Germanetto, *Le Memorie di un Barbiere*, Roma, 1949, p. 84.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*. Vol. 35, p. 211.

issues they were supported by another 12 delegates. Although the Left Zimmerwaldians were again in a minority, their ideas had increased influence. Guided by Lenin, they came out as an organised and united force. The Zimmerwald Right consisted of 31 delegates (from 8 countries). As at Zimmerwald, they were a group of extremely heterogeneous elements, from overt Centrists to inconsistent internationalists. But this time, to quote Lenin, "the Zimmerwald Right wing did not have so large a majority as to be able to continue its *own* policy."*

During the discussion of the question of the proletariat's attitude towards the different peace programmes the Left Zimmerwaldians, despite opposition from the Centrist majority, succeeded in getting the resolution worded with a number of formulations condemning social-pacifism described as a species of bourgeois deceit to wean the masses away from the revolutionary class struggle.

The ideological struggle was at its sharpest during the discussion of the Zimmerwaldians' attitude towards the convocation of the International Socialist Bureau. The main issue of controversy was whether the workers should be called to restore the old, bankrupt International or to work for the establishment of a new, Third International. The Kautskian majority were emphatically against any break with the I.S.B. In the end a compromise resolution was adopted formally condemning the social-chauvinist policy of the I.S.B. without, however, drawing any practical conclusions from the fact of the Second International leaders' betrayal of the proletarian cause. The Conference also adopted an appeal "To the Peoples Being Ruined and Killed by the War" containing a sharp criticism of social-chauvinism.

Reviewing the results of the Kienthal Conference, Lenin wrote:

"Result { a small step forward / in the general mark-time / vacillation."**

The Right Zimmerwaldians were forced by the mounting revolutionary anti-war movement of the masses to make concessions at Kienthal to the Left. But while they signed the resolutions condemning social-chauvinism and pacifism, they did not, in practice, alter their own social-pacifist views, still less try to shut the door

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 280-81.
** C.P.A., I.M.L. (Central Party Archives, Institute of Marxism-Leninism), 2/1/4050.

to reconciliation with the social-chauvinists. Though categorically rejecting the idea of a Third International and reiterating the need for dissolving the I.S.C. as soon as the I.S.B. met, the Right Zimmerwaldians expressed their readiness to renounce a bloc with the revolutionary internationalists in favour of an alliance with the social-chauvinists. The debates at Kienthal showed that the Centrists resorted more and more often to crude diktat in order to impose their will on the Conference and threatened to break up the Zimmerwald organisation if the Conference went on record for a break with the Second International.

The Left Zimmerwaldians, already at Kienthal, were faced with the problem of whether it was worth while remaining in the Zimmerwald organisation. They decided for the time being to remain in order to continue the fight against the Kautskyites and help the vacillators extricate themselves from the bog of Centrism and come into line with proletarian policy.

Analysing the causes of the growing deadlock into which the Zimmerwald organisation was being forced by the Kautskyites, Lenin wrote in September 1916: "Struggle against imperialism that is not closely linked with the struggle against opportunism is either an empty phrase or a fraud. One of the main defects of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, one of the main reasons why these embryos of the Third International may possibly end in a fiasco, is that the question of fighting opportunism was not even raised openly, let alone solved in the sense of proclaiming the need to break with the opportunists."*

The end of 1916 saw a switchover in world policy from imperialist war to imperialist peace. Objective conditions and fear of revolution forced certain imperialist circles in a number of countries to seek ways for ending the protracted war. Pacifist propaganda thus received, as it were, objective ground on which a political reconciliation was built up between the social-chauvinists and the Right wing of the Zimmerwaldians.

By uniting with the social-chauvinists on the common platform of social-pacifism, the Right Zimmerwaldians betrayed the idea of revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war and capitalism which had been so solemnly proclaimed at Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The Zimmerwald majority were responsible for the ideological and political breakdown of the Zimmerwald organisation by using the banner of Zimmerwald as a screen to cover up social-chauvinism and bourgeois reformism.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 83.

The February bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia widened still further the gulf that had formed between the Left and Right Zimmerwaldians. The events in Russia showed that the imperialist war had begun to change into a civil war. The working class of Russia developed tremendous revolutionary energy, and its party, given a chance to work under legal conditions, the only party in the world that had a clear-cut, explicit programme on the questions of war, peace and revolution, naturally became the centre of attraction for the revolutionary forces of the world proletariat, and had to take upon itself the initiative in preparing the ground for the Communist International.

Lenin considered that the revolutionary internationalists could no longer remain in the Zimmerwald organisation. "The Zimmerwald bog can no longer be tolerated," he wrote. "We must not, for the sake of the Zimmerwald 'Kautskyites', continue the semi-alliance with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and Scheidemanns. We must break with this International immediately. We must remain in Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information."* Lenin urged the immediate establishment of a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International.

Lenin's call was not immediately appreciated by some members of the Party, who were still beguiled with Zimmerwald illusions. The majority of delegates to the April 1917 Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) did not yet know that the Zimmerwald organisation was dominated by Kautskyites. The Conference resolved to remain in the Zimmerwald bloc with the aim of upholding there the tactics of the Zimmerwald Left, and directed the Central Committee to arrange for the Bolsheviks' attendance at the Third Zimmerwald Conference to be called at Stockholm by the International Socialist Commission. Lenin's motion to remain in the Zimmerwald bloc only for purposes of information was rejected.**

Zimmerwald illusions in the Party were spread by Zinoviev. He argued the case for the Left Social-Democrats who had shown irresolution on the question of dissociating from the Centrists and proposed staying on in Zimmerwald and endeavouring to win the majority over to the Third International. He defended this point of view both at the April Conference and after it. "It would be a good thing now to seize the Zimmerwald International," he con-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 82.

** *Sedmaya (Aprelskaya) Vserossiiskaya konferentsiya R.S.D.R.P.(b.). Protokoly* (The Seventh [April] All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). Minutes.), Moscow, 1958, pp. 228-33, 253-55.

tinued to urge in June 1917, to which Lenin replied: "In my opinion, this is super-opportunist and harmful tactics.... This would mean throwing overboard all our principles, forgetting everything we wrote and said against the Centre, getting ourselves muddled up and disgraced."*

Lenin constantly stressed the fact that the Zimmerwald organisation had outlived itself and by not breaking with it the Bolsheviks were merely making it more difficult for themselves to take practical steps towards a speedy establishment of the Third International. After the April Conference Lenin pressed for this mistake to be rectified. In the summer and autumn of 1917 he repeatedly asked the Central Committee and its Foreign Representative to hasten the convocation of a world conference of internationalists in order to have "a *real* Third International founded of the Lefts *alone* and *against the Kautskyites alone*."**

However, Zinoviev in the C.C. and Radek in its Bureau Abroad sabotaged Lenin's instructions. They believed that such a conference would be a failure because of the small number of its delegates. Countering these arguments, Lenin wrote: "It would be immeasurably stupid to 'wait' for a 'large' number of participants, and to be 'embarrassed' by the fact that at present there are 'few'. For just now such a conference will be a *moral* force, independently of the number of participants, while later it may be *hushed up*."*** Lenin emphasised that in the resolutions of the Seventh (April) Conference and the Sixth Congress of the Party, and also the draft of the Bolsheviks' new programme "there is a sufficient *ideological basis* (adding *Vorbote, Tribune, Arbeiterpolitik* and others) to be able to present the whole world with clear answers to the questions raised by imperialism, and to accuse the social-chauvinists and the Kautskyites."****

Lenin's instructions, unfortunately, were not carried out at the time. Representatives of the Bolsheviks attended the Third Zimmerwald Conference at Stockholm held during September 5-12, 1917. The Conference, as Lenin had foreseen, was abortive as far as the world revolutionary movement was concerned, since the decisive role in it was played by the Centrists.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, p. 635.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., Vol. 35, p. 321.
**** Ibid., p. 322.

THE FOUNDING OF THE COMINTERN

The World Revolutionary Crisis

On November 7 (October 25 Old Style) 1917 the victorious socialist revolution took place in Russia. As a result of the armed uprising the rule of the bourgeoisie was overthrown, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was established on one-sixth of the globe.

The October Revolution, which developed as a result of the extreme aggravation of all the contradictions of capitalism in the course of the imperialist war, started the general crisis of capitalism and ushered in a new era in the history of man—the era of the nations' transition from capitalism to socialism. It was the first act of the world socialist revolution. "The abolition of capitalism and its vestiges," wrote Lenin, "and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order comprise the content of the new era of world history that has set in."*

The socialist revolution occurred in a country of singularly varied social relations. Tsarist Russia was a focus of contradictions engendered both by capitalist development and the survivals of feudalism. The peasant and national questions, which were key issues throughout the capitalist world, were here at their acutest.

The October Revolution split the world into two systems: the capitalist and socialist systems. It sharpened all the contradictions of imperialism and inspired the world's workers in their struggle against the system of violence and oppression. The victory of the October Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the revolutionary struggle both in the developed capitalist countries and the backward countries.

The working class of the capitalist countries marched in the van of the revolutionary movement. It fought for peace, freedom and socialism, and expressed the interests of all the oppressed and the exploited. The objective aim of the labour masses was not only to end the predatory war, but to do away with the whole capitalist system.

In January 1918 some two million workers in Austro-Hungary and Germany went on strike in protest against the predatory peace terms which the Central Powers presented to Soviet Russia

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 392.

at Brest-Litovsk. The workers demanded the immediate conclusion of a peace treaty on the terms proposed by the Soviet Government, the lifting of the state of siege, and the improvement of food supplies. Soviets (councils) of workers' deputies were formed in a number of industrial centres. The January action in Austro-Hungary and Germany revealed the immense revolutionary strength of the popular masses. This strength, however, was paralysed by the opportunists, who broke the strike.

At the close of January 1918 a proletarian revolution broke out in Finland. Finland was the first country after Soviet Russia to have a socialist republic of the workers and peasants, in which, to quote Lenin, "there are no Soviets but... there is, at any rate, a new type of power, proletarian power".*

The bourgeois government of Finland, escaping from the popular wrath, fled to the north of the country, and power in the industrial southern districts passed into the hands of the workers. On January 28 a revolutionary government was formed in which the Left Social-Democrats Manner, Sirola, Kuusinen and other Social-Democratic leaders took part. They had behind them the majority of the Social-Democratic Party. Sejms of labour organisations, workers' committees, shop workers' boards were set up in the local areas to carry out the revolutionary objectives of the workers' government.

Expressing the will of the workers and torpparit (landless tenant-farmers), the revolutionary government carried out a number of sweeping democratic reforms. It bound employers strictly to observe the 8-hour day, turned over to the torpparit free of charge the land which they worked, nationalised industrial enterprises abandoned by the capitalists, established workers' control at the factories, carried out reforms of the judiciary and put the Bank of Finland under control. On March 1, 1918 the government signed a treaty of friendship and brotherhood between the Socialist Workers' Republic of Finland and the R.S.F.S.R., which for the first time determined the friendly relationships between the two socialist republics. The workers' government in Finland remained in power until the beginning of May 1918. In April troops from Kaiser Germany came to the aid of the Finnish white-guards. Between them they kindled the flame of civil war in the country and drowned the socialist republic in blood.

Separate defeats of the workers could not halt the revolutionary movement in the West. The causes at the bottom of the revolutionary ferment had not been removed. The predatory war was being dragged on and the atrocities of imperialism stood out more glaringly than ever, opening the eyes of the downtrodden and oppressed sections of the nation and drawing the masses more and more into politics and revolutionary struggle. "The workers of the world," wrote Lenin, "feel that the cause of the Russian revolution is their own cause no matter how great the obstacles in our way.... Parallel with the war between the two groups of imperialists, another war is beginning everywhere, the war which the working class, inspired by the example of the Russian revolution, is declaring against its own bourgeoisie."*

In September 1918 an armed insurrection broke out in the Bulgarian army (the Vladai Revolt). The soldiers declared the monarchy overthrown and proclaimed a republic. This spontaneous action of the soldier mass, however, was brutally suppressed by the government with the aid of foreign troops.

In the autumn of 1918, as a result of military defeats at the front, mutinies in the Army and Navy, the revolutionary democratic movement among the workers, the rapidly mounting movement of national liberation in the Czech, Slovak, Southern-Slav, Polish, West-Ukrainian and Rumanian territories, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy began to crumble. In October and November the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Austro-Hungary swept away the reactionary Hapsburg regime. The proletariat was the motive force of this revolution, but led as it was by the social-reformists, it was unable to make itself the preponderant force and seize power, although in the course of the struggle such embryonic organs of revolutionary power as Soviets of Workers' Deputies had sprung up in many towns. Ultimately, a number of new bourgeois states arose in this part of Europe—Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom (from 1929 on Yugoslavia).

On November 3, 1918, a revolution started in Germany with the mutiny in the Navy at Kiel. Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies sprang up everywhere. On November 9, at the call of the Spartacists** and the revolutionary seniors the armed workers and soldiers took over control of Berlin—the centre of German imperialism—and overthrew the Kaiser regime.

The revolution in Germany, though carried out to a certain

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 133.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 85.

** Members of the Spartacus Union, a revolutionary organisation of the German Left Social-Democrats.

extent by proletarian means and methods, did not go beyond the bounds of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It merely did away with the monarchy of Wilhelm II, but left the power of the bourgeoisie intact. The new government, acting hypocritically in the name of the socialist republic, was formed of Right Social-Democrats and Centrists. The "socialist" signboard did not prevent it from exercising its power in the interests of the bourgeoisie with the backing of the more gullible sections of the masses.

Most of the workers and soldiers in Germany believed that with the end of the war (the armistice was signed on November 11), the overthrow of the monarchy, the setting up of Soviets, the proclamation of a republic and the introduction of universal suffrage, the proletariat had won political power and created the preconditions for the building of socialism. This, however, was a profound delusion, stemming from a lack of revolutionary experience and from bourgeois-parliamentarian prejudices, which had been cultivated for years in the German working class by the reformist leaders of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions.

The German opportunists succeeded in splitting the revolutionary movement and checking the revolution by keeping it within bourgeois-democratic limits. Under the banner of the early convocation of the National Assembly, which, strictly speaking, was a bourgeois body, the Right Social-Democratic leaders banded together all the reactionary forces and, in league with the military, dealt a heavy blow to the working class. In taking upon himself the bloody mission of suppressing the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, Noske, a Right-wing leader, declared: "It can't be helped. Somebody must be the bloodhound. I do not shy at the responsibility!"* The main causes of the defeat of the German working class were the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders and the absence of a proletarian party of a new type at the beginning of the revolution.

Intensification of the class struggle was also to be observed in the victor countries. A powerful strike movement was building up in France, Britain, Italy and the U.S.A. "Rice riots" broke out in Japan, involving over ten million people. The workers everywhere demanded an 8-hour day, a rise in pay, recognition of the trade unions' rights and democratic freedoms. The working class's fight for its economic and political rights was interwoven in many cases with the struggle of the war-ruined peasantry for land. By their combined efforts the working people in a number of countries

* Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp*, Berlin, 1920, S. 68.

succeeded in securing wider suffrage, a shorter working day and higher pay.

The year 1919 saw the build up in Britain of a wide movement among the workers under the motto of "Hands Off Soviet Russia!". This movement was a striking example of international solidarity among the working people. An admirable example of fraternal solidarity with the workers of Soviet Russia was shown by the sailors of the French fleet sent to the Black Sea to help the Russian counter-revolution. The French sailors refused to be parties to a dirty war against the working people and began to fraternise with the Russian workers. In April 1919 they hoisted red flags on the warships and joined the workers of Sevastopol in a demonstration, proclaiming slogans in support of the Soviets. This brave deed of the French sailors had wide repercussions among the working people of different countries. Lenin spoke of it with deep emotion: "Throughout France the names of the sailors who served in our Black Sea are associated with recollections of the Russian revolution; the French workers know that those who are now serving terms of penal servitude in France mutinied in the Black Sea because they refused to become butchers of the Russian workers and peasants."*

An important feature of the mounting revolutionary movement throughout the world was the anti-imperialist spearhead of the national liberation struggle among the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries. The October Revolution dealt a severe blow at colonial imperialism and sparked off a crisis of the colonial system.

In the dependent countries of Latin America not only the workers, but the peasants, the petty-bourgeoisie in the cities, the intellectuals and students joined the fight against the foreign yoke, injustice, want and the high cost of living. The working people of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Chile demanded an agrarian reform, an 8-hour day, higher wages, old-age pensions, labour protection for women and children, freedom of association in trade unions and university reforms.

Vast masses were drawn into the powerful anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist movement in China (the Movement of May 4), in India (the Amritsar Affair), in Korea (the 1919 revolt) and Indonesia. The peasants of Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, the Sudan, and Somali rose against foreign rule. The first steps in the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 400.

struggle against colonialism were taken by the enslaved peoples of Tropical Africa (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Belgian Congo, Senegal). In most cases the risings of the oppressed peoples were brutally crushed by the imperialist powers. Nevertheless the peoples of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Mongolia, thanks to the aid of Soviet Russia, succeeded in winning national independence.

Thus, the world revolutionary process affected not only the metropolis, but the colonial rear of imperialism. The many-millioned masses rose to the struggle in all continents. The consolidation of Soviet rule in Russia and the strong upsurge of the class struggle in the capitalist world signified that the world proletarian revolution was rapidly gaining momentum. The imperialist bourgeoisie, frightened by this, made frantic efforts to suppress the proletarian movement both within their own countries and in Soviet Russia. They fomented a civil war in Russia and organised armed intervention against her. The period of assault upon capitalism had set in, the class battles were sharpening to a climax, raising momentous problems which called for the speediest possible consolidation of the revolutionary forces and the strengthening of international solidarity.

Lenin's Efforts to Strengthen the Ideological Foundations of the Communist Movement

Soviet Russia, by the mere fact of its existence, exercised a strong revolutionising influence on the international working class. However, the revolutionary class consciousness of the proletariat in other countries developed more slowly than in Russia and was a much more painful and difficult process.

In this situation, the Marxist generalisation of the experience of the October Revolution and its assimilation by the revolutionary workers became of tremendous importance for strengthening the international revolutionary movement. This task was all the more urgent in that the ruling classes and their Social-Democratic hirelings had taken all steps to ensure that events in their countries did not follow the pattern they had taken in Russia. Violence and deceit, threats and promises—every means was used to damp down the growing discontent among the masses. The propaganda machine went into action to bamboozle and mislead the workers with

a torrent of misinformation and slanderous fabrications concerning the Russian revolution.

The social-chauvinists and Centrists at first made a show of congratulating the Russian proletariat. This was a concession on the part of the Social-Democratic leaders to the sympathies of the broad working masses and the rank-and-file Social-Democrats towards Soviet Russia, but this was invariably followed by a detraction of Bolshevism. Trading on the difficulties of the Soviet Republic engendered by four years of devastating war, foreign intervention and whiteguard revolts, the reformists of all hues launched a monstrous campaign, unprecedented in scope and method, to counteract the impact which the ideas of the October Revolution were having upon the West European workers.

The ideological inspirer of this disgraceful anti-Soviet and anti-communist campaign was Karl Kautsky, the leading theoretician of Centrism. In August 1918 he published a book in which he distorted the Marxist teaching concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat and slandered the socialist revolution in Russia, picturing Soviet rule as a source of still greater calamities and suffering than those caused by capitalism and the war. The true purpose of Kautsky's theoretical arguments was to frighten the workers away from the revolution, paralyse their will for the struggle, drug their minds and strengthen them in the reformist illusions about the possibility of capitalism evolving peacefully into socialism.

Kautsky masked his renunciation of the proletarian revolution by paying lip service to Marxism, while attacking the world revolution, which had already begun in Russia, under the guise of "defending" orthodox Marxism from what he alleged to be its idealist distortion by the Bolsheviks. With the aid of sophisms Kautsky emasculated Marxism of its revolutionary living essence; he rejected revolutionary methods of struggle and denied the need for the ideological and political preparation of the proletarian revolution and for educating the masses in this direction.

The opportunist conceptions of the Centrists and the views of their leader Kautsky were a great danger to the development of the world revolutionary movement. Lenin considered the ideological and doctrinal defeat of Kautskyism to be extremely important for the future course of the proletariat's class struggle. Early in October 1918, barely recovered from his serious wounds, Lenin took up his pen to give battle to international Centrism. He wrote an article and then a book under the same title of *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.*

In his polemic against Kautsky Lenin highlighted the most important problems of the proletarian revolution, which held good not only for Russia and the Bolsheviks but for the international workers' and communist movement as a whole. Lenin thus armed the international working class in its struggle against imperialism and opportunism.

Lenin gave his chief attention to the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was on this issue that Kautsky leaned over backwards in his efforts to falsify Marxism. Marx's famous conclusion about the necessity of a revolutionary *dictatorship of the proletariat* during the transition period from capitalism to socialism was described by Kautsky in his book as a word that Marx had casually let fall and which the Bolsheviks had opportunely seized upon for their own purpose.* Later on he suggested rejecting the idea of "dictatorship of the proletariat" altogether, as it was always, he alleged, a source of misunderstanding.

In exposing the sophistries of Kautsky, Lenin wrote that the formula "dictatorship of the proletariat" was simply a more historically concrete and scientifically accurate statement of the proletariat's task (that of smashing the bourgeois state machine) of which Marx and Engels spoke in connection with the experience of the revolution of 1848 and especially that of the Paris Commune of 1871. Lenin demonstrated that the dictatorship of the proletariat was power of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie won and maintained by force, power that was needed in order to uphold the authority of the armed people over its enemies and to suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie. In every country, Lenin wrote, whatever course the revolution may take—whether peaceful or non-peaceful—"the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a *class*, and, consequently, the *infringement* of 'pure democracy', i.e., of equality and freedom, *in regard to* that *class*"** is an essential *feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

Lenin took the lid off Kautsky's arguments about "democratic socialism" and "pure democracy", which were merely designed to conceal the historical limitations of bourgeois democracy and its inevitable replacement by the dictatorship of the proletariat. "Bourgeois democracy," Lenin wrote, "although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false

* Cf. K. Kautsky, *Die Diktatur des Proletariats*, Wien, 1918, S. 20, 60.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 256.

and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor."*

Lenin contraposed proletarian democracy to bourgeois democracy. He showed that the dictatorship of the proletariat was the highest type of democracy in class society. Soviet rule was a million times more democratic than the most democratic of bourgeois republics, he wrote, because it did not repel but attracted the broad masses as a constant and decisive factor in the job of running the state. Bolshevism rendered an historical service in that it made the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat intelligible to the whole world by demonstrating that this term stood for the power of the working class, which marched at the head of all the working people.

In his book Lenin showed the outstanding role which the Bolsheviks played in the creative development of revolutionary theory and practice and the principles of international proletarian solidarity. The tactics of the Bolsheviks, Lenin pointed out, were the only correct tactics, as they were based not on a hypocritical fear of world revolution, but on a proper evaluation of the European revolutionary situation. "These tactics were the only internationalist tactics," he wrote, "because they did the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries*."**

The Bolsheviks gave the lead to the workers of all countries in the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie, whereas the social-chauvinists defended this bourgeoisie and the Centrists advocated reformist "improvement" of and adjustment and submission to imperialism. It was brought home to increasing numbers of workers that the policy of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys did not rid them of war and wage slavery. At the same time it grew steadily clearer to them that the Bolsheviks had shown the right way out from the horrors of war and imperialism, that "Bolshevism *can serve as a model of tactics for all*".***

Bolshevism achieved tremendous successes and became an international force because its policy found sympathy with the working masses the world over. It thus dealt a shattering blow to the International of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Renaudels and Longuets, the Hendersons and MacDonalds. "Bolshevism *has created* the ideological and tactical foundations of a Third International, of a really proletarian and Communist International, which will take into consideration both the gains of the tranquil

* Ibid., p. 243.
** Ibid., p. 292.
*** Ibid., p. 293.

epoch and the experience of the *epoch of revolutions, which has begun*".*

The revolutionary upsurge in the capitalist countries was attended by a rapid growth of the mass workers' organisations. The sharp increase in the membership of the Social-Democratic parties, trade unions and co-operative societies reflected the rising political activity of the vast mass of the more backward and downtrodden sections of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. This upsurge was a necessary precondition for the further deepening of the revolution. However, the masses who rose to the struggle mostly followed the lead of the reformist parties. The time-serving reformist programme of the social-chauvinists and Centrists was easier for them to grasp than that of the Communists, which called for a drastic reorganisation of the old society. Time was needed for the masses to learn by experience to rid themselves of reformist illusions, break with the opportunists and take the road of revolutionary struggle. Only a revolutionary proletarian party of a new type could help the masses to an awareness of their own vital interests and channel their energy towards the overthrow of capitalism.

The creation of such a party in every country was a burning, pressing need, an essential condition for the victory of the socialist revolution. Even many adherents of the Zimmerwald Left, however, were not fully convinced of such a necessity. Groups of internationalists in different countries, as a rule, acted within the framework of the old Social-Democratic parties and hesitated to break with them organisationally. In this connection Lenin wrote in October 1918:

"Europe's greatest misfortune and danger is that it has *no* revolutionary party. . . .

"Of course, a mighty, popular revolutionary movement may rectify this deficiency, but it is nevertheless a serious misfortune and a grave danger.

"That is why we must do our utmost to expose renegades like Kautsky, thereby supporting the revolutionary *groups* of genuine internationalist workers, who are to be found in *all* countries."**

The world revolutionary crisis gave a strong impetus to the process of ideological and organisational formation of separate communist parties and groups out of the internationalist groups and currents. January 1918 saw the founding of the International

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 292-93.
** Ibid., p. 113.

Socialist Party of Argentina, which adopted the name of Communist Party of Argentina at the end of 1920. During the second half of 1918 communist parties were established in Finland, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary and Germany. In Poland the Communist Party was formed by the amalgamation of two revolutionary workers' parties—the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, and the Polish Socialist Party. Among the parties who took a revolutionary-internationalist stand at the time were the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Tesnyaks), the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party, the Social-Democratic parties of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, the Norwegian Labour Party, the Greek Socialist Workers' Party, and the Socialist Workers' Party of Mexico. Communist groups and circles were formed in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Italy, France, Great Britain, Denmark, Switzerland, the U.S.A., Canada, Brazil, China, Korea, Australia, the Union of South Africa and other countries during 1918-1919.

The largest Communist Party in Western Europe was that of Germany, formed through the amalgamation of the Spartacus Union with other Left currents. The Communist Party of Germany was founded at the inaugural congress held between December 30, 1918, and January 1, 1919, which was attended by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Ideological, doctrinal and organisational weakness had prevented the Spartacists from timely creating a militant proletarian party, capable of leading the masses during the November revolution. Lenin commented on this in the following terms: "When the crisis broke out, however, the German workers lacked a genuine revolutionary party, owing to the fact that the split was brought about too late, and owing to the burden of the accursed tradition of 'unity' with capital's corrupt (the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids and Co.) and spineless (the Kautskys, Hilferdings and Co.) gang of lackeys."*

The Programme of the Communist Party of Germany, drafted by Rosa Luxemburg and adopted by the Party's Inaugural Congress, proceeded from the postulate that only the dictatorship of the proletariat could put an end to the capitalist system of wage slavery. The Programme, on the whole, correctly defined the militant tasks of the German working class and contained a demand for support of the world's first socialist state—Soviet Russia. On a number of doctrinal issues, however (the agrarian, national-colonial

* Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 513.

and others) and on the question of ways of drawing the working class and peasantry into the general struggle against German imperialism, the Programme was seriously vague.

The great diversity of the conditions under which the Communists carried on their activities in the different countries gave rise to different shades of views and opinions. These differences, however, did not affect the fundamental, ideological basis on which all Communists, in practice, were united, namely, recognition of the need of a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat for the transition to socialism.

The First (Inaugural) Congress of the Communist International

The October Revolution had drastically changed the whole international situation and created new, more favourable conditions for the formation of the Communist International. It was the first revolution in human history to give effect to the Marxist-Leninist ideas of a socialist remodelling of society and conclusively demonstrate the truth of these ideas and their great revolutionising power. It was the victory of revolutionary theory over reformism, the victory of Leninism over Social-Democratism. The October Revolution advanced to the forefront of world history Communists who took the lead in the world revolutionary process. Under the impact of the October Revolution more and more advanced political groups in the labour movement joined the revolutionary stream and began to unite ideologically and politically on the basis of Leninism. Leninism became established as an ideological force within the labour movement and the national liberation movement.

The October Revolution, the theory and practice of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, pointed to the nations the only right way towards peace, genuine freedom and socialism. "The Russian Soviet Republic," wrote Karl Liebknecht, "has become the banner of struggle, the banner of the International; it heartens others, it fills the vacillating with courage, it increases tenfold the valour and resolution of the fighters."* The victory of the October Revolution gave the world communist movement a mass base it never

* Quoted from F. Fisher, *Kak zhil i borolsya Karl Liebknecht* (How Karl Liebknecht Lived and Fought), Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, p. 56.

had before. The Soviet Republic made the idea of a Third International intelligible to the working millions of the capitalist world who had risen to the assault of imperialism, against wage slavery and colonial oppression. The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat and of all the working people called for the maximum concentration of forces and co-ordination of effort by all contingents of the liberation movement for dealing a knock-out blow to imperialism. This task could only be undertaken by a proletarian party of a new type, organised on a world scale.

In January 1918 the first international meeting for the preparation of the Communist International was held in Petrograd. It was attended by representatives of the Bolsheviks, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Left Social-Democrats of Sweden, Norway, Britain and the U.S.A. and also of the Polish, Rumanian, Czech and Croatian internationalists. The meeting decided to call a conference of the Left on the following conditions: "1. Consent of parties and organisations to engage in revolutionary struggle against their governments for an immediate peace; 2. Support of the October Russian revolution and the Soviet government."* This decision was circulated to Left parties and groups and formed the basis on which work was painstakingly continued for uniting the internationalist forces of different countries into the Third International.

An important role in propagandising the idea of the Communist International was played by the Foreign Groups Federation under the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.) and the Central Bureau of R.C.P.(B.) Mussulman Organisations. Lenin thought highly of the activities of the foreign groups. Thanks to them, thousands of prisoners-of-war, political emigrants and former interventionist soldiers received in Russia a schooling in Bolshevism and became convinced internationalists. On returning to their countries they related what they had seen and experienced and did a great deal towards spreading the truth about the October Revolution among their countrymen and rallying the workers under the banner of the Third International.

The founding of communist parties and groups in a number of countries signified that the Third International virtually existed and was operating. The task was to unite the existing detachments of the communist movement organisationally and by this means to augment their strength and influence among the masses. Another reason why this task had become an urgent one was that at

* *Pravda*, February 12 (January 30), 1918.

this time the social-chauvinists and Centrists, with the aim of combating the communist movement, had begun to build up a reformist international organisation ostensibly in order to re-establish the Second International. In view of this, the R.C.P.(B.) on December 24, 1918, appealed to the Communists of the different countries to unite in the Third, Communist International.

Another international meeting was held in Moscow in January 1919. It unanimously adopted Lenin's proposal for convening an inaugural congress of the Third International in the very near future. A corresponding appeal was signed by the Communists of Soviet Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Latvia, and Finland, and also by representatives of the Balkan Revolutionary Socialist Federation and the American Socialist Labour Party. On the basis of the programmatic documents of the R.C.P.(B.) and the Spartacus Union, the appeal briefly formulated the ideological and political platform of the proposed International and mapped out the aims, tactics and organisational principles of the international communist movement. The meeting appealed to 39 fraternal parties, groups and organisations to discuss the question of founding the Communist International and to take part in the work of its founding congress.

Invited to the Congress in Moscow, as Lenin pointed out, were, first of all "parties and groups we have good reason to consider as *already* sharing the platform of the Third International and as being sufficiently unanimous on the question of *formally* founding the Third International"; secondly, "parties *close* to this, from whom we *expect* alignment and affiliation"; thirdly, "*groups* and currents *within* the social-patriotic parties more or less close to *Bolshevism*".*

In an attempt to prevent the proletarian masses from uniting under the banner of the socialist revolution, the social-chauvinists and Centrists, at a conference in Berne in February 1919, galvanised the corpse of the Second International. This International, in the words of Lenin, immediately revealed itself as "*an organisation of agents of international imperialism* operating *within* the labour movement, permeating *that movement* with bourgeois influence, bourgeois ideas, bourgeois lies, and bourgeois corruption".** The real purpose of the Berne International was made no secret of by its leaders either. MacDonald, the British opportunist, frankly admitted that "the whole Second International is

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 120.
** Ibid., Vol. 29, p. 502.

anti-Bolshevist. It is indeed the only real bulwark against Bolshevism short of military executions."*

At the end of February 1919 the communist delegates, overcoming immense difficulties, the blockade, and the chain of civil war fronts, began to arrive in Moscow. The delegates of the Italian Socialist Party and representatives of the Left-wing socialist groups in France, Britain and America were unable to break through. The delegates of the Hungarian Communist Party and one German delegate were arrested on their way to Soviet Russia. Some of the delegates arrived late.

On March 1 a preliminary meeting of a number of delegates, chaired by Lenin, was held to discuss the questions of the opening, constitution and agenda of the forthcoming Congress. At this meeting Hugo Eberlein, representing the Communist Party of Germany, on the basis of the mandate given to him by his Party's Central Committee, declared against the immediate founding of the Communist International. In view of the attitude of the C.P.G. and the absence of a number of delegates from other countries, the meeting resolved, without deciding beforehand the question of the constitution of the Third International, to go into session as an international communist conference, which would draw up a platform, elect a Bureau and appeal to the fraternal parties to join.

On the evening of March 2, 1919, the International Communist Conference opened in the Kremlin. Lenin (Soviet Russia), Eberlein (Germany) and Platten (Switzerland) were elected standing members of the presiding committee. The Conference was attended by 52 delegates from 35 organisations of 21 countries of Europe, America and Asia. Nineteen organisations had a vote, and sixteen a voice but no vote. The delegates represented the communist and Left socialist parties and groups of Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Soviet Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S.A. There were separate delegations from the communist organisations of the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Estonia, Armenia, the Volga Region Germans, Turkestan, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Representatives of the oppressed peoples of Iran, China, Korea and Turkey attended such a forum for the first time.

The only party with a truly mass membership represented at the Conference was the R.C.P.(B.). The Communist Parties of

* *The Labour Leader*, August 14, 1919, p. 5.

Finland, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Poland and Germany had only recently been formed and were not yet firmly established. With the labour movement on the upswing, however, they were quickly gaining experience in revolutionary struggle. Most of the delegates represented communist groups and Left Social-Democratic parties which were still in the embryonic stage of becoming communist parties. As a matter of fact, one of the chief tasks of the Communist International at that period was to help the Left socialists and the first foreign detachments of the world communist movement establish themselves ideologically and organisationally and stand foursquare on the ground of Leninist theory and practice.

Opening the Conference, Lenin pointed out that the revolutionary movement was mounting in all countries and the workers were beginning more and more to grasp the significance of the developing struggle. Thanks to Soviet rule in Russia the working masses had discovered a practical form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

After hearing reports on the growth of the revolutionary movement in various countries the Conference on March 3 proceeded to discuss one of the main items of the agenda—the draft platform of the international communist movement (speakers on the draft were Eberlein and Bukharin). The draft, in a nutshell, set forth the principal theses of Lenin's teaching on imperialism and the theory of the socialist revolution. "A new era has dawned," ran this document, "the era of the collapse of capitalism, of its internal break-up. *The era of the Communist Revolution of the proletariat.*"* This Leninist description of the epoch served as the theoretical basis for all further conclusions concerning the tasks of the proletariat and its methods of struggle.

The platform pointed out that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat had become an immediate task in many capitalist countries. The winning of political power by the proletariat could not be reduced to terms of a simple change of personalities in the government—it meant breaking up the old machinery of state with its army, police force and bureaucracy, the disarming of the bourgeoisie and arming of the proletariat and the setting up of new proletarian organs of administration.

The dictatorship of the proletariat was not an end in itself, but merely a means for carrying out social and economic reforms in

* *The Communist International* (Organ of the Executive Committee of the Comintern), No. 1, 1919, p. 29.

the interests of all the working people. The immediate economic task envisaged by the platform was the expropriation of the expropriators, the abolition of private property and the transfer of big industry and landed estates to the ownership of the proletarian state. The platform stressed the fact "that small property will in no way be expropriated, and that proprietors who do not exploit hired labour will not be exposed to any violent measures".*

It went on to say that a complete break with the Right Social-Democrats and Centrists was an essential precondition to the victorious struggle of the proletariat. At the same time it pointed to the necessity of a bloc with the syndicalist and other previously non-socialist elements in the labour movement who had now accepted the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the Soviets.

The platform of the Communist International affirmed the principle of proletarian internationalism, stressed the absolute necessity for the revolutionary proletariat to co-ordinate its action on an international scale and tie up the interests of the class struggle within the national framework with the tasks of the world revolution. The Comintern took upon itself the duty of constantly maintaining a close connection between the struggle of the proletariat in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and supporting the struggle of the oppressed peoples "so as to advance the ultimate overthrow of the imperialist world system".**

Simultaneously, the Comintern proclaimed a close alliance and fraternal mutual aid between the countries in which proletarian rule had triumphed for the purpose of joint defence of their gains and for the building of socialism.

Many delegates took part in the discussion of the draft platform. They moved a number of amendments and addenda. The final text, on a roll-call vote, was adopted by all except the delegate of the Norwegian Labour Party, who abstained.

The next day the Conference heard Lenin's theses and report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin elaborated in them the most important of his theoretical and political conclusions expounded in his classical works *The State and Revolution, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky,* and other writings. Lenin revealed all the class limita-

* Ibid., p. 51.
** Ibid., p. 52.

tions of bourgeois democracy and convincingly demonstrated the historical necessity of its being superceded by the dictatorship of the proletariat. The speaker drew a sharp line between communism and reformism, and showed the gulf that in reality divided the proletarian revolutionaries and the opportunists.

In the prevailing revolutionary crisis the Social-Democrats used the slogan of "pure democracy" to combat the proletarian revolution. Lenin demolished the specious arguments of the bourgeoisie and the social-reformists in defence of so-called "pure democracy", and emphasised that in a situation of world revolutionary crisis and direct attack upon the bourgeois set-up "there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat".*

Lenin made it clear that all arguments about "democracy in general" or "pure democracy" amounted in fact to a defence of the bourgeoisie and its exploiter privileges. The freedom of assembly and of the press, equality—all these slogans were used by the bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic underlings to fool the proletariat, mask the rule of capital and vindicate the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Lenin showed that the dictatorship of the proletariat differed essentially from the dictatorship of other classes, from that of the landowners and the capitalists. This difference, Lenin pointed out, consisted in the fact that "the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists."** Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat signified an unprecedented widening of democracy for the working people, the exploited masses.

Soviet rule was a concrete state form of proletarian dictatorship discovered by the masses themselves. The transfer of power from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority could not take place within the old framework of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, could not produce the new forms of proletarian democracy.

A distinctive feature of Soviet state organisation was that it was geared to the leading role of the proletariat as a class that was most concentrated and educated by capitalism. The experience of history had shown, said Lenin, "that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 463.
** Ibid., p. 464.

the working and exploited population".* Revolutionary practice in Russia had confirmed that only Soviet power, implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat, was in a position to break up the bourgeois machine of state and give the working people real freedom and democracy.

At the conclusion of his report Lenin moved a resolution pointing out that the chief task of the communist parties, who were preparing the proletariat for the direct assault of the capitalist system, was as follows:

"(1) to explain to the broad mass of the workers the historic significance and the political and historical necessity of the new, proletarian, democracy which must replace bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system;

"(2) to extend the organisation of Soviets among the workers in all branches of industry, among the soldiers in the Army and sailors in the Navy and also among farm labourers and poor peasants;

"(3) to build a stable communist majority inside the Soviets."**

Analysing the difficulties in the growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries, Lenin pointed out that even in Germany the significance of the system of Soviets was not yet clear to the mass of politically alert workers educated in the spirit of bourgeois parliamentarian and reformist prejudices. Lenin also pointed out that the Communists were not doing enough to spread the system of Soviets more widely. "Victory," he said, "can only be considered assured when not only the urban workers, but also the rural proletarians are organised, and organised not as before—in trade unions and co-operative societies—but in Soviets."*** Lenin, finally, laid special stress on the need for winning a stable communist majority in the Soviets. "Then our victory," he said, "will be assured and no power on earth will be able to do anything against the communist revolution. If we do not, victory will not be secured so easily, and it will not be durable."****

Lenin's report and theses on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat were heard out by the Conference with rapt attention. The theses and resolution on the tasks of the communist parties were adopted unanimously as the basic programmatic document of the international communist movement.

The unanimous endorsement of the platform and Lenin's theses showed that the international communist movement had already

* Ibid., p. 466.
** Ibid., p. 475.
*** Ibid., p. 473.
**** Ibid., p. 474.

accumulated the necessary experience and reached a sufficient degree of maturity to enable the general principles and aims of the struggle to be set forth in programmatic documents. These documents established the unity of view and action among the Communists of different countries and confirmed the international character of Leninism as the integral theory of world communism.

With the adoption of these programmatic documents it became perfectly clear that there were no grounds whatever for further postponing the formal establishment of the Communist International. On the evening of March 4, with the arrival of new delegates, the question of constituting the Third International was raised once more. The representatives of the Communist Parties of Austria and Hungary, the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party and the Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation issued a joint statement to the effect that "the constitution of the Third International is therefore an unconditional historical necessity and must be realised by the Moscow International Communist Conference".* They pointed out that the establishment of the Third International was essential for the successful struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for rallying the workers under the banner of communism, and rebuffing the opportunist Berne International.

In view of this statement submitted to the Conference, the latter took up again the question of constituting the Third International. Eberlein, the delegate of the German Communist Party, reiterated his objections to the immediate founding of the Communist International. He considered the adoption of such a decision premature for tactical reasons. However, the delegates considered the time quite ripe for founding the Communist International. O. Kuusinen, the delegate from the Communist Party of Finland, reminded the Conference that the small size of the assembly had not prevented Marx and his associates from founding the First International. "The strength of the new International," he said, "will be equal to the strength of the revolutionary proletariat and not to the strength of this small gathering."**

The representative of the Communist Party of Austria, K. Steinhardt, stated: "It is not our fault that not all countries are represented here. The Third International must first see to it that in those countries where no organisations on a communist basis yet

* *Pervy kongress Kominterna* (The First Congress of the Comintern), pp. 118-19.

** *Der I. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale. Protokoll der Verhandlungen in Moskau vom 2. bis zum 19.* März 1919, Petrograd, 1920, S. 151.

exist, such organisations should be created."* Eino Rahja (Communist Party of Finland) said that the founding of the Third International would give a powerful impetus to the revolutionary movement, as it would make for clarity and induce all those who vacillated to make a firm decision. Ch. Rakowsky (the Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation) said that delay in establishing the Third International could have unfavourable moral and political consequences for the revolutionary labour movement. Demands for the immediate founding of the Third International came also from O. Grimlund (the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party), J. Sadoul (the French Communist Group), J. Fineberg (the British Communist Group), Lea Kasher (the Swiss Communist Group) and others.

After the discussion a roll-call vote was held by all the delegates, the delegate of the German Communist Party abstaining. All the others went on record for the immediate constitution of the Communist International. The adopted resolution stated that "all parties, organisations and groups retain the right of declaring their adhesion to the Third International within a space of eight months".** After the voting Eberlein stated that on his return to Germany he would spare no effort to have his party become a member of the Comintern. In fact, the Communist Party of Germany was among the first to join the Communist International.

From March 4, 1919 onward the International Communist Conference continued in session as the First (Inaugural) Congress of the Communist International. That day, on the motion of several prominent Zimmerwaldians, an official decision was passed abolishing the Zimmerwald organisation, in view of the fact that it had outlived itself. At the next meetings a number of important decisions were passed. All the propositions, theoretically demonstrated in the platform of the Comintern and in Lenin's theses, were concretised and elucidated in the reports and resolutions under the headings "The Attitude Towards the 'Socialist' Parties and Berne Conference", "The International Situation and the Policy of the Entente" and "The Necessity of the Co-operation of Proletarian Women in the Struggle for Socialism". The resolution "On the White Terror", the report on which was made by the Finnish Communist Y. Sirola, appealed to the workers of all countries to put an end to the system of killings and plunder begotten by capitalism. The First Congress also endorsed the

* Ibid., S. 220.

** *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, p. 68.

"Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World" and the "Appeal to the Workers and Soldiers of All Countries".

The documents adopted at the First Congress of the Comintern furnished the international proletariat with a militant programme of struggle for power. They clearly defined the tasks and main direction of the communist parties' tactics.

For leadership of the Comintern the Congress decided to set up an Executive Committee (E.C.C.I.) consisting of representatives of the communist parties of Soviet Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Balkan Revolutionary Social-Democratic Federation, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. The Communist International, as stated in the resolution, was to be finally constituted at the next congress, pending which a five-man Bureau was charged with the work of organisation. Somewhat later G. Zinoviev, representing the R.C.P.(B.), was endorsed as Chairman of the Comintern Executive, with Angelica Balabanova and J. Berzin as secretaries.

In his closing speech commenting on the successful work of the First Congress, Lenin said: "That we have been able to gather, despite all the persecution and all the difficulties created by the police, that we have been able without any serious differences and in a brief space of time to reach important decisions on all the vitally urgent questions of the contemporary revolutionary epoch, we owe to the fact that the proletarian masses of the whole world, by their action, have brought up these questions in practice and begun to tackle them."*

The First (Inaugural) Congress of the Comintern was of great international significance. It officially proclaimed the founding of the Communist International, theoretically summarised the first steps of the beginning world proletarian revolution and laid the foundations for the ideological and organisational unity of the workers of all countries under the banner of Leninism. The Congress called for an all-out fight against the treacherous policy of the social-chauvinists, it stigmatised the Berne International, which it described as a yellow organisation of blacklegs, and demonstrated the need for devastating criticism and exposure of the leaders of Centrism, and the historical inevitability of an organisational break with them. At this Congress, for the first time in the world's history, the workers of Europe and America united with the toiling people of the colonial and dependent countries.

"The founding of the Third, Communist International..."

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 476.

Lenin wrote, "was a record of what has been gained not only by the Russian workers, but also by the German, Austrian, Hungarian, Finnish, Swiss—in a word, by the workers of the world. Precisely because of this, the founding of the Third, Communist International really is firm."* A distinctive feature of the new International was that it rested on a firm basis, namely, Soviet Russia, which, in the international revolutionary movement, stood for the dictatorship of the proletariat and its victory over capitalism.

Lenin defined the Third International's place in history in the following words:

"The First International laid the foundation of the proletarian, international struggle for socialism.

"The Second International marked a period in which the soil was prepared for the broad, mass spread of the movement in a number of countries.

"The Third International has gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois dross, and *has begun to implement* the dictatorship of the proletariat."**

* Ibid., p. 478.
** Ibid., Vol. 29, p. 307.

THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN

The World Revolutionary Movement During 1919-1920

Revolutionary events in Western Europe were soon to confirm the correctness of the Comintern's theoretical thesis to the effect that the capitalist system as a whole was ripe for the socialist revolution. The emergence of Soviet republics in Hungary, Bavaria and Slovakia showed that the dictatorship of the proletariat was not a specifically Russian phenomenon, as the reformists contended, but an indispensable and unavoidable condition for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The main feature of the socialist revolution in Hungary was that the proletariat there had come to power in a peaceful way, without resorting to armed uprising. This gave the lie to the opportunists' protestations about the dictatorship of the proletariat involving always bloodshed and terror.

The Hungarian working class showed itself to be the only force capable in a moment of acute national crisis of rallying behind it the whole nation in order to free the country from chaos and organise its defence against imperialist aggression. The Hungarian Communists, in their endeavour to make the working class more fighting-fit and overcome the split in its ranks, immediately joined with the Social-Democrats into a united Socialist Party of Hungary, which played an important role in the establishment on March 21, 1919 of a Soviet republic. The Council of People's Commissars, which was set up in the course of the revolution, proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The unity of the working class, built up in the struggle for Soviet power, ensured the proletariat a swift and bloodless victory.

Lenin spoke about the complexities of the process of unity and its various effects. He commented favourably on the success of the Hungarian Communists, who were able to achieve unity with the socialists on the platform of a real proletarian dictatorship. At the same time he warned that there were likely to be betrayals and vacillation among yesterday's Social-Democrats, who had hastily turned communist, and that this could be the undoing of the proletarian dictatorship. Addressing himself to the Hungarian workers, he wrote in May 1919: "You are now faced with the most

gratifying and most difficult task of holding your own in a rigorous war against the Entente. Be firm. Should vacillation manifest itself among the socialists who yesterday gave their support to you, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or among the petty bourgeoisie, suppress it ruthlessly."*

The subsequent course of events showed that the united party, which had adopted a communist programme, had within its ranks not only revolutionary workers but also Centrists and Right Social-Democrats who merely paid lip service to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Unfortunately, the Communists and Left socialists, who fought heroically to consolidate Soviet rule in Hungary, were unable to cleanse the ranks of the united party, government bodies and other institutions of the Soviet Republic of traitors and vacillating elements. At the most difficult moment they stabbed the revolution in the back. The treachery of the Right-wing Social-Democrats and the faint-heartedness and waverings of the Centrists easened for the international counter-revolution the task of overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary. "No Communist," Lenin said, "should forget the lessons of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. The Hungarian proletariat paid dearly for the Hungarian Communists having united with the reformists."**

Surrounded by enemies, the Hungarian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic lived and fought for 133 days, from March 21 to August 1, 1919. In that brief space the Hungarian workers managed to accomplish a great deal. They organised a workers' and peasants' Red Army, which for a long time repelled the attacks of the whiteguard troops of Rumania and Czechoslovakia, behind whom stood the Entente. The Soviet government nationalised industry and the banks, introduced an 8-hour working day, disestablished the Church, introduced free School tuition, and handed over palaces, villas and sanatoriums for the use of the working people.

At the same time the government of Soviet Hungary made a mistake in its handling of the agrarian and peasant question. It nationalised all the big farms in the countryside and turned them into state farms or farming co-operatives. By not gratifying the needs of the land-starved poor peasants, the Hungarian workers failed to enlist its natural ally to active struggle against the bourgeoisie, thereby weakening the mass basis of the proletarian

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 391.
** Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 207.

dictatorship. In pointing out this mistake, Lenin said that it was the bounden duty of the Soviet government to meet the demands of the poor peasants at the expense of the big landed estates. "Otherwise, the small peasant will see no difference between the old order and the dictatorship of the Soviets. If the proletarian state authority does not act in this way, it will be unable to retain power."* In April 1919, for the first time in Hungary's history, general elections were held in which all citizens who had reached the age of 18 took part.

The working people of Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary did their utmost to bring about a military as well as political alliance between the two socialist states. Their efforts to make junction, however, were of no avail. The Hungarian workers and their vanguard made heroic efforts to save the Soviet Republic. It fell beneath the onslaught of the superior forces of the foreign interventionists and internal counter-revolution. A factor which weakened the position of the republic was the withdrawal of the Hungarian Red Army from the territories it had liberated in the hope of a withdrawal of the Entente's Rumanian troops from Hungary and the starting of peace talks, as intimated in Clemenceau's ultimatum. This promise, as we know, was treacherously broken by the Entente.

Soviet rule lasted still shorter in Bavaria (from April 13 to May 1, 1919) and Slovakia (from June 16 to July 5, 1919). As in Hungary, it was overthrown by superior forces of internal and external counter-revolution. Nevertheless, the experience and lessons of the first Soviet republics in the West were most instructive for the Comintern. They showed that the working class could not clinch its victory unless it had an experienced, disciplined communist party closely linked with the masses and prosecuting a correct policy towards the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The defeat of these actions of the working class in a number of countries was in no little measure due to the fact that with the war at an end, the imperialist powers were able to draw on large military forces to suppress these areas of revolution. The Entente moved the troops of a number of countries against Soviet Hungary. With the acquiescence of the Allied powers, German imperialism took a hand in the sanguinary suppression of Soviet rule in the occupied territories of Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic region. The imperialist peace of Versailles, which recarved the map of

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 250.

the world to meet the demands of the victor states and sowed the seeds of another war, had at the same time a strongly marked anti-Soviet tendency and provided for measures of combating the revolutionary movement in the countries of Europe. The Versailles Treaty left German imperialism sufficient power to crush the revolutionary proletariat in Germany and act as a strike force against Soviet Russia.

After the bloody suppression of Soviet rule in Hungary and Bavaria there was a slight ebb in the revolutionary activity of the proletariat, but its spirit was not broken. This is borne out by the events of 1920, such as the general strike against the Kapp Putsch in Germany involving 12 million people, the seizure of factories and mills by the workers in Italy, the powerful strike movement in France, Britain, the U.S.A. and Japan. The strikes, as a rule, were hard-fought and stubborn. In many cases they were attended by sanguinary clashes with the police and troops, and took the form of open armed struggle.

These sharp class battles worked a change in the mentality of the workers, increased their urge towards organisation and unity. The membership of the Social-Democratic parties, trade unions and other traditional mass organisations increased in all countries during the early post-war years. At the same time the leftward shift among the masses became pronounced. It found expression in the rapid growth of the world communist movement.

After the First Congress of the Comintern the world communist movement took a big stride forward. In May 1919 the Bulgarian Tesnyak Party was reorganised into the Communist Party. Between March 1919 and November 1920 communist parties were formed in Yugoslavia, the U.S.A., Mexico, Denmark, Spain, Indonesia, Iran, Great Britain, Turkey, Uruguay and Australia. Affiliation to the Comintern was announced by the International-Socialist Party of Argentina, the Socialist Workers' Party of Greece, the Socialist Party of Rumania, the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party, the Norwegian Labour Party, the Italian Socialist Party, the British Socialist Party, the Scottish Branch of the British Independent Labour Party, the Socialist Party of Luxemburg and revolutionary groups and trade unions in a number of countries.

Under pressure of the revolutionary workers various parties announced their break with the Second International, among them the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the French Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party of America, the British Independent Labour Party, and the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland. In admitting Left-moving Social-Democratic masses

into its ranks, the Comintern could not allow elements to penetrate into its organisations who had not broken with the ideology and practice of reformism. The admission of these elements threatened the revolutionary foundations of the Third International.

Tremendous assistance was rendered to the Communists of different countries by the Executive of the Comintern, which from the very outset acted as the headquarters of the revolutionary movement. Persecution of Communists, lack of experienced cadres, the blockade of Soviet Russia, the civil war—all this throughout a long period following the First Congress prevented most of the communist parties in the capitalist countries from sending their representatives to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The current business of the Executive was therefore handled for the time being by the R.C.P.(B.) representatives in the Comintern.

Eventually the composition of the Executive took definite shape and its work was carried on by Communists from Soviet Russia, Hungary, Finland, Yugoslavia and Switzerland. Whenever possible the co-operation of comrades from other countries was enlisted, among them representatives of the communist and Left socialist parties of the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, France, the U.S.A., Italy, Britain, Austria, Korea and China. The entire activities of the Comintern Executive were directed by Lenin, who attended all the important meetings.

After the First Congress, despite the tremendous difficulties in establishing contacts with the communist parties in the different countries, the E.C.C.I. did a great deal towards spreading the ideas of communism in the labour movement. May 1919 saw the publication of the first issue of the journal *The Communist International*. It was put out in Russian, German, English, and French, to which were afterwards added Spanish and Chinese. The journal became an important ideological weapon for all the communist parties.

The E.C.C.I., from its very first day, gave the greatest attention to the propaganda of proletarian internationalism and the organisation of effective assistance to the revolutionary actions of the workers in the different countries.

In the spring of 1919 the Executive appealed to the workers of Europe to hold an international general strike in defence of the Soviet republics of Hungary and Russia. On July 21, 1919, this strike was held in Italy, Austria, Norway and Germany. In England and France, however, the strike was torpedoed by the reformists. Despite strong opposition from the extreme Right leaders of Social-Democracy, the movement of solidarity in the capitalist countries gained in scope and magnitude. It reached its highest pitch in the summer of 1920 after Poland's attack on Soviet Russia. Millions of working people on all continents came out under the slogan of "Hands Off Soviet Russia!". In many countries, from Germany to Argentina, Committees of Aid to Soviet Russia sprang up. "The international bourgeoisie has only to raise a hand against us to have it seized by its own workers,"* said Lenin, paying tribute to the fraternal assistance rendered the Soviet Republic by the foreign workers.

The E.C.C.I. played a large part in rallying the international youth, women's and trade union movement beneath the banner of communism. In May 1919 the Executive appealed to the revolutionary boys and girls to organise a Youth International. In November of the same year the first International Congress of Communist Youth Organisations assembled illegally in Berlin. It was attended by 20 delegates from 13 countries. The Congress founded the Young Communist International, which became a section of the Comintern.

On the initiative of the E.C.C.I. an international conference of women workers was held in Moscow in July 1920. It was attended by 21 delegates from 16 countries. The Conference adopted a manifesto to working women and theses laying down the main lines of communist work among the proletarian women. In accordance with the Conference decision the Comintern Executive in November 1920 set up an International Women's Secretariat, which issued propaganda literature in various languages.

The E.C.C.I. played an important part in uniting the revolutionary trade unions in different countries. In the summer of 1920, on its initiative, the revolutionary trade unions of Soviet Russia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Italy, France and Spain formed an International Council of Trade Unions with a membership of nine million workers.

Ideological and organisational consolidation of the world communist movement was regarded by the E.C.C.I. as one of its most important tasks. With this aim in view, letters were drawn up giving guidelines on such important matters as the role of political parties in the proletarian revolution, combining legal with illegal work, parliamentarism, the trade unions, and the special features of the British labour movement.

The formation and development of the communist parties was a complex process, and the young communist parties at the out-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 309.

set of their career met with formidable difficulties. They were confronted in the labour movement by experienced reformist organisations whose lead was followed by the majority of the workers in the capitalist countries. The Communists succeeded in winning over the advanced workers, but their influence among the broad masses grew slowly and remained rather weak. The process of rallying the broad masses of workers to the communist banner was further complicated in the capitalist countries by Leftist and sectarian mistakes. In England, for example, many revolutionaries took a negative attitude towards participation in a bourgeois parliament and refused to join the Labour Party on the basis of collective membership, thereby restricting the Communist Party's chances of influencing the masses and carrying them with them.

Leftist sectarian views and moods became widespread also in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, the U.S.A., the Netherlands and other countries. In Germany the ultra-Left elements formed in April 1920 a separate Communist Workers' Party, which violently attacked the Communist Party of Germany for its attempts to seek an approach to the Social-Democratic workers. The leaders of the C.W.P.—"Left" phrasemongers of the Wolffheim and Laufenberg brand—accused the C.P.G. of opportunism, of seeking an agreement with the Independents. The E.C.C.I. came out in defence of the C.P.G.'s tactics. In an open letter to the Communist Workers' Party of Germany it pointed out that the Centrist leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany were to be distinguished from the rank and file of this party, the overwhelming majority of whom were honest and sincere in their support of the Communist International. "To obtain an agreement with the million or nearly so of workmen who are organised in the ranks of the Party of Independents, but whom the lessons of time will push every day nearer to us, is no opportunism, but the first duty of every serious Communist in Germany,"* the letter stated.

The Leftist sectarian mistakes, said Lenin, were very damaging to communism. Until they were mended there could be no question of Communists' effective work among the rank and file of labour and the non-proletarian sections of the working people. The fight against "Leftism" in the communist movement, therefore, became an urgent and primary task of the day. "While the first historical objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached

* *The Communist International*, No. 11-12, 1920, Petrograd, p. 2507.

without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the *masses* to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors."*

Lenin on the Pressing Problems of the World Communist Movement

The situation prevailing in the world towards the spring of 1920 was difficult and anomalous. The consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Soviet Russia, the mounting national liberation movement among the oppressed peoples, and at the same time the slowing down of the tempo of revolutionary development in the capitalist countries pointed to the irregular development of the world revolutionary process.

Explaining the reasons for the setbacks suffered by the West European proletariat, Lenin wrote: "In the early period of the revolution many entertained the hope that the socialist revolution would begin in Western Europe immediately the imperialist war ended; at the time when the masses were armed there could have been a successful revolution in some of the Western countries as well. It could have taken place, had it not been for the split within the proletariat of Western Europe being deeper and the treachery of the former socialist leaders greater than had been imagined."** The bourgeoisie, with the help of the reformist leaders of Social-Democracy and the trade unions, succeeded in repelling the first revolutionary onset of the proletariat in the West. The strength of the working class, however, was not broken. This class was preparing for a renewed struggle against capitalist slavery.

The changed situation and the lessons of the class battles of 1919-1920 demanded of the Comintern that it work out a more flexible strategy and tactic for the world communist movement, that it win over the majority of the working class to communism, enlist mass allies and seek new ways and means of introducing

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 93.
** Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 417.

the masses to the revolution. It was these urgent problems that Lenin dealt with in his book *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, written in the spring of 1920 on the occasion of the Comintern's Second Congress.

The task of strengthening the communist parties ideologically and organisationally and turning them into real leaders and organisers of the revolutionary struggle called for a radical antidote against Left doctrinairism, dogmatism and sectarianism within the communist movement. Refusal to carry on work in the bourgeois parliaments and reformist trade unions, inability and unwillingness to reckon with the real line-up of forces, a nihilist attitude to the principle of partyism and party discipline in general, renunciation of political compromise—all these manifestations of "Leftism" were a dangerous weakness of the growing communist movement, which led to isolation from the masses and turned the party of the working class into a sect.

"Leftism" in communism often originated in the revolutionary workers' legitimate hatred of the opportunist Social-Democrat leaders. It blinded people, goaded them to misguided and premature action, prevented them from passing cool judgement and working out a sensible and flexible tactic and strategy. Another cause of Left mistakes in many cases was the revolutionary impatience of Communists, their political inexperience, a desire to have things done as quickly as possible the way they had been done in Russia, without proper allowance being made for the sum total of conditions necessary for this.

At the same time Lenin showed that "Leftism" was deeply rooted in petty-bourgeois revolutionism, which reflected the violent lurchings of the petty bourgeoisie and their pressure on the working class. Lenin wrote: "The petty proprietor, the small master (a social type existing on a very extensive and even mass scale in many European countries), who, under capitalism, always suffers oppression and very frequently a most acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, and even ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organisation, discipline and steadfastness."*

The mass of the war-ruined petty bourgeoisie who joined the ranks of the proletariat brought with them a spirit of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, anarchism, impatience, and disregard of the experience accumulated by the labour movement. Consequently, this germ of petty-bourgeois revolutionism was carried also by a

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 32.

part of the working class, which had recently emerged from the midst of the petty bourgeoisie. The demands of these sections of the working class exercised a marked influence on those Communists who had not yet been schooled in sustained struggle.

In showing "Left" communism to be a pseudo-revolutionary trend, Lenin argued from the experience of the Bolsheviks who had been steeled in the grim struggle not only against opportunism, but against petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchic revolutionism. The main purpose which Lenin pursued in this book was to pool this experience with all Communists of the globe.

First of all Lenin dealt with the scientific principles of communist strategy and tactics. He condemned subjectivism in policies, which, he said, should be based on a sober, strictly objective appraisal of all class forces in the given state and the line-up of these forces on a world scale. Communist policy, he said, "should not be determined only by the desires and views, by the degree of class-consciousness and the militancy of one group or party alone".* Dealing with the foundations of communist policy, Lenin in his book elaborated the doctrine of the revolutionary situation, of policy as a science and an art.

Of greatest importance were Lenin's theses concerning the correlation of the general and the special, the international and the national in Communists' policy. Blind imitation of Bolshevik tactics in different countries without regard for specific local conditions was liable to cause serious damage to the cause of developing the world proletarian revolution. Therefore, said Lenin, the unity of the international tactic of the communist workers' movement in all countries called, not for the elimination of diversity, not for the effacement of national distinctions, but for such an application of the basic principles of communism as "will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions."** This conclusion is an elaboration of Lenin's theses, formulated back in 1916, to the effect that "All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life".***

* Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 81.
** Ibid., p. 92.
*** Ibid., Vol. 23, pp. 69-70.

In his analysis of the international significance of the October Revolution Lenin singled out those moments and aspects in the history and tactics of Bolshevism which had a general application and general implications. These features of the Russian revolution, which bore a general, and not specific or peculiarly national character, Lenin considered to be the dictatorship of the proletariat and the existence of a strongly welded and disciplined communist party.

The experience of Soviet Russia showed that without a dictatorship of the proletariat it was impossible to suppress the resistance of the deposed bourgeoisie, solve the complex problems of the relationships between the working class and the small commodity producer, and rid the workers themselves of petty-bourgeois prejudices and habits. "The dictatorship of the proletariat," wrote Lenin, "means a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society."*

Lenin warned foreign Communists against a narrow, one-sided interpretation of the class content of the proletarian dictatorship, which, he pointed out, represented a special form of class alliance between the proletariat and the numerous non-proletarian strata of the working people (the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and intellectuals), an alliance against capital, an alliance aimed at the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the suppression of its resistance, an alliance with the aim of building socialism. A special feature of this class alliance was that the guiding force in it is the proletariat.

Further Lenin showed that the proletariat could not defeat its enemies without the Communist Party. Citing the experience of the October Revolution, he revealed the flimsiness of some Leftists' arguments, which recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat, but denied the necessity of a workers' party with an iron discipline, strict centralisation and close ties with the masses. The Communist Party, he stressed, was the highest form of class organisation of the proletariat. Without such a party the dictatorship of the proletariat was impossible and the labour masses were doomed to defeat. Lenin wrote: "It is, I think, almost universally realised at present that the Bolsheviks could not have retained power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, without the most rigorous and truly iron discipline in our Party, or without

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 44.

the fullest and unreserved support from the entire mass of the working class, that is, from all thinking, honest, devoted and influential elements in it, capable of leading the backward strata or carrying the latter along with them."*

In demonstrating the role of the Party in the mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin wrote that the power of the working class is exercised, with the help of the Party, through the mass organisations of the working people—the trade unions, the Soviets, the co-operative societies, the youth, cultural-and-educational and other organisations. The result is a flexible, relatively broad, and powerful proletarian instrument, formally non-communist, implementing the dictatorship of the working class under the leadership of the Party.

Lenin made a point of stressing the important role of proletarian leaders in the revolutionary struggle of the working class. This was necessary in view of the fact that the "Leftists" in certain countries denied the role of leaders, and drew a line between them and the party, between the party and the class, and between the class and the masses. The dislike, often hostile attitude of the masses towards their leaders was due, as a rule, to the behaviour of the opportunist leaders, who grovelled before the bourgeoisie. But this did not mean that the proletariat could do without leaders. If the proletariat wants to defeat the bourgeoisie it must make its own politicians, wrote Lenin, politicians who would be as good as those of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin gave a good deal of attention to the problem of introducing the masses to the revolution. He pointed out that Communists had to learn to carefully time the moment of decisive battle against the oppressors. The vanguard alone could not win. To throw the vanguard into battle, while the whole class and the masses had not occupied a position of either direct support of this vanguard or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it and were entirely unwilling to support its opponent, would be not only stupidity, but a crime.

Many "Left" Communists naively believed that the working class and all the working people merely had to be called on to overthrow the exploiters for these masses to immediately respond to such an appeal. Lenin showed convincingly that the masses could not be brought to a realisation of the need for revolutionary struggle by such methods, that "propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the

* Ibid., p. 23.

working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions."* To help the masses take up such a position and gain experience in order to swing them towards a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat was, in Lenin's opinion, the main task of the communist parties.

The main obstacle to the solution of this problem was Left doctrinairism, expressed in the "Left" Communists' refusal to work in bourgeois parliaments and the reformist trade unions and the rejection of all and any compromises. Posing as the custodians of communist doctrinal purity, the "Lefts" declared political compromises unacceptable in principle, and peddled the absurd slogan "Get out of the trade unions!" and declared parliamentarism to be outdated historically and politically. Sectarian narrow-mindedness and insularity, even when attributable to the workers' hatred and disgust of the reformist politicians, were strongly condemned by Lenin. One had to be capable of making all kinds of sacrifices, surmounting the most formidable obstacles, he taught, in order to systematically, ploddingly, persistently and patiently carry on propaganda and agitation in all bodies, societies, and unions, however reactionary, wherever there are proletarian or semi-proletarian masses.

"We Bolsheviks participated in the most counter-revolutionary parliaments," he wrote, "and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat. . . ."** Parliamentary activities were all the more important for Communists in Western Europe where bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary traditions were deeply rooted in the minds of the masses. Parliament, Lenin pointed out, was an arena of struggle in which all classes participated and where all class interests and conflicts came into play. The rostrum of parliament was of great importance in moulding the minds of the broad petty-bourgeois strata. Participation in parliamentary elections and in the fight for the parliamentary rostrum, therefore, were obligatory for parties of the revolutionary proletariat as a means of educating the backward sections of their own class, rousing and educating the undeveloped, downtrodden and ignorant rural masses.

Lenin regarded anti-parliamentarism as an attempt to shirk the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 93.
** Ibid., p. 61.

difficult job of creating an unconventional, non-opportunist, non-careerist type of parliamentarism. At the same time he warned Communists against overestimating the parliamentary forms of struggle, and stressed the fact that the principal issues of the labour movement in the countries of capitalism were decided not in bourgeois parliaments, but only by the mass revolutionary struggle of the working class.

Lenin taught the young communist parties to master all and every form of struggle without exception—legal and illegal, peaceful and non-peaceful, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary, and to be prepared for the swift and sudden change from one form of struggle to another. These requirements could be met only if Communists mastered to perfection the art of flexible tactics and political compromise. The stronger adversary, Lenin pointed out, could be beaten only by a tremendous exertion of strength and by the most careful, thorough and skilful use being made of both every "rift", however slight, among the enemies, and of every opportunity, however slight, of winning to one's side a mass ally, even if only a temporary, wavering, unstable, unreliable and tentative one.

Many "Left" Communists regarded the rejection of any compromise as a sign of special revolutionism. Their conduct was reminiscent of the stand taken by the Blanquists, who contended that Communists could achieve their goal without stopping at the intermediate stages, without attempting compromises, which, they averred, merely deferred the day of victory and prolonged the period of slavery. Engels in the 1870s criticised these views.* However, the negative attitude towards compromise still lingered among many revolutionaries. This was largely due to the fact that there were far too many compromises of a treacherous nature in the international labour movement.

But there are compromises and compromises, Lenin taught. They cannot be rejected out of hand, "in principle". The Bolshevik Party when necessary had recourse to maneuvering and compromises.

One such forced compromise was the Treaty of Brest imposed on the young Soviet Republic. From the point of view of the "Left" Communists this, like any other kind of deal with the imperialists, was unacceptable. Actually, in the concrete conditions then prevailing, such a compromise was obligatory, since it was

* See K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works* (in Russian), Vol. 18, pp. 510-17.

of decisive importance for the preservation of Soviet rule in Russia and for the development of the revolutionary movement in Germany and other countries.

Lenin repeatedly stressed the fact that it was impossible to devise any rule for concluding compromises, any hard-and-fast rule for all occasions. One had to work this out for oneself on each separate occasion. In his article "On Compromises" (written in the spring of 1920) Lenin pointed out: "The idea of compromises must not be renounced. The point is through all the compromises which are sometimes necessarily imposed by force of circumstance upon even the most revolutionary party of even the most revolutionary class, to be able to preserve, strengthen, steel and develop the revolutionary tactics and organisation, the revolutionary consciousness, determination and preparedness of the working class and its organised vanguard, the Communist Party."*

Lenin taught that it was correct tactics on the part of Communists to make concessions to such elements and in such cases as redound to the proletariat, while at the same time fighting against those which redound to the bourgeoisie. His important rule on the question of compromise was—make a deal, but without sacrifice of principles.

Lenin's work, as we see, was a real encyclopaedia of communist strategy and tactics, which passed on to the young communist parties of the West the rich experience of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin's book *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* was widely circulated in the international labour movement. It was published in Russian, English, and French in the summer of 1920 in Moscow on the occasion of the Second Congress of the Comintern. The same year saw it published in Germany, Britain, France, Bulgaria, Argentina, the Netherlands and Sweden; in 1921 it appeared in Italy, the U.S.A. and Finland. The book was very popular with the majority of class-conscious workers and Communists in the different countries.

William Gallacher, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Great Britain, writing of the impression which this book of Lenin's made upon him on first acquaintance, said that he started reading the part concerning Germany quite casually, "but when I came to the section dealing with Britain, and saw what it had to say about me, I sat up with a jolt".** A careful study of Lenin's book and personal meetings and talks with the great leader of the

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 492.
** *The Communist International*, No. 10-12, 1937, p. 1255.

world proletariat helped Gallacher and many other Communists to rectify their mistakes and find the proper road to the hard revolutionary struggle.

Lenin's book dealing with the vital problems of strategy, tactics and organisational principles of the communist movement is an inestimable contribution to the treasure-store of Marxism-Leninism. It has lost none of its significance to this day, and continues to teach Communists the art of political struggle, the art of fighting to win.

The Strategy and Tactics of the Communist Movement Worked Out by the Second Congress of the Comintern

The Second Congress of the Comintern met at a time when the world communist movement had grown considerably stronger and was making progress in all continents. The national detachments of the communist movement owed their successes to a great extent to the colossal efforts of the Comintern and personally of Lenin in reorientating the world labour movement. "The process of transforming the old type of European parliamentary party—which in fact is reformist and only slightly tinted with revolutionary colours —into a *new type* of party, into a genuinely revolutionary, genuinely Communist Party, is an extremely arduous one,"* Lenin wrote at a later date. Nevertheless, the difficulties were overcome.

The rapid growth of communism also revealed two mistakes or weaknesses, which hampered the further development of the movement. One of them was the declaration of affiliation to the Third International by many socialist parties which had not yet broken with the ideology and practice of Centrism. This situation was an obstacle to the formation and development of strong communist parties and was fraught with the danger of social-opportunism infiltrating the communist movement and undermining its revolutionary trend. The other mistake was the tendency towards Leftism, the refusal of some Communists to work in the traditional mass organisations and build up the political army of the revolution out of the masses which capitalism had created.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 209.

The lessons of the class battles of 1919-1920 emphasised the grave danger of these mistakes and raised before the Comintern the most complex issues of the world revolutionary movement, namely, the role of the proletarian parties of a new type in the socialist revolution, the communist parties' drive to win the masses, and the allies of the proletariat in the struggle for power. It was to working out these vital problems that the Second Congress of the Comintern dedicated itself.

The Congress was attended by 217 delegates from 67 organisations of 37 countries. Communist parties and groups and some syndicalist organisations were represented. There were non-voting delegates from two Centrist parties: the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany and the French Socialist Party. The Congress opened in Petrograd on July 19, 1920, subsequent sessions being held in Moscow during the period July 23 to August 7. The Congress met in an atmosphere of general enthusiasm created by the Red Army's determined counter-offensive against the white Poles and its swift advance on Warsaw. The workers of all countries sincerely expressed their solidarity with the working people of Soviet Russia. The general enthusiasm communicated itself to the Congress delegates.

All the Congress proceedings were directed by Lenin, who had devoted enormous time and energy to its careful preparation. His book *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* was printed in advance in three languages and handed out among the delegates. Lenin prepared the main report and the theses on practically all the more important points of the agenda, and sat on three of the ten committees of the Congress.

In his report on the international situation and the fundamental tasks of the Communist International made at the first meeting Lenin gave a profound analysis of the world revolutionary crisis as a guideline for Communists. He criticised two erroneous evaluations of the crisis which were current at the time. On one hand, the reformists presented the crisis as a matter of simple "concern", which would soon shake down. At the heart of this evaluation lay the selfish interests of the labour aristocracy, its refusal to use the revolutionary crisis to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie. "Opportunism is our principal enemy," said Lenin. "Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism. It has been shown in practice that working-class activists who follow the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie themselves. Without their leadership of the workers the bourgeoisie could not remain in power."*

On the other hand, some "Left" Communists believed that the bourgeoisie had absolutely no way out of the crisis. This view was founded on the erroneous theory of capitalism's automatic collapse and on the revolutionary impatience of inexperienced Communists. "There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation," said Lenin. "The bourgeoisie are behaving like barefaced plunderers who have lost their heads; they are committing folly after folly, thus aggravating the situation and hastening their doom. All that is true. But nobody can 'prove' that it is absolutely impossible for them to pacify a minority of the exploited with some petty concessions, and suppress some movement or uprising of some section of the oppressed and exploited."**

Pointing out the decisive importance of the subjective factor in a ripened revolutionary situation, Lenin said: "All over the world, the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis. The revolutionary parties must now 'prove' in practice that they have sufficient understanding and organisation, contact with the exploited masses, and determination and skill to utilise this crisis for a successful, a victorious revolution."***

Describing the economic and political situation in the world, Lenin pointed out that it superabounded in inflammable material and motives for sparking it off. The general state of crisis among the ruling classes was an established fact. The trouble, however, was that in most of the capitalist countries the proletariat was not yet ready to establish its dictatorship. The task of the moment was to step up the preparedness of the proletariat for revolutionary action. The decisive role in this respect was to be played by the communist parties.

The creation and strengthening of proletarian parties of a new type in all countries was a key issue at the Second Congress of the Comintern. The theses on the fundamental tasks of the Communist International drafted by Lenin and adopted by the Congress pointed out that the principal task was to unite the scattered communist forces, form in each country a single communist party (or strengthen and renovate the already existing one) in order to intensify tenfold the work of preparing the proletariat for the conquest of political power in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 231.
** Ibid., p. 227.
*** Ibid.

Preparation of the working class for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie was impossible without the exposure and expulsion of the opportunists, without rectifying "Left" errors, without winning the masses over to the side of the Communists. "All the parties adhering to the Third International," the Theses stated, "must at all costs put into practice the mottoes: 'Deeper into the masses,' 'In closer contact with the masses,' understanding by the word 'masses' the entire mass of workers and those exploited by capitalism, especially the less organised and enlightened, the most oppressed and less adaptable to organisation."*

The relationship between the party of a new type and the labour masses was dealt with in another resolution of the Congress entitled "The Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution". The concept of *Party*, this resolution stated, had to be rigidly distinguished from the concept of *Class*. The communist party was a part of the working class, its most advanced, most class-conscious and most revolutionary part. The communist party was distinguished from the mass of the workers in that it surveyed the historical path of the working class as a whole and endeavoured at every turn in this path to defend the interests of the working class as a whole, and not its separate groups or separate trades. The communist party was the organisational and political lever by which the more advanced part of the working class guided the mass of the proletariat and semi-proletariat along the right path.

The resolution stressed that breakdown of the old Social-Democratic parties was not to be interpreted as the breakdown of proletarian partyism as such. The communist party was the chief instrument of working-class emancipation. After winning power, the party's role does not diminish, but grows more important than ever. The party has to direct the economic, political and cultural-and-educational struggle of the working class. It could perform this task only if it had a decisive influence in the Soviets, the trade unions, the co-operative societies and other mass organisations.

The resolution pointed out that the basic organisational principle of the communist parties was to be democratic centralism. In practice this meant election of the higher unit by the primary unit, the absolutely binding nature of the directives of the higher unit for the unit subordinated to it, the existence of an authoritative party centre whose decisions were binding upon all Communists

* *Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings*, Moscow, 1920, pp. 523-24.

from congress to congress. The principle of democratic centralism has withstood the test of time. Events have shown that only a centralised party leadership can unite all forces, direct them towards a single goal and give unity to the unco-ordinated efforts of the different groups of workers. At the same time practice has shown that the best way of determining the general will of the party is through a democratic, collective discussion of different views and proposals leading to the adoption of a decision which is binding upon all.

The sum total of ideological, tactical and organisational principles of the proletarian party of a new type were briefly summarised in the document known as the "21 Conditions" of admission to the Communist International. The building up of the Comintern into an ideologically monolithic organisation was impossible without such a document. The Comintern was in danger of being cluttered up by wavering pussyfooting elements, who had not yet broken with the ideology of reformism and the legacy of anarcho-syndicalism. Danger from the Right and "Left" made it necessary to draft clear terms of admission which would keep the door of the Comintern closed to parties which did not take a firm stand on the ground of the Communist International.

The basic conditions of membership of the Communist International were: recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a consistent, systematic struggle to secure it; a complete break with the reformists and Centrists and their expulsion from the party; combining legal and illegal methods of struggle; systematic work in the countryside, the army, the reformist trade unions and bourgeois parliaments. The parties of the Comintern were to be called communist parties and were to be built on the principle of democratic centralism. All decisions of the congresses of the Comintern and of its Executive Committee were binding upon all parties affiliated to the Communist International. The Congress stressed that the Comintern and its Executive were bound to take into consideration "the variety of conditions under which the different parties have to work and struggle, and generally binding resolutions should be passed only on such questions upon which such resolutions are possible".*

The overwhelming majority of the Congress delegates appreciated the importance of the "21 Conditions" for building up a militant monolithic organisation of the international proletariat and fully approved this basic document. Certain points in it,

* Ibid., p. 536.

however, were taken exception to by some delegates. For example, Serrati, who headed the delegation of the Italian Socialist Party, considered that the doors of the Third International should be thrown open to all parties who wished to join it. He was also against the immediate expulsion from his party of outspoken reformists. Wilhelm Dittmann and Artur Crispien of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany objected to the obligatory recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time some delegates of the Italian Socialist Party, the Communist Party of the Netherlands, the Young Communist International and others of the "Left" were emphatically opposed to any negotiations with representatives of the French Socialist Party, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Norwegian Labour Party and a number of other parties who had broken with the Second International. The "Leftists" in their speeches improperly identified the opportunist leaders with the rank and file of these parties, most of whom had already taken a revolutionary stand.

Arguing with Crispien and Dittmann, whose speeches revealed bourgeois thought-patterns, Lenin vigorously upheld the "21 Conditions". At the same time he criticised the "Left" Communists, who were displeased because the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany had been invited for talks. "When Kautsky attacks us and brings out books against us," said Lenin, "we polemise with him as our class enemy. But when the Independent Social-Democratic Party, which has expanded as a result of an influx of revolutionary workers, comes here for negotiations, we must talk to its representatives, since they are a section of the revolutionary workers."*

After the debate the "21 Conditions" of admission were endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the Congress against two dissenting votes. A dam was thus created which afforded reliable protection to the ideological, political and organisational integrity of the world communist movement.

In safeguarding the Comintern against an influx of alien elements, the Second Congress emphasised that one of the most important tasks of the communist parties was to cope with sectarian narrow-mindedness and to win the masses. It was from this standpoint that the Congress dealt with the questions of Communists' work in bourgeois parliaments and reformist trade unions and of the British Communists joining the Labour Party.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 250-51.

Some delegates—Amadeo Bordiga (Italy), William Gallacher (Britain), Jacob Herzog (Switzerland) and others—were altogether opposed to Communists participating in bourgeois parliaments and stood for these being boycotted on all occasions.

In his speech on parliamentarism Lenin revealed the great danger of boycottist tactics. Backward elements of the working class, he said, the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, still largely believed that parliament represented their interests. Communists therefore had to take part in bourgeois parliaments in order to show in practice how this state institution was acting as an instrument of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The opportunists were using the slogan of parliamentary democracy to vindicate and defend the capitalist system and divert the masses from the revolutionary struggle. At that period, therefore, Lenin's statement of the issue, namely, the necessity of taking part in parliament with the aim of exposing bourgeois parliamentarism, which was subsequently to be superceded by proletarian democracy, was the only correct way of putting the question.

The majority of the delegates rejected the sectarian proposals of the "Left" Communists and supported resolutions drafted in the spirit of Lenin's theses elaborated in his book *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. The Congress demanded of the communist parties that they combine legal work with illegal work; it bound the communist parties to carry on work in the reformist trade unions with the aim of winning the rank and file over to communism; it declared in favour of Communists taking part in bourgeois parliaments. It moved that the British Communists join the Labour Party, inasmuch as its structure allowed propaganda of communist views to be conducted within it.

The Congress devoted considerable attention to the problem of the working class's allies in the struggle against imperialism. In this connection it dealt with the agrarian and the national-colonial questions. Lenin drafted the theses on both questions and took an active part in the committees which drafted the corresponding resolutions.

The alliance between the working class and the peasantry is one of the fundamental ideas of Leninism. The need for such an alliance was mentioned by Marx and Engels in considering the consequences of the defeat of the West European proletariat in the revolutionary battles of 1848 and lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871. The profound thoughts of the founders of scientific socialism on the peasant question were consigned to oblivion by the opportunists of the Second International, but they served

Lenin as his point of departure in working out the agrarian programme of the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern.

In the first draft of his theses on the agrarian question, which was discussed by the delegates, Lenin started out by showing that a close alliance between the working class and the peasantry was in the vital interests of both classes, who had the same common enemy—capitalism. There was no deliverance from exploitation for the working masses of the countryside other than in an alliance with the proletariat, in wholehearted support of its revolutionary struggle to overthrow the yoke of the landowners and the bourgeoisie. At the same time the industrial workers would never be able to fulfil their mission of liberating mankind from the oppression of capitalism and wars of conquest if they shut themselves up in the shell of their narrow craft and professional interests. "The proletariat," Lenin said, "is a really revolutionary class and acts in a really socialist manner only when it comes out and acts as the vanguard of all the working and exploited people, as their leader in the struggle for the overthrow of the exploiters; this, however, cannot be achieved unless the class struggle is carried into the countryside, unless the rural working masses are united behind the Communist Party of the urban proletariat, and unless they are trained by the proletariat."*

On the basis of a thorough analysis of the position of various social groups within the peasantry Lenin made out a strong case for the communist agrarian policy. What groups of peasants could be the workers' allies in the struggle against capitalism? To this question Lenin gave a clear, differentiated answer: first of all, the agricultural labourers who earn their livelihood as wage workers in capitalist agricultural enterprises; secondly, the semi-proletarians who earn their living in part employment with the capitalist and part work on their own or rented patch of land; thirdly, the small peasants farming small plots which they own or rent and cover the needs of their family and household without employing outside labour.

These three groups, taken together, form the bulk of the rural population in the capitalist countries. They benefit immediately and substantially from the overthrow of the capitalists and landowners. The ultimate success of the socialist revolution in the countryside, therefore, is assured. The support of these groups of peasants, however, could not be expected right away, Lenin pointed out. The experience of the October Revolution had shown that

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 153.

these groups of the rural population, downtrodden, disunited, browbeaten and condemned to semi-barbarian conditions of life were interested in the victory of socialism economically, socially and culturally, but were capable of giving strong support to the revolutionary proletariat only after the big landowners and capitalists had been summarily dealt with, only after these downtrodden peasants had seen in practice that they have an organised leader and defender powerful and firm enough to give them assistance and leadership.

Characterising the middle peasants, Lenin wrote that by these should be understood economically small farmers who owned or rented small plots of land capable as a rule under capitalism not only of providing for the upkeep of a family and farm, but of yielding a certain surplus, which, at least in good years, was capable of being turned into capital, and who often resorted to the employment of outside labour. Generalising the experience of the revolutionary struggle of his time, Lenin pointed out that as far as the middle peasants were concerned the revolutionary proletariat could not set itself the task—at least in the near future and during the early period of the dictatorship of the proletariat—of winning this stratum over to its side, and should confine itself to the task of neutralising it. Lenin pointed out that with the middle peasants neutralised and torn away from the bourgeoisie the next step would be to form a strong alliance with them.

Quite a different policy should be adopted by the working class towards the big farmers. By these was to be understood capitalist employers in agriculture, who ran their farms, as a general rule, with the aid of several hired labourers, and whose only connection with the "peasantry" was a low cultural level, routine of life and personal work on their farms. The big peasants (kulaks) were the most numerous of the bourgeois strata who acted as direct and determined enemies of the revolutionary working class. After the victory of the proletariat in the town these strata were bound to resort to all possible acts of sabotage and armed rebellion of a counter-revolutionary nature. The proletariat, therefore, had to be prepared to completely disarm this stratum and crush any resistance on its part.

The expropriation of even the big peasants, however, could not become the immediate task of the victorious proletariat, Lenin pointed out, since the material, particularly the technical as well as social conditions for this were still lacking. As a general rule, the victorious proletariat had to allow the big peasants to keep their land, which was to be confiscated only in the event of their

resisting the authority of the working people. The experience of the October Revolution had shown that "when taught a severe lesson for the slightest attempt at resistance, this stratum is capable of loyally fulfilling the tasks set by the proletarian state...".*

The revolutionary proletariat was to confiscate immediately and unconditionally all the lands of the landed gentry and big landowners, that is, of those people, who, in capitalist countries, resort directly or through their farmers to the systematic exploitation of hired labour and of the neighbouring small (often also middle) peasants; who do not engage in physical work, and who belong largely to descendants of feudal lords, or financial magnates, or to a cross-breed of both these categories of exploiters and idle rich.

The agrarian question was a subject of sharp controversy both in the committees and at the plenary meetings of the Congress. Some delegates strongly objected to the landed estates being shared out among the small and middle peasants. Lenin anticipated such objections by pointing out in his theses that as far as the advanced capitalist countries were concerned the Comintern considered it correct to keep the landed estates intact and run them along the lines of the state farms in Russia. "It would, however, be grossly erroneous to exaggerate or to stereotype this rule and never to permit the free grant of *part* of the land that belonged to the expropriated expropriators to the neighbouring small and sometimes middle peasants."**

Some of the delegates still failed to grasp the importance which a strong alliance between the proletariat and the small peasantry had for the victory of the socialist revolution. They accused Lenin of petty-bourgeois tendencies. For instance, Crispien (Germany) and Serrati (Italy) contended that concessions to the small peasants were likely to push the proletariat onto the path of opportunism. Serrati proposed until the revolution "not to make concessions to the petty peasant bourgeoisie, so as not to hurt the interests of the proletarian class".*** The majority of the delegates did not agree with this point of view and supported Lenin, whose theses took into account not only the experience of the Russian revolution, but the lessons of the Hungarian and Bavarian Soviet republics.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 158.
** Ibid., p. 160.
*** *Second Congress...*, op. cit., p. 355.

An extremely important issue before the Congress was the national-colonial problem. Basically, it was a problem of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry on an international scale, since the peasantry in the colonial and dependent countries formed the vast majority of the population. Just as victory over the bourgeoisie in any given country is impossible without an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, so is victory over world imperialism impossible without an alliance between the revolutionary proletariat and the national liberation movement. Considering that in the new historical epoch the national liberation movement becomes an inseparable component part of the world socialist revolution, the Congress posed the task of fusing the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in the developed capitalist countries with the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples to form a single anti-imperialist current.

Lenin played a decisive role in defining this strategical task of the world communist movement. In his writings after the October Revolution he dealt with the most complex problems of interaction between the various detachments of the world revolutionary movement and showed the bearing which the proletarian revolutions in the capitalist countries had upon the liberative struggle of the oppressed peoples.

Before the opening of the Second Congress of the Comintern Lenin had offered for discussion a rough draft of theses on the national and colonial questions, and asked the delegates from different countries to give their opinions. Some of the delegates responded to this request by sending in their comments and materials, which Lenin made use of. Eventually a big collective job was done in a special committee of the Congress chaired by Lenin. At his request the Indian Communist M. Roy drafted supplementary theses in which the national liberation movement was characterised "from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain".* After a thorough discussion the committee unanimously adopted Lenin's theses with slight amendments and Roy's supplementary theses with Lenin's amendments.

Reporting on the committee's work at a plenary session of the Congress Lenin started by saying that the committee had reached complete unanimity on all major points. The theses started by defining the contradiction between imperialism and socialism as the basic contradiction of the new epoch. All world development,

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.

said Lenin, was now conditioned by the struggle of the imperialist nations against Soviet Russia. "Unless we bear that in mind," he said, "we shall not be able to pose a single national or colonial problem correctly, even if it concerns a most outlying part of the world. The communist parties, in civilised and backward countries alike, can pose and solve political problems correctly only if they make this postulate their starting-point."* The most important task of the Comintern following from the statement of the question was to effect a close alliance of all the national and colonial liberation movements with Soviet Russia against the common enemy—world imperialism, represented by a group of imperialist powers who exploited and oppressed the vast majority of the world's population.

Lenin proceeded from the assumption that the Communists in the oppressed countries were bound to act, and given definite conditions, would be able to act as a vanguard force in the struggle for national liberation. Lenin pointed out the progressive role of the awakened national consciousness of the oppressed peoples and emphasised that the revolutionary and nationalist East was a growing anti-imperialist force. He was strongly opposed to any attempt to draw a line between the national liberation movement in the East and the cause of socialist revolution in the West. He rejected as unfounded the claim "that the fate of the West depends entirely upon the degree of development and strength of the revolutionary movement in the countries of the East".**

At the same time Lenin stressed "the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries. . .".*** Later, characterising the parties that could be created in underdeveloped countries, Lenin wrote that in a country like Mongolia, for example "the revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."****

How, under what conditions, was the Comintern to support the national liberation movement, which, in class content, was a bourgeois-democratic movement? Lenin's theses gave a clear reply to

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.
** *Vestnik 2-go Kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, No. 1, July 27, 1920.
*** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 149.
**** Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 361.

this question too. The Communists were to support any national liberation movement which was really revolutionary and served as a means of destroying imperialism. "The Communist International must establish temporary relations and even unions with the revolutionary movements in the colonies and backward countries, without however amalgamating with them, but preserving the independent character of the proletarian movement even though it be still in its embryonic state."*

The tasks of the communist elements in the oppressed countries, as Lenin saw them, were: to create revolutionary parties, communistic not only in name; to translate the communist doctrine into the language of every nation; to establish contacts between the exploited masses of these countries and the world proletariat; to rouse the masses, at whatever level they may stand, to revolutionary activity and independent action; to fight for the satisfaction of their urgent demands. Lenin emphasised that the Communists of the East would have to base themselves "on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples, and which has its historical justification".**

In putting forward the slogan of support to the really revolutionary bourgeois-democratic forces in the colonies—provided that the communist elements retain their organisational and ideological independence—Lenin, in fact, gave currency in his theses to the idea of a united anti-imperialist front.

This fundamentally new way of presenting the question evoked objections on the part of some of the Congress delegates. Serrati (Italy) and Sultan-Zade (Iran), for example, contended that national movements in which the bourgeoisie took part were not revolutionary movements. Support for the national bourgeoisie in the national liberation struggle could, in the opinion of Serrati, "only demoralise the class consciousness of the proletariat. . .".*** A similar idea was expressed by the Indian delegate Roy in the original wording of his theses. He considered that in the colonial and dependent countries the movement of the local bourgeoisie for national independence and the movement of the worker and peasant masses against exploitation were too far apart and could not develop together.

After a thorough discussion the majority of the delegates realised the groundlessness of the argument which claimed that the

* *Second Congress. . .*, op. cit., p. 575.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.
*** *Second Congress. . .*, op. cit., p. 154.

national liberation movement could not be an ally of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism. The Congress came to the conclusion that in the colonial and dependent countries the Communists were to support the local bourgeois-democratic movement in so far as it had not yet played out its objectively revolutionary role. Agreements between the Communists and the national-revolutionary forces, however, were possible only when the latter did not "hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited".*

The Congress also stressed the urgent necessity of rooting out from Communists' minds the survivals of petty-bourgeois nationalist habits, which could seriously damage the business of uniting the anti-imperialist efforts of the working class and the oppressed peoples. Lenin's theses stated: "The struggle against this evil, and against the deep-rooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices (manifesting themselves in various forms, such as race hatred, national antagonism and antisemitism), must be brought to the foreground the more vigorously because of the urgent necessity of transforming the dictatorship of the proletariat and changing it from a national basis (i.e., existing in one country and incapable of exercising an influence over world politics), into an international dictatorship (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat of at least several advanced countries capable of exercising a determined influence upon world politics)."**

Denouncing the national egoism of those members of the labour movement who laid stress on the equality of nations and ignored the general proletarian and international aims and tasks, Lenin wrote that proletarian internationalism required, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in a given country be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world scale; secondly, that the nations which had achieved victory over the bourgeoisie should be capable and prepared to make great national sacrifices in order to secure the overthrow of international capitalism.

In the course of the discussion of the national-colonial problem the question of a possible non-capitalist path of development in the backward countries was also dealt with. The Congress delegates paid tribute to the successes of Soviet state organisation in Soviet Central Asia and unanimously approved Lenin's view that "with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage".* The historical development of the Central Asian Soviet republics and the Mongolian People's Republic eventually confirmed in practice this most important theoretical proposition.

Speaking of the tasks of the Communists in the countries of the East, Lenin said: "It is necessary in particular to direct all efforts towards applying the basic principles of the Soviet system to countries in which pre-capitalist relations prevail, by way of setting up 'Soviets of working people' etc."** Lenin here had in mind peasant soviets, i.e., organs of power that were non-proletarian in class structure. Lenin also pointed out that the coming to power of Communists in the backward countries was not an essential condition of these countries' development along the non-capitalist path.

The Congress dealt with a number of other important questions. It adopted a manifesto, a resolution on the conditions under which Soviets should be formed, appeals to the working men and women of the world, to the trade unions of all countries, to all members of the French Socialist Party and the class-conscious workers of France, to the workers of Petrograd, to the Red Army and Navy of the R.S.F.S.R., and an appeal against the executioners of Hungary.

The Congress unanimously adopted the Statutes of the Communist International, which exactly defined the structure of the Comintern and its organisation on the basis of democratic centralism.

K. Kabakchiev, the delegate of the Bulgarian Communist Party, who addressed the Congress on the Statutes, said that the rallying and centralisation of the proletarian forces were a primary condition for the success of the proletarian revolution in the fight against the united front of the bourgeois counter-revolution. The Comintern was called upon to unite the forces of the world proletariat. To achieve this, the Communist International had to be a powerful, well-disciplined, strictly centralised organisation controlling, directing and co-ordinating the activities of the proletariat in all countries.

The Statutes stated that the Communist International set itself the task of liberating the working people of the whole world.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.
** *Second Congress...*, op. cit., p. 573.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.
** C.P.A., IML, 2/1/14423/7.

Therefore, people of every race and colour, toilers of the whole planet, were united in the ranks of the Comintern. The Statutes stated explicitly that "to all intents and purposes the Communist International should represent a single universal communist party, of which the parties operating in every country form individual sections".*

The world congress of all parties and organisations affiliated to the Comintern was recognised as the supreme organ of the Communist International. The world congress was to be convened, as a rule, every year. It alone had the right to make changes in the Programme of the Comintern and to decide the major questions of strategy and tactics.

The governing body between congresses was the Executive Committee, which was accountable to the congress. The seat of the Executive, according to the Statutes, was to be determined each time by the congress. The communist party of the country in which the Executive was located had five voting members on the Executive Committee; from 10 to 13 of the largest communist parties, as determined at the congress, as well as the Young Communist International and the organisation of the revolutionary trade unions had one voting member each on the Executive. The other parties and organisations had the right to send non-voting representatives to the Executive. At the last meeting of the Second Congress the membership of the Executive was extended and the Committee was given the right to co-opt new members.

The duties of the Executive were to direct the work of the Comintern from congress to congress, to publish the journal *The Communist International* in various languages, to issue the necessary appeals and directives in the name of the Communist International. The Statutes gave the Comintern Executive "the right to demand from the affiliated parties the expulsion of groups of members who are guilty of the infringement of international proletarian discipline, as well as the expulsion from the Communist International of such parties guilty of the infringement of the regulations of the World Congress".** All important political intercourse between the various communist parties was, as a general rule, to be effected through the Executive Committee.

The Second Congress of the Comintern was an admirable political university for the delegates of the international proletariat and the representatives of the oppressed peoples. The businesslike,

* *Second Congress...*, op. cit., p. 511.
** Ibid., p. 513.

constructive atmosphere prevailing at the plenary meetings and working committees of the Congress, the friendly meetings and talks with Lenin—all this contributed to a more thorough understanding by the delegates of the aims and tasks of the world communist movement. There was not a delegate at the Congress who had not come under the powerful influence of Lenin's personality. "Both a theoretician and man of action, Lenin is now the greatest figure in the world working-class movement," Marcel Cachin, a prominent leader of the French working class wrote at the time.*

On August 7, 1920 the Second Congress of the Comintern came to an end. The same day an Executive Committee of representatives from twenty sections of the Comintern was formed. A five-man Narrow Bureau (Presidium) of the Executive Committee to carry on the everyday current work and prepare the materials for the plenary meetings of the Executive was endorsed, consisting of: G. Zinoviev (Chairman), N. Bukharin (Deputy Chairman), M. Kobetsky (Secretary), E. Meyer and A. Rudnyanski.

Shortly after the Second Congress of the Comintern the First Congress of the Eastern Peoples was held in Baku. It was attended by nearly two thousand delegates, who had arrived from the Central Asian Soviet republics, India, China, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and other countries of the East, as well as guests from Europe and America. The Congress adopted a number of documents in the spirit of the resolutions carried at the Second Congress of the Comintern, and proclaimed its fighting slogan: "Workers of all lands and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!"

Stressing the great importance of these decisions, Lenin said: "That which was achieved by the congress of Communists in Moscow and by the Baku congress of Communist representatives of the peoples of the East cannot be immediately assessed or directly calculated, but it has been an achievement of greater significance than some military victories are, because it proves to us that the Bolsheviks' experience, their activities and programme, and their call for a revolutionary struggle against the capitalists and imperialists have won world-wide recognition...."**

The world-wide significance of the Second Congress of the Comintern is that it worked out the political line of the world communist movement in the struggle against imperialism. It gave guidelines for establishing a lasting alliance of the revolutionary

* *Through the Eyes of the World*, Moscow, 1970, p. 187.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 330.

proletariat with the peasantry and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples, closed the doors of the Comintern to opportunists, mapped out ways for rectifying Leftist errors in the communist movement, and set the task of strengthening the communist parties ideologically and organisationally, strengthening their ties with the masses. With the adoption by the Second Congress of the "21 Conditions" and the Statutes the Comintern assumed its final organisational shape as a united world party of the international proletariat and laid down the firm principles of international proletarian discipline. In a letter to the Austrian Communists, Lenin wrote: "We are proud that we settle the great problems of the workers' struggle for their emancipation by submitting to the international discipline of the revolutionary proletariat, with due account of the experience of the workers in different countries, reckoning with their knowledge and their will, and thus giving effect in deed (and not in word, as the Renners, Fritz Adlers and Otto Bauers do) to the unity of the workers' class struggle for communism throughout the world."*

Commenting on the successes achieved by the world communist movement since the founding of the Comintern in 1919, Lenin wrote that the Second Congress rallied not only the advanced pioneers of proletarian revolution, but delegates of strong organisations having ties with the masses. Whereas the First (Inaugural) Congress of the Comintern laid the foundations for the ideological and organisational unity of the international proletariat under the banner of communism, the Second Congress took the next step forward. In its resolutions it elaborated the basic questions of theory and practice of the international communist movement.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 269.

Chapter Two

THE STRUGGLE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL TO WIN THE MASSES, SECURE A UNITED WORKERS' FRONT AND STRENGTHEN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

(1921-1923)

THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE NEW CONDITIONS

The Situation in the Labour Movement

The period between the Second and Third congresses of the Comintern was marked by serious changes in the international situation and the world revolutionary movement.

At the close of 1920 the foreign military intervention and the civil war in Soviet Russia were practically ended. The Soviet people, led by the Bolshevik Party and supported by the international proletariat, had made safe the gains of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Soviet rule and the country's independence. The attempts of international imperialism to strangle the world's first socialist revolution failed. The victory of the young socialist state over the interventionists and the internal counter-revolution demonstrated the impregnability of the new social system, the irreversibility of the process of capitalism's downfall, which had already begun; it signified the consolidation of this stronghold of the world socialist revolution, this revolutionary beacon for the fighting masses in the capitalist countries and the colonies.

The mounting national liberation movement was an active and growing factor in world politics and in the revolutionary onset against imperialism. In 1921, following the victory of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist people's revolution, Mongolia fell away from the colonial system of imperialism and was able to develop as a free and independent democratic country. The revolution was headed by the Mongolian People's Party, founded on March 1, 1921.

At the same time there was a perceptible ebb in the tide of the revolutionary struggle in the capitalist countries. Backed by the Right Social-Democrats, the bourgeoisie succeeded in defeating the proletariat in the revolutionary battles that raged during the second half of 1920 and the beginning of 1921. The fight of the workers of Northern Italy, who seized the factories in September 1920, ended in failure. In December the bourgeoisie crushed the general strike of the workers in Czechoslovakia. In March 1921 the German reactionaries provoked and then drowned in its own blood the revolutionary uprising of the advanced workers in central Germany.

The bourgeoisie in most of the capitalist countries launched an attack against the proletariat. The working class was compelled to fight hard defensive battles in a situation of prevailing economic crisis, which gripped the capitalist countries during 1920-1921. Millions of people were thrown into the street and those who were working had their pay cut. Many of the workers' political and economic gains won after the war were now being threatened and in some countries done away with. Capitalism's attack on the workers' living standards was attended by a growth of political reaction. Lash-and-gun methods of strikebreaking, including armed fascist gangs, were used more and more often against the workers. In most cases the strikes and other actions of the workers ended in defeat.

The European and American bourgeoisie skilfully combined a policy of pressure and terror with maneuvering and concessions. They had the backing of the reformist leaders, who had retained their influence on the majority of the working class. During the years of revolutionary upswing there was a sharp increase in the political activity among the millioned masses of the working people in the capitalist countries. However, the power and experience of the bourgeoisie, the ideological and organisational influence of the social-reformist parties, the insufficient political maturity of the masses, the deeply ingrained prejudices and illusions among the working people, their naive belief that their interests could be fully taken care of under a bourgeois democracy, as well as the weakness and inexperience of the young communist parties resulted in a considerable number of workers and other strata of the working people failing to find the right revolutionary road and following the lead of the reformists.

The Social-Democratic and socialist parties in 1921 had a membership of nearly eight million, while the reformist-led International Federation of Trade Unions (the Amsterdam International) had about twenty-two million members.*

The Right socialist leaders and the leaders of the reformist trade unions meanwhile preached "class peace" and "the growing of capitalism into socialism" and widely propagandised their plans of so-called "socialisation" of the economy. They declared that after the world war the proletariat had the way open to socialism without a revolution through parliamentary democracy, and therefore the task of the socialist parties was to put through their programme by winning a victory at the parliamentary elections. The working classes "must realise that their power must also be directed through the ballot-box. The ballot was stronger than the bullet, and would ultimately triumph,"* stated James Thomas, one of the leaders of the Amsterdam International. Demagogically taking advantage of the democratic moods among the workers, the reformists took the credit for the gains which had been won in the course of the class struggle, claiming that they were paving the way to a "democratic socialism" and doing everything in their power to prevent the masses from being drawn into revolutionary actions. At the most crucial moments of the class struggle the Social-Democrats often assumed the role of stranglers and executioners of the revolution. They waged a bitter fight against the Communists, tried to isolate them from the people and paralyse the influence of the communist parties on the working class. For this purpose the reformists banished Communists from the trade unions and expelled from the trade union associations those unions in which communist influence was strong.

The splitting tactics of the reformists were assisted by the errors of the "Left" Communists in Germany, Czechoslovakia and other countries, who stood for the revolutionary workers quitting the reformist trade unions and setting up separate trade union organisations. This seemingly radical line of action merely tended to make it easier for the reformists to split the trade unions. The people expelled from the trade unions were compelled to set up their own unions, which, though taking a revolutionary stand, found themselves isolated from the broad masses, who remained in the reformist trade unions.

A harmful policy in the international labour movement was pursued also by the leaders of the Centrist parties. They tried to bar the way to the Communists for those workers who were turning away from the Right Social-Democrats and were beginning to realise the need for revolutionary action. The Centrist leaders, while recognising in words the correctness and importance of revolutionary changes and even the need for establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat, actually helped the Right Social-Democrats to bleed white the labour movement. They criticised the Second International for being a reformist organisation, but in practice they followed the same opportunist line and splitting tactics. All this in the Centrist parties led to a deepening cleavage

* *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaft, Politik und Arbeiterbewegung 1923-24*, Hamburg. S. 51. *Yezhegodnik Kominterna* (Comintern Yearbook), Petrograd-Moscow, 1923, pp. 54-55, 82-83.

* *The Times*, London, November 26, 1920, p. 14.

between the Leftward-moving rank and file and the Rightward-pulling leaders.

In Vienna in February 1921 the Centrist parties founded the International Association of Socialist Parties, the so-called Second-and-a-Half International. With the aid of revolutionary phraseology and repeated demagogic calls for unity, the Centrists used the Second-and-a-Half International to counteract the growing influence of the Communists among the masses.

The gentlemen of this International, wrote Lenin, "pose as revolutionaries; but in every serious situation they prove to be counter-revolutionaries because they shrink from the violent destruction of the old state machine; they have no faith in the forces of the working class."*

The split in the international working class caused by the treachery of the Social-Democratic leadership, and sabotage of the class struggle by the reformist leaders weakened the force of the proletariat and made it easier for the bourgeoisie to develop their all-out attack upon the working class. The bourgeoisie succeeded in administering a temporary defeat on the working class in the capitalist countries and decelerating the world revolutionary process, but it was powerless to stop that process. The general crisis of capitalism was further aggravated.

Despite the apparent signs of an ebb in the revolutionary tide as a result of the proletariat's defeat, the situation remained an objectively revolutionary one, and the "inflammable material" which had built up in the capitalist and colonial countries made possible a new revolutionary explosion.

The Founding of New Communist Parties

During this period, despite the more complex conditions of the class struggle, the process of differentiation in the ranks of the labour movement was intensified. As a result of the cleavage the best, most advanced elements of the socialist parties sided with communism.

The decisions of the Second Congress, especially the "21 Conditions", engendered heated debates within the parties who had expressed their desire to join the Third International while remaining essentially Centrist parties. A sharp struggle of the revolutionary wing against the opportunist, Centrist elements who refused to accept the "21 Conditions" developed in the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the French Socialist Party, the Italian Socialist Party and several other parties. The opportunists accused the Comintern and especially the R.C.P.(B.) of a tendency to "dictate", a desire to gear the labour movement to "the interests of Moscow". Lenin exposed this slander in a letter to the German and French workers in which he stated: "All the clamour about Moscow's 'dictates', etc., is simply a red herring. As a matter of fact, only five of the twenty members of the Communist International's Executive Committee belong to the Russian Communist Party. All this talk about 'dictates', etc., is either self-deception or deception of the workers."** The fact of the matter was that a struggle was going on between the revolutionary proletarian elements and the opportunist petty-bourgeois elements, who were implementing the influence of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat from within the proletarian party, subjecting the proletariat to bourgeois reformism. "Only a break with such and similar people can lead to *international unity* of the revolutionary proletariat *against* the bourgeoisie, and for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie."***

The exposure of the Centrists and their expulsion from the parties of the Third International were part and parcel of the process of formation of communist parties, the process of consolidation of the unity of the international communist movement.

In Germany, the revolutionary wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, with the help of the Communist Party of Germany, won the party rank and file to its side and at the Congress at Halle received the majority of votes, and got a resolution passed for joining the Comintern and uniting with the C.P.G. The Right elements walked out and split the Party. In December 1920, at its congress in Berlin, the Left wing of the I.S.D.P.G. united with the Communist Party, forming the United Communist Party of Germany (U.C.P.G.).**** The rallying of the revolutionary vanguard of the German proletariat and the transformation of the Communist Party of Germany within a short time into a mass party were a considerable achievement of the international com-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 25-26.

* Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 280.
** Ibid., p. 282.
*** In August 1921 the U.C.P.G. was renamed the Communist Party of Germany.

munist movement which had a strong impact on other countries. "The joint struggle of two workers' parties of a highly industrialised country led to their amalgamation into a single party on a revolutionary basis."*

The Congress of the French Socialist Party opened at Tours at the end of December 1920. It was preceded by an intense struggle of the revolutionary elements within the Party for the adoption of a Marxist-Leninist stand and the acceptance of the "21 Conditions". Under the influence and with the help of the Comintern the Congress adopted decisions which enabled the Party to take up at last a revolutionary stand and assume the character of a genuine communist party. Marcel Cachin, who, after his visit to Soviet Russia and talks with Lenin became a dedicated revolutionary, was an active promoter of the Comintern line and indefatigable builder of the Communist Party of France. Clara Zetkin, who arrived at the Tours Congress illegally, appealed to the Congress on behalf of the Comintern Executive to take up a revolutionary stand in the class struggle and to form a communist party. "In order to go forward," she said, "you must create a strong, united, centralised and well-disciplined party and clearly announce your adherence to the Third International."**

By a three-quarter majority of votes the Congress decided to join the Communist International. It adopted a manifesto, read out by Paul Vaillant-Couturier, which said: "The Congress at Tours will be a memorable date in the long and glorious history of socialism in France. In restoring for us the authentic conceptions of Marx and Engels, their doctrines, once sacred to us but all too often forgotten by us in practice, this Congress at the same time teaches us in future to adapt our methods and actions to the requirements of the new period, to the obligations imperiously imposed upon us by the world revolutionary crisis.... May our Party be strong, disciplined and authoritative not only for its rank and file but also for its leaders!"***

The Congress at Tours provided the conditions for linking the French labour movement with Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party broke with the reformist and opportunist policy of the Right-wingers and Centrists and took the historical stage as heir to the

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* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 3, Von 1917 bis 1923. Berlin, 1966, S. 311.

** Quoted from: Jacques Duclos, *Octobre 17 vu de France*, Paris, 1967, p. 312.

*** Ibid., pp. 315-16.

revolutionary traditions of the French proletariat. From the very first day of its existence the Party was a mass organisation enjoying wide influence among the working class and possessing a solid base in a number of rural areas. At the same time the Party still had to rid itself of a number of survivals of social-democratism if it was to become a genuine party of revolutionary action. The opportunist minority decided to split the Party and set up a socialist party.

During the same period there was created the Communist Party of Italy. In 1920 the Socialist Party of Italy was a member of the Third International, but it was not in a position to take the lead of the revolutionary movement in the country. It lacked an inner ideological and organisational unity, a firm political discipline. It failed to take a correct line of action both in a situation of revolutionary upsurge and under conditions of a bourgeois onset and fascist activity. In addition to its revolutionary wing, the party had in it overt opportunists, and the leadership was controlled by a Centrist group. The reformist Right wing came out against the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and acceptance of the "21 Conditions", and the Centrist leadership refused to break with the reformists. A profound crisis was coming to a head within the party as a result of the leadership's failure to grasp the necessity of a radical renovation of the party and its transformation into a genuinely revolutionary proletarian party, which was impossible unless it was purged of the reformists. At the Congress at Livorno in January 1921, after the Centrist group, which had an absolute majority, had refused to break with the reformists, the Communists walked out and founded the Communist Party of Italy. The Comintern Executive announced its recognition of the new Party as the section of the Third International in Italy. The founding of the Communist Party was an outstanding event in the history of the Italian labour movement. The country received a real revolutionary party of the working class based ideologically on Marxism-Leninism. However, only a minority of the membership of the former Socialist Party joined the Communist Party. Many revolutionary workers remained in the old party. The leadership of the Communist Party fell into the hands of the Bordiga sectarian group. The *Ordine Nuovo* group headed by Antonio Gramsci, Palmiro Togliatti and Umberto Terracini, which took a Marxist-Leninist stand, leaned only on the Turin organisation and had less influence in the socialist movement than the supporters of Bordiga. They were therefore unable to assume the leadership of the newly organised Party at the outset. At its very inception the

Party had to wage a difficult struggle against the onset of fascism, which was assuming countrywide proportions.

On May 8, 1921, the Congress of the Socialist Party of Rumania by an overwhelming majority carried a resolution to have the party renamed the Communist Party and join the Third International. The Congress was preceded by active work of the communist group within the party, which succeeded in winning over the majority of the organisations. The reactionaries tried to smash the party. Many of the Congress delegates were arrested and thrown into prison, but despite all repressions the Communist Party still carried on.

The same month saw the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. After a hard fight by the revolutionary wing of the Social-Democratic Party—the Marxist Left, headed by Bohumir Šmeral, to get the party to join the Communist International, the absolute majority of the party membership sided with the Marxist Left. The Right leaders opted for a split, after which the Marxist Left, in September 1920, formed a separate party, which expressed its agreement in principle with the Comintern line and authorised its Central Committee to negotiate its affiliation to the Third International. The Congress of the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party (Left) passed a resolution in May 1921 to join the Comintern and rename the party the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. This Party arose as a mass party, which, at its inception, had a membership second only to the Communist Parties of Russia and Germany.

The year 1921 saw the founding of Communist Parties in China, South Africa, Belgium, Canada, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Palestine, Portugal and New Zealand. In 1922 they were formed in Brazil, Japan and Chile; in 1923 in Norway. The growth of the world communist movement drew from Lenin the conclusion that "the Communist International, since its Second Congress in Moscow last summer, has become part and parcel of the working-class movement in all the major advanced countries of Europe—more than that, it has become the chief factor in international politics."*

The formation of communist parties was a great achievement of the revolutionary workers. It marked an historic turning point in the development of the labour movement in these countries. In the person of the communist parties the masses now had a consistently revolutionary, militant vanguard.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 167.

To Win the Masses— the Basic Task of the Communist Parties

In working out their strategic and tactical line, the Comintern and the communist parties proceeded from an analysis of the general crisis of capitalism, the changes in the international situation, the balance of class forces in the world as a whole and in the separate countries, the experience of the revolutionary battles of the past, and the causes of the defeat of the working class in the capitalist countries during 1918-1920.

The onset of the bourgeoisie, which threw the working class onto the defensive, raised new problems before the communist parties. It became an urgent task of the proletariat and its revolutionary organisations to stand up for the pressing demands of the masses and their economic interests, to uphold and widen the democratic freedoms, the social and political gains which the workers had won during the period of revolutionary upsurge, to combat the danger of new wars, to defend the Soviet Union, and make more thorough preparations for the revolutionary battles to come. Success depended upon the extent to which the workers were able to close their ranks. The primary task of the communist parties, therefore, was to carry on painstaking, day-to-day work in organising the forces of the proletariat. The attack of the bourgeoisie affected all sections of the working people, and was spearheaded above all against the working class as a whole. Therefore, all the workers, irrespective of their political views and trade union membership, were concerned in repelling this attack. This created the objective possibility of achieving unity of action by the different contingents of the working class.

A serious obstacle to the spread of communist influence among the masses was the small membership and inexperience of most of the parties. At the beginning of 1921, according to preliminary data, the communist parties [without the R.C.P.(B.)] numbered in their ranks about 760,000 members.*

With the formation of new communist parties and the general growth of their membership the international communist movement registered a considerable increase by the summer of 1921. According to the information of the Mandate Commission of the Third Congress of the Comintern the membership increased to

* *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaft, Politik und Arbeiterbewegung 1923-24*, Hamburg, S. 51.

2,238,000, of which 722,000 were members of the R.C.P.(B.) and 1,516,000 were members of the parties in the capitalist countries.* The influence of the communist parties on the proletarian masses increased considerably. The bulk of the proletariat, however, still followed the lead of the Social-Democratic parties and other reformist organisations.

The young communist parties lacked experience and skill in working with the masses. They did not always correctly understand the tasks of preparing the masses for class battles under the new conditions. Lenin wrote in 1921: "We have an army of Communists all over the world. It is still poorly trained and poorly organised. It would be extremely harmful to forget this truth or be afraid of admitting it. Submitting ourselves to a most careful and rigorous test, and studying the experience of our own movement, we must train this army efficiently; we must organise it properly, and test it in all sorts of manoeuvres, all sorts of battles, in attack and in retreat. We cannot win without this long and hard schooling."**

With the help of the Comintern the fraternal parties determined ways and means for uniting the labour masses and pooling experience to enrich the collective experience of the whole communist movement. An important initiative and new approach in organising the workers to repulse the onset of capitalism was demonstrated by the Communists of Germany. At the beginning of 1921 the Communist Party tackled the problem of wider work among the masses head-on. In the drive to secure unity of action among the working class, it focussed attention on the everyday economic demands of the working people as well as on the demands aimed at defending and extending democratic rights and freedoms. The Party started regular work in the trade unions and other mass proletarian organisations and made active use of the rostrum of parliament to explain its aims and rally the masses. On

* These figures are not quite accurate, as the communist parties in those days did not keep a systematic register of members, and sometimes the members of revolutionary trade unions were included in their numbers. The handbook *5 let Kominterna v resheniyakh i tsifrakh* (Five Years of the Comintern: Decisions and Figures), Moscow, 1924, pp. 26-27, compiled by A. Tivel estimates the membership of the communist parties at the time of the Third Congress at 1,963,000, of which the R.C.P.(B.) accounted for 643,000 and the communist parties in the capitalist countries for 1,320,000 members. In November 1921, according to the figures of the E.C.C.I., the communist parties had a membership of 2,000,000, of which the R.C.P.(B.) accounted for 674,000 and the foreign parties for 1,326,000. (*Pravda*, November 13, 1921.)

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 520.

January 8, 1921, the Central Committee of the U.C.P.G. published an Open Letter to all proletarian organisations in the country—to the Social-Democratic and Independent Social-Democratic parties, to the Communist Workers' Party and trade union organisations—calling upon them to wage a joint fight for the pressing demands of the workers and the non-proletarian masses, and against the increasing attacks of reaction. The Letter proposed launching a fight for higher wages, pensions, etc., against the rising cost of living, for the immediate requisition of vacant premises and for improving the housing conditions of the workers, and for workers' control over the production and distribution of food and raw materials. A slogan was also put forward calling for immediate disarmament and the disbandment of all counter-revolutionary organisations, the setting up of organisations of proletarian self-defence, an amnesty and the release of political prisoners and the immediate establishment of diplomatic and trade relations with Soviet Russia. This document evoked a wide response among the German workers. Meetings approving the initiative of the Communists and demanding acceptance of their proposals by the Social-Democrats were held in many cities and industrial centres throughout the country. These proposals, however, were rejected by the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, the "Independents" and the reformist trade unions. The anti-communism of the Right leaders of Social-Democracy and the trade unions was a serious barrier to united action of the working class. A sharply negative attitude to the Open Letter was taken by the ultra-Left Communist Workers' Party of Germany, which regarded it as a sinking into the mire of reformism. By renouncing the mass struggle of the people, the sectarians of the C.W.P. virtually rejected the very idea of any serious revolutionary work among the masses.

The Growing Left-Opportunist Danger Within the Communist Movement

The Open Letter of the U.C.P.G. which was an important step towards the unity of the working class, attracted great attention in the international communist movement. The disputes which it raised in the Comintern reflected the feeling and views of the Communists as regards the prospects of further development of the

class struggle in the capitalist countries, and the tasks and methods of the communist parties' activity among the masses. The opportunist elements in the communist parties were inclined towards concessions of principle to social-reformism, towards rejecting the idea of preparing the masses for revolution. The communist parties and the Comintern had to combat the opportunist survivals of social-democratism, the reformist and Centrist deviations which had become manifest in the activities of some of the communist parties.

At the same time, erroneous sectarian views obtained wide currency in the communist parties, expressed in a failure to grasp the significance of defending the everyday needs of the workers and uniting the working class in this struggle; in a denial of the need for contacts with the Social-Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions, whose lead most of the workers were following. In some communist parties support was lent to views which represented a variety of petty-bourgeois revolutionism. Very often, through inexperience, young Communists "instead of soberly weighing up the situation that was not very favourable for immediate and direct revolutionary action... vigorously indulged in the waving of little red flags."*

The "Lefts" denied the beginning of an ebb in the revolutionary tide, demanded immediate revolutionary action and rejected the need for winning the working masses over to the side of the communist parties in the belief that action by an active minority played a decisive role. These views were all the more dangerous at a time of revolutionary ebb tide, when the communist parties enjoyed the support of only a minority of the working class. The policy of the "Lefts", under the new conditions, became the main danger within the communist movement; it spelt defeat for the revolutionary proletariat in premature action and led to the isolation of the communist parties.

The situation was complicated by the fact that some of the views of the "Lefts" against the Open Letter were shared by G. Zinoviev, Chairman of the Comintern Executive, and N. Bukharin, member of the Executive. During the discussion of the tactics of the U.C.P.G. at the Executive meeting of February 22, 1921, Zinoviev called the Open Letter an artificial device and condemned the tactics proposed in the Open Letter as entirely impracticable. The Communists, he said, should not seek any agreement with other workers' parties. Bukharin regarded the Open Letter

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 208.

as a "non-revolutionary act". Drawing a line between the fight in defence of the everyday interests of the workers and the revolutionary policy of the party, Bukharin said that the U.C.P.G. was shirking the real struggle and hatching artificial plans.

This stand taken by Zinoviev and Bukharin threatened to wreck the new political line of the communist parties and contributed to the spread of sectarian Leftist views in the communist parties. In revealing this danger, Lenin vigorously intervened in the discussion of the Open Letter, which he warmly supported. In a letter to Clara Zetkin and Paul Levi, he wrote: "The only thing I have seen is the Open Letter, which I think is *perfectly correct* tactics (I have condemned the contrary opinion of our 'Lefts' who were opposed to this letter)."* Lenin regarded the letter of the U.C.P.G. as a correct attempt to set up a united proletarian front. He repeatedly urged the importance of other parties adopting the tactics proposed in the Open Letter, which he called "a model political step.... It is a model because it is the first act of a practical method of winning over the majority of the working class."**

Lenin's vigorous defence of the Open Letter and opposition to "Left" sectarianism were occasioned by the extreme danger which the spread of sectarian adventurist views by the "Lefts" represented. Exaggeration of the masses' readiness for revolution and refusal of the "Lefts" to soberly weigh the objective chances of the class struggle, to correctly define the necessary tasks and methods of work under conditions of ebb in the revolutionary tide and the mounted attack of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat—all this not only led to a dangerous isolation of the communist vanguard from the masses, but threatened the very existence of the communist parties.

The "Lefts" offered the so-called "theory of offensive" as an alternative to the tactics of struggle to unite the working class. This theory stated that the communist parties were always to apply offensive tactics, to go over to armed offensive and wage "vanguard fights" in every case, no matter what the objective conditions were. There were adherents of this theory among the German, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Italian, Austrian and French Communists.

The discussion of this "theory of offensive" was most acute after the March events of 1921 in Germany. The counter-revolution,

* Ibid., Vol. 45, p. 124.
** Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 470.

it will be remembered, with the help of the Right leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, provoked the workers of Central Germany, where communist influence was strong, to an armed rising. On March 19, on the order of Otto Hörsing, Oberpräsident of the Province of Saxony, police were brought into the factories and this was strongly resented by the workers. Clashes with the police and protest strikes developed into armed battles. The Communist Party and the working class of Germany were not prepared for an armed uprising all over the country; the fight was confined to the area of Central Germany (mainly the territory of Mansfeld). Despite the heroism of the revolutionary workers, led by the Communists, they suffered a heavy defeat. At that time the leadership of the U.C.P.G. was controlled by sectarian elements, who viewed the March events as the beginning of a general revolutionary uprising which the Party was to bring about among the masses. "The adventurist, subjectivist policy accruing from the 'theory of offensive', played into the hands of the class enemy."*

At this time a stab in the back was given to the Communist Party by P. Levi, who had resigned from the C.C. of the U.C.P.G. in February 1921. After the March events he came out in print accusing the Party and the Comintern of putschism, and thus supplying the bourgeoisie and Social-Democrats with an argument for hounding the Communists. The C.C. of the U.C.P.G. expelled Levi from the Party for gross breach of party discipline and for the harm caused by the publication of his slanderous pamphlet. Levi's demagogic action made it more difficult to combat the Left-sectarian views of the leadership.

The "theory of offensive" weakened the influence of the Party among the working class and threatened to isolate it from the masses. It was necessary as quickly as possible to overcome Left opportunism, which had become the main obstacle to the Communists' effective work among the masses. This is what some communist parties, as well as Zinoviev, Bukharin and Radek, failed to understand. They still saw the danger only in Right opportunism and were opposed to any change in the tactics of the Comintern. This tended to strengthen sectarian moods in the communist parties, a hard fight against which confronted the Third Congress of the Communist International.

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* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 3, Von 1917 bis 1923. Brl., 1966, S. 327-28.

Preparations for the Third Congress of the Comintern

The international communist movement was faced with the necessity of readjusting its tactics to the requirements of the new phase in world development. The representatives of many communist parties took an active part in the preparations for the Third Congress. Already at this stage a sharp discussion was started with those who wished put through the idea of the "theory of offensive" in the decisions of the Congress.

Béla Kun and C.C. member of the U.C.P.G. August Thalheimer, both active supporters of this "theory", drafted theses on tactics, which affirmed that the Comintern had already completed the propagandist period of mustering strength and now had to proceed to a new period—a period of action. Theses were also drafted by Radek, who afterwards introduced a number of corrections by way of concession to the "Lefts". Lenin's comment, on receiving these drafts, was that the Kun-Thalheimer theses were incorrect politically and were a playing at "Leftism". He examined in detail the shortcomings of Radek's draft, especially what he called the "concessions to 'Leftist' silliness". Lenin sharply criticised Radek for omitting to mention in his original draft the necessity of "winning the majority of the working class" and using instead the phrase "winning the *socially decisive sections* of the working class". Lenin wrote: "To weaken here, in such a context, the necessity of winning precisely the *majority* of the working class 'to the principles of communism', is the height of absurdity. To win power, you need, *under certain conditions* (even when the *majority* of the working class have already been won over *to the principles of communism*) *a blow* dealt at the decisive place by the majority of the socially decisive sections of the working class."* "None of the communist parties anywhere have yet won the majority (of the working class), not only as regards organisational leadership, but to the principles of communism as well. This is the basis of everything. To 'weaken' this foundation of the only reasonable tactic is *criminal irresponsibility*."**

Lenin formulated the main idea of the theses: "The tactics of the Communist International should be based on a steady and

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 319-20.
** Ibid., p. 320.

systematic drive to win the *majority of the working class*, first and foremost *within the OLD trade unions*. Then we shall win for certain, whatever the course of events. As for 'winning' for a short time in an exceptionally happy turn of events—any fool can do that.... Hence: the tactic of the Open Letter should definitely be applied everywhere."* This clear-cut conclusion of Lenin's formed the basis of the Communist International's strategic line eventuallv adopted by the Congress. Lenin repeatedly stressed the fact that the theses had to contain a warning against the communist parties prematurely accepting general battle imposed by the bourgeoisie, against playing at "Leftism". He insisted on having the theses fully reveal the concrete mistakes of the U.C.P.G. during the March events of 1921 and forcefully warn against a repetition of these mistakes. The draft theses on tactic were revised in accordance with Lenin's comments, discussed at preliminary meetings with a number of communist party delegations and submitted to the Congress in the name of the R.C.P.(B.). "It is, of course, no secret that our theses are a compromise," Lenin said at the Congress. "And why not? Among Communists, who have already convened their Third Congress and have worked out definite fundamental principles, compromises under certain conditions are necessary. Our theses, put forward by the Russian delegation, were studied and prepared in the most careful way and were the result of long arguments and meetings with various delegations."**

The new tasks facing the labour movement called for the strengthening of the young communist parties organisationally, for improved principles of party building, improved methods of party work. The theses on this question were drafted by O. Kuusinen. He sent Lenin part of an article he had written on the organisational question together with the theses on which the article was based. Lenin approved them and suggested that he prepare a report to the Congress, which, Lenin thought advisable, should be made by a delegate of the German Communist Party.***

Lenin advised underlining in these theses that in most of the legal parties in the West "there is no *everyday* work (*revolutionary* work) by *every* member of the Party. This is the chief drawback. To change this is the most difficult job of all. *But this is the most important.*"****

* V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 321.
** Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 468.
*** Ibid., Vol. 45, pp. 185-86.
**** Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 317.

Lenin also recommended a more detailed wording for the duties of the Communists "*among the mass* of the unorganised proletariat and of the proletariat organised in the yellow trade unions (including the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals) *and the non-proletarian* sections of the *working people*".* Lenin's recommendations and remarks persistently urged Communists to work in the very midst of the masses, to rally them behind the communist parties, in whom they had a champion of their most vital interests. The communist parties could not shut themselves up within the narrow circle of the most politically alert section of the proletariat; they had to carry on work among the broadest sections of the masses, giving special attention to the workers who belonged to reformist parties and organisations. Lenin's advice helped the communist parties to realise the need for the tactics of a united proletarian front. Kuusinen revised the theses with the help of the German Communist Wilhelm Koenen, who addressed the Congress on this question.

Of great importance in the matter of preparing new decisions was the task of summing up the experience of the practical activities of every section of the Comintern. The representatives of the communist parties tried to familiarise the fraternal parties with their own conclusions and views, thus contributing to the collective working out of the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement. The young communist parties made a specially careful study of the experience of the R.C.P.(B.) on which they modelled their own activities.

The Russian Communist Party considered it its international duty to give an account of its activities to the collective organ of the international proletariat—the Congress of the Comintern. On behalf of the R.C.P.(B.)'s Central Committee, Lenin drew up the theses for a report on the tactics of the R.C.P.(B.). For a better understanding of the policy of the R.C.P.(B.) the Congress delegates were supplied with German, English and French translations of Lenin's article "The Tax in Kind" which was published in the journal *The Communist International.*

Meetings of the E.C.C.I. were held on the eve of the Congress at which the situation in various parties was analysed. Lenin's meetings and talks with the delegates were of great importance. The most pressing problems of the communist movement were discussed, and since the approach to these questions on the part of some representatives betrayed a tendency to avoid the everyday

* Ibid., p. 318.

painstaking work among the masses necessitated by the prevailing situation and replace it instead by "revolutionary" slogans and appeals for action, these discussions were often of an acute nature.

The German Communist Fritz Heckert recalled one such meeting at which Lenin asked the delegates of the U.C.P.G.: "'What did you imagine the workers would think if you led them into battle and they got the kind of thrashing they did in Mansfeld?' Koenen answered: 'The workers learn from the blows they get.'

"'Even now, when they are unemployed?' Lenin countered, to which Koenen answered: 'Then the stomach will electrify their brain with revolutionary energy.'

"Lenin seized on this expression to ridicule our entire stand on these questions. Every time he proved to us, on any question, the error and danger of our position, he invariably added: 'Well, of course, it's because your brain is electrified by your stomach....'"*

Lenin supported Clara Zetkin, who sharply criticised the "theory of offensive" and the Leftist mistakes of the U.C.P.G. leadership during the March events.

Preparatory to the Congress, the activities of the French Communist Party were discussed at the E.C.C.I. meetings of June 16-18, 1921. The "Leftists" attacked the leadership of the French Communist Party for its poor work among the youth, and especially for the article in *L'Humanité* urging Communists to "keep cool and maintain discipline". They were sharply rebuffed by Lenin. Those who think that there exist only Right opportunist errors are mistaken, he said. There were "Left" errors as well. If you follow the advice of the "Lefts" "you will kill the revolutionary movement...".** The French Party was to be criticised, but this criticism should apply to definite, wrong, opportunist actions of the Party; it should not be attacked indiscriminately, should not be split and offered other "Left" stupidities to counteract opportunist actions. "Marxism," Lenin explained, "consists in being able to determine what policy to pursue in certain conditions."*** "There is only one way of preventing the victory of communism in France, Britain or Germany—and that is by committing Leftist stupidities. If we continue our fight against opportunism without going to extremes we are sure to win."**** With the masses getting closer to us, we must win the trade unions, Lenin

* *Vospominaniya o Lenine* (Reminiscences About Lenin), Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 621.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/19320/12.
*** *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Biografiya*, Moscow, 1967, p. 684.
**** C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/19320/13.

said. If we win them, he went on, it will be our greatest victory. The thing is first of all to win a majority. Only after that can we start making the revolution waging a fight against opportunism and Left stupidities.

"Lenin's speech clarified the situation for the delegates," the Bulgarian Communist V. Kolarov writes in his reminiscences. "It made them feel that it was the great leader of the world revolution who had spoken, that he was fully confident of victory and holding the helm of the Communist International strongly in his hands."*

Questions concerning the communist movement in Czechoslovakia were discussed at the Executive's meetings shortly before the Congress. In view of the fact that the process of formation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia passed through several stages (at first the establishment of the Left wing into a separate party to which the majority of members of the former Social-Democratic Party were admitted, then the refounding of this Left party into the Communist Party) the policy of its leadership, especially of B. Šmeral, came in for sharp criticism on the part of the "Left" elements in the Comintern and members of the German section of the C.P.C., which was set up in March 1921. The "Leftists" ascribed to Šmeral what was nothing short of deliberate resistance to the formation of the C.P.C. They proclaimed him a Centrist and demanded his removal from the leadership of the C.P.C. They did not understand that it was due to the flexible policy of the Marxist Left leadership headed by Šmeral that the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia succeeded in preserving its mass character. At the same time Šmeral committed certain errors in his activities, notably in regard to the datings of the C.P.C.'s amalgamation with the German section. Lenin defended Šmeral and got the erroneous definition of Šmeral as being a supporter of the Centre expunged from the text of the Third Congress theses on tactics. Lenin, however, pointed out that the amalgamation of the C.P.C. and the German section had been dragged out unnecessarily.** He expressed the desire that the Czech comrades should define their position more clearly. Later on Lenin made a careful study of Šmeral's report at the Inaugural Congress. He underlined the report's basic propositions and expressed his agreement

* *They Knew Lenin. Reminiscences of Foreign Contemporaries*, Moscow, p. 74.
** The Unity Congress of the C.P.C. and the German section was held during October 30-November 4, 1921.

with Šmeral's argumentation on questions concerning the importance of the party's mass character, the need for a flexible policy and for winning allies over to the side of the working class. Lenin underscored the following passages in the text of this report:

"The Central European bourgeoisie have passed through the first critical moment since their military defeat and have started anew on building up the old machine of exploitation ... the social-patriots come out at the crucial moment as the direct defenders of capitalism.... These parties are organised in mass parties and we can win against them and against the capitalists only if we become a great Communist Party, a party of the masses...."

Lenin's attention was drawn also to Šmeral's words to the effect that in order to win the masses "a tactic of calm explanation, tolerance and patience was necessary", words emphasising the importance of a considerate attitude towards the national feelings of the workers, and the religious beliefs of the poor in Slovakia. Lenin underlined the passage in the report which stated that the party should support "the active movement of the masses, strikes, protest demonstrations, even riots, evoked by the food shortage, protest demonstrations against concrete acts of violence, against reaction", that the party should always be with the masses and itself organise action by the masses in support of concrete demands in keeping with the requirements of the masses. Lenin expressed his complete agreement with Šmeral who deprecated "the desire to create artificially an embattled situation without regard to conditions" and stated that "the strongest protest should be made in principle against such tactics". Lenin also marked off some erroneous theses in Šmeral's report, notably his objections to the immediate amalgamation with the German section of the C.P.C. and several other erroneous propositions.* Lenin's analysis of the text of Šmeral's report demonstrates the thoroughness with which he studied the experience of the communist parties and the care he took to have this experience used in working out the correct political line, strategy and tactics of the Comintern.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/20565/2, 5, 7, 8.

THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Congress on Communist Party Tactics

The Third Congress of the Communist International opened in Moscow on June 22, 1921. Delegates from the communist parties of 48 countries and 28 youth leagues and a number of other proletarian organisations (altogether 605 delegates from 103 organisations of 52 countries attended the Congress) gathered in order by their collective effort to determine the policy of the Comintern and its sections under the changed conditions and deal with a number of other pressing problems concerning the development of the international communist movement. The agenda of the Congress contained the following items: the world economic crisis and the new tasks of the Comintern; discussion of the Executive Committee's report, tactics of the Comintern, tactics of the R.C.P., organisation of the Comintern and its sections; questions of the trade union, co-operative, youth and women's movements; the situation in some communist parties, and sundry items. The problems of the international situation and the strategy and tactics of the communist parties were the high point of the Congress debates. Lenin addressed the Congress three times: once in a report on the tactics of the R.C.P. and in speeches on the Italian question and in defence of the tactics of the Communist International.

The Congress recorded the fact that the first period of the revolutionary movement after the war, characterised by spontaneous pressure of the masses, considerable lack of cohesion in methods and aims and ruling class panic, was largely consummated. The bourgeoisie in all countries had passed over to the offensive against the working masses on both the economic and political fronts. A hitch and a slowing down were to be observed on a world scale in the proletariat's revolutionary struggle for power. Capitalist post-war equilibrium, however, had not been restored.

Since capitalism depended for its stability upon increased exploitation, the workers were constantly compelled to resort to strikes and other forms of the class struggle. The situation in the capitalist countries remained objectively a revolutionary one, but the revolutionary movement was in a phase of retreat. "The fun-

damental task of the Communist Party in the current crisis is to conduct, extend, widen and unite the present defensive fight of the proletariat and sharpen it towards the political final struggle in accordance with the course of evolution.'"* It followed from this evaluation of the situation and the prospects of the revolutionary movement's further development that allowance had to be made for a prolonged drive in preparation for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, that more thorough preparations for the revolution and a deep study of the concrete development of the class struggle in the capitalist countries had to be made in order to be able to apply the basic revolutionary principles to the specific conditions of the respective countries. "The more organised the proletariat is in a capitalistically developed country, the greater thoroughness does history demand of us in preparing for revolution, and the more thoroughly must we win over the majority of the working class,"** Lenin said at the Congress. On the strength of this it was necessary to dispose of "Left" illusions, which held that the world revolution was uninterruptedly going forward at its initial tempestuous pace, that "we are on the crest of the second revolutionary wave" and that the victory of the revolution depends entirely upon the will of the communist parties and their activity.***

Lenin and such prominent leaders of the communist parties as Zetkin, Kuusinen, Kolarov, Šmeral, Jacquemotte, Minor (Ballister) and many others who supported him, urged the Congress to adopt decisions in keeping with the state and tasks of the international communist movement. Carrying through this line was no easy job, as a large part of the delegates had come to the Congress in a mood for securing approval for the "theory of offensive" and making it the keystone of the communist parties' further activities. The young Communists who upheld these views were by and large honest and dedicated people, who misunderstood what the chief aim of their parties should be at the given stage and whose "Left" mistakes were due to revolutionary zeal and inexperience. It was a discussion among comrades-in-arms, among people with identical political views who were agreed among themselves on the main point, namely, the necessity of working for a proletarian revolution, but who disagreed as to the methods and ways of the struggle. The Congress was attended in a consultative non-voting capacity by a small group of "ultra-Leftists" who took an extreme

* *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International (June 22nd-July 12th, 1921)* Moscow, 1921, p. 15.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 481.
*** *O Lenine. Vospominaniya zarubezhnykh sovremennikov*, p. 45.

sectarian and adventurist stand. They were the delegates from the Communist Workers' Party of Germany and the Dutch "Left" with a strong anarcho-syndicalist bias.

Leftist tendencies appeared also in Zinoviev's report on the activities of the E.C.C.I. In spite of Lenin's recommendations that attention should be focussed on strengthening the communist parties' ties with the masses, on winning over the majority of the working class and rectifying "Left stupidities" in the activities of the parties, Zinoviev orientated the delegates chiefly on stepping up the fight against the Right and Centrist elements within the communist parties. He affirmed that this fight was the "chief task".* A number of delegates from various communist parties (Edigio Gennari and Umberto Terracini, Italy; Fritz Heckert and Wilhelm Koenen, Germany; and Mathias Rakosi, Hungary) demanded that the fight against the Centrist and semi-Centrist elements should be stepped up to the utmost and that they should be expelled from the communist parties, wrongly including among these elements people who urged the need for the communist parties applying a more flexible policy. The "Leftists", in fact, identified the attitude to the opportunist and Centrist leaders of the Social-Democrats with the attitude towards those former Social-Democrats who had joined the communist parties but had not yet discarded the burden of former concepts and prejudices. It was a question, therefore, not of re-educating the new communist party members, but of fighting mechanically "for the purity" of the communist parties and expelling from them everybody who had not yet got rid of his erroneous views. The speeches of the "Left", in effect, repudiated the need for working to give the communist parties a mass character. They failed to grasp the importance of reorganising the work of the communist parties in order to win over the masses, failed to understand the decisive importance of winning the masses over to the side of the revolution. This, in Lenin's opinion, was the crux of the whole matter as far as the international communist movement was concerned. ". . .Some of the best and most influential sections of the Communist International did not quite properly understand this task; *they exaggerated* the 'struggle against Centrism' *ever so slightly*; they *went ever so slightly beyond* the border line at which this struggle turns into a pastime and revolutionary Marxism begins to be compromised. . . .

* *III Usemirny Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. Stenograficheski otchet* (The Third World Congress of the Communist International. Verbatim Report), Petrograd, 1922, pp. 85, 86, 101.

"The exaggeration was a slight one; but the danger arising out of it was enormous."* And "exaggeration, if not corrected, was sure to kill the Communist International".** "Exaggeration of the struggle against Centrism means *saving* Centrism, means *strengthening* its position, its influence over the workers."***

In fighting Right opportunism and "Left" sectarians, the communist party, said Lenin, should make the fullest possible use of the revolutionary experience already accumulated, first and foremost the experience of the Bolsheviks. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the experience of the Bolshevik Party and the October Revolution was of a world-wide significance and that the tactics of the Bolsheviks served as a model for the whole international communist movement. At the same time he warned against this experience being blindly copied and stereotyped. He stressed at the Congress that "We never wanted Serrati in Italy to copy the Russian revolution. That would have been stupid. We are intelligent and flexible enough to avoid such stupidity."****

The first stage in the rise of the communist party, Lenin said, was a serious, complete, unequivocal and decisive break with reformism. "The second stage is by no means a repetition of revolutionary slogans. It will be the adoption of our wise and skilful decisions, which will always be such, and which will always say: fundamental revolutionary principles must be adapted to the specific conditions in the various countries."*****

Lenin drew the attention of Communists to the need for employing flexible and cautious tactics while at the same time strongly warning that this by no means signified repudiation of revolutionary struggle. "If anyone, after a struggle in which hundreds of thousands have taken part, comes out against this struggle and behaves like Levi, then he should be expelled."****** When the need for co-ordinating the struggle among the workers of different countries is interpreted as meaning that a country with a smaller population is to wait until another more wealthy and populous country acts, then this, said Lenin, was downright deception. "Co-ordination should consist in comrades from other countries knowing exactly what moments are significant. The really important

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 520.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., p. 521.
**** Ibid., p. 466.
***** Ibid., p. 465.
****** Ibid., p. 473.

interpretation of co-ordination is this: the best and quickest imitation of a good example."*

The Congress stated that the communist parties, including that of Czechoslovakia, had to "do away with all Centrist traditions and moods".** At a meeting with delegates from the German, Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Italian communist parties, Lenin said: "What worries us now is this: will things really come to the stage of preparation for the offensive in Czechoslovakia, or will they be confined merely to talk about difficulties."***

If the mistake "pertains to the resolution to act, then this is by no means a small mistake, it is a betrayal.... The theory that we shall make a revolution, but only after others have acted first, is utterly fallacious."****

On July 1 the newspaper *Moskau*, organ of the Third Congress, published amendments to the draft theses on tactics over the signatures of the German, Austrian and Italian delegations. They contained no criticism of the mistakes made by the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany during the March events and proposed the acceptance of the "theory of offensive" and the deletion of everything that was sharply directed against the tendencies shown by the "impatient and politically inexperienced revolutionary elements". The amendments proposed that the word "majority" be deleted in the phrase about the communist parties winning over the majority of the working class to the principles of communism, and that mention of the Open Letter be struck out. These amendments proposed by the three delegations and seconded by the delegation of the German section of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the majority of the Hungarian delegation and the delegates of the Young Communist International, greatly sharpened the discussion at the Congress.

In his speech at the Congress on July 1 Lenin formulated the principles upon which the Comintern's tactics were based and revealed the danger of "Left" opportunism to the communist movement. "If the Congress is not going to wage a vigorous offensive against such errors, against such 'Leftist' stupidities, the whole movement is doomed. That is my deep conviction,"***** Lenin said. The theses on tactics were aimed at establishing the

* Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 328.
** *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International (June 22nd-July 12th, 1921)*, Moscow, 1921, p. 22.
*** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 328.
**** Ibid.
***** Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 468.

Comintern's basic line and were needed more than ever now after the Communists had not only formally condemned the real Centrists, but had expelled them from the party. Lenin reminded the Congress that the slogan at the First and Second congresses had been "Down with the Centrists". The vigorous fight against the Centrist leaders had won over to the Comintern the revolutionary-minded members of the Centrist parties in Germany, France and other countries. We had to go further, Lenin said. "Now we must deal with another aspect, which we also consider dangerous."* "We are confronted now by other, more important questions than that of attacks on the Centrists."** "Instead, the comrades ought to learn to wage a real revolutionary struggle."*** "We must not engage in empty word-spinning but must immediately begin to learn, on the basis of the mistakes made, how to organise the struggle better."****

Lenin emphasised that the "Leftist" tendency so strikingly demonstrated in the amendments to the theses had become so harmful and dangerous that "a relentless fight against this trend is essential, for otherwise there is no communism and no Communist International."***** The negative attitude of the "Leftists" to the task of winning over the majority of the working class and their opposition to the Open Letter, which they alleged to be opportunistic, was described by Lenin as a disgraceful attitude for Communists to take. "In Europe, where almost all the proletarians are organised, we must win the majority of the working class and anyone who fails to understand this is lost to the communist movement. . . ."****** In putting the case for the theses of winning over the majority of the working class, the majority of the working people in general, Lenin said: "In Russia, we were a small party, but we had with us in addition the majority of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country. . . . Do you have anything of the sort? We had with us almost half the army, which then numbered at least ten million men. Do you really have the majority of the army behind you? Show me such a country!"******* "If it is said that we were victorious in Russia in spite of not having a big party, that only proves that those who say

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 477.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid.
**** Ibid.
***** Ibid., p. 469.
****** Ibid., p. 470.
******* Ibid., p. 471.

it have not understood the Russian revolution and that they have absolutely no understanding of how to prepare for a revolution."*

Impressing on the Congress delegates the need for winning over the broad masses, Lenin pointed out that the concept "masses" was itself a variable one, affected by the changes in the nature of the struggle. In the early stages of the struggle several thousand revolutionaries were enough to justify the use of the word mass. If the party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it succeeds in rousing the non-party people as well, then this is already the beginning of the movement to win the masses. During revolution the concept "masses" embraces the majority, and not just the majority of the workers, but the majority of all the exploited. Lenin repeated again and again that "what is essential to win and retain power is not only the majority of the working class. . . but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population."** There can be no dispute in a revolutionary party about the necessity of a revolutionary offensive; it was a question of correct understanding of the fact that the primary condition of success was the preparation of this offensive, that is to say, winning over the majority of the working masses of town and country.

Lenin revealed the mistakes of the "Left" Communists and called for these mistakes to be courageously admitted and rectified. "We must not conceal our mistakes from the enemy," he said, winding up his passionate speech. "Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary. On the contrary, if we openly declare to the workers: 'Yes, we have made mistakes,' it will mean that they will not be repeated and we shall be able better to choose the moment. And if during the struggle itself the majority of the working people prove to be on our side—not only the majority of the workers, but the majority of all the exploited and oppressed—then we shall really be victorious."***

Lenin's speech made a tremendous impression on the delegates. W. Koenen, in his reminiscences, said: "The tense, strained atmosphere at the Congress vanished."**** Terracini, who actively advocated "Left" views at the time, wrote that during Lenin's speech he realised that "his eyes had sought me out to tell me that the severe censure which I had heard a few minutes before

* Ibid., p. 474.
** Ibid., p. 476.
*** Ibid., p. 477.
**** *O Lenine. Vospominaniya zarubezhnykh sovremennikov*, p. 368.

was uttered by him in the name of the highest duty that fell to his lot. That duty was to save me, to save all of us from an error that may have proved irremediable and fatal not only to us, but also to the very greatest and loftiest cause of social liberation, to our common cause.... And I knew that this lesson was to stand me in good stead in my subsequent 40 years of struggle as a Communist."*

On behalf of the delegation of the American Communist Party Robert Minor (Ballister) declared full agreement "with all the theses on tactics advanced by the Russian delegation".** Lenin's speech was warmly supported by Clara Zetkin, who said: "We thank our Russian brothers, we thank the Russian proletariat still more for giving us the methods and ways of struggle at a period when the old world is breaking up under the impact of the world revolution. We thank them, above all, for showing us by their example what a vast power and might are contained in the will to revolutionary struggle."***

"The French delegation fully approves of the theses presented by the Russian Communist Party,"**** declared Vaillant-Couturier. The delegation of the Communist Party of Great Britain, said Thomas Bell, agrees in the main with the proposed theses. The theses were supported by the delegations of the communist parties of Czechoslovakia and other countries.***** Although the debates were at times very heated, the Congress proceedings were informed by a spirit of fraternal co-operation and proletarian internationalism. The representatives of the communist parties worked collectively to find a correct answer to the question of how the Communists were to carry on, how to prepare for the coming defensive and offensive battles. A natural result of the discussion, therefore, was a rejection of the erroneous views of the "Lefts" by an absolute majority of the delegates. It was brought home to them that Lenin's approach to the problems and methods of communist party activities based on a generalisation of the diversified experience of the international communist movement, furthered the interests of the proletariat's class struggle and opened up prospects for winning the masses over to the Communists.

* *They Knew Lenin*, Moscow, pp. 218-19.
** *Third Congress of the Communist International. Report of Meetings Held at Moscow June 22nd-July 12th, 1921*, Leningrad, p. 112.
*** *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau, 22 Juni bis 12 Juli 1921*, Hamburg 1921, S. 605.
**** *Bulletin du III Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste, Moscou No. 13, 5 Juillet 1921*, p. 20.
***** *III Usemirny Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, p. 256.

"The Congress sided with Lenin,"* Kuusinen said in his recollections. The sponsors of "Left" amendments presented a written statement to the presiding committee expressing agreement with the basic principles of the theses on tactics proposed by the Russian delegation exclusively and definitely in the sense of the views set forth by Lenin and other spokesmen of the R.C.P.(B.).** The Congress unanimously adopted the theses on tactics, which stated that the most important tasks of the communist parties were to win a predominant influence, first and foremost, over the majority of the working class, to draw its most decisive part into the struggle, to *participate directly in the struggle of the labour masses, to effect communist leadership of this struggle and create in the process of the struggle big, revolutionary, communist mass parties.****** The theses stressed the importance of the Communists taking part in the fight to meet the everyday practical demands of the proletariat. The Congress pointed out the direct bearing which the movement in defence of the workers' demands had upon the prospects of the masses coming to closer grips with the tasks of the socialist revolution. "Only in case they prove able to lead the practical struggle of the proletariat, only in case they can promote these conflicts, will the Communists succeed in winning over great masses of the proletariat to the struggle for the dictatorship."****

As opposed to the "Leftists", who scorned the idea of upholding limited demands and urged that all efforts be concentrated on organising armed uprising, the Congress pointed out that there must be no "abandonment of all participation in the proletarian struggle for actual and immediate necessaries of life, until such a time as the proletariat will be able to attain them through its own dictatorship."***** The communist parties, said the theses, put forward no minimum programme on the Social-Democratic pattern, tending within the framework of capitalism to bolster up and improve its tottering edifice. In urging a fight for the concrete demands of the proletariat, the Congress proceeded from the assumption that the realisation of these demands ultimately undermines the power of the bourgeoisie, organises the proletariat and becomes a stage in the struggle of the working class for power.

* O. V. Kuusinen, *Izbranniye Proizvedeniya* (Selected Works), Moscow, 1966, p. 670.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 512/1/8133/1.
*** *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit., p. 19.
**** Ibid., p. 24.
***** Ibid.

With the growth of the movement for concrete demands, the communist party should put forward new slogans raising the struggle of the workers to a higher level. The Congress warned that "Every objection to the establishment of such part demands, every accusation of reformism in connection with these part struggles, is an outcome of the same incapacity to grasp the live issues of revolutionary action which manifested itself in the opposition of some communist groups to participation in trade-union activities and parliamentary action. Communists should not rest content with teaching the proletariat its ultimate aims, but should lend impetus to every practical move leading the proletariat into the struggle for the ultimate aims."*

The Congress gave a profound analysis and demonstration of the important connection which existed between the struggle for the concrete, limited demands of the workers and the task of bringing home to them the need for overthrowing the capitalist system. It gave concrete expression to Lenin's concept of the ways of struggle for socialism.

The Congress emphatically rejected the "theory of offensive" and emphasised that attempts by revolutionarily impatient and politically inexperienced elements to resort on certain issues to the most extreme methods, which in effect were methods of decisive revolutionary uprisings, were fraught with the most dangerous kind of adventurism and could, if actually employed, ruin the whole truly revolutionary preparatory work of the proletariat for seizing power.

From the experience of the working-class struggle in the different countries and the example of the Open Letter of the U.C.P.G., the Congress came to the conclusion that it was essential to draw all the detachments and organisations of the working class into the fight for its everyday vital needs. "In view of the fact that in Western Europe and in America the workers are organised in trade-unions and political parties, and hence spontaneous movements are for the time being out of the question, it is the duty of the communist parties to endeavour, by means of their influence in the trade-unions, by increased pressure on other parties, connected with the working masses, to bring about the struggle for the achievement of the immediate needs of the proletariat."**

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* *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit. p. 25.

** Ibid., p. 27.

Thus, by a generalisation of labour movement practice and its collective discussion, the communist parties at the Third Congress of the Comintern, with Lenin's invaluable assistance, began a new phase in the history of the international communist movement—the phase of struggle for setting up a united proletarian front.

At the same time the Congress set before the communist parties the task of winning over to the side of the proletariat the semi-proletarian and petty-bourgeois strata of the people, first and foremost the small peasantry, part of the petty bourgeoisie, and salaried workers and intellectuals with a view to creating a broad all-democratic front against the onset of capital.

Dwelling on the significance of the Congress decisions in a letter to the Congress of the United Communist Party of Germany, Lenin wrote: "What the German proletariat must and will do—and this is the guarantee of victory—is keep their heads; systematically rectify the mistakes of the past; steadily win over the mass of the workers both inside and outside the trade unions; patiently build up a strong and intelligent Communist Party capable of giving real leadership to the masses at every turn of events; and work out a strategy that is on a level with the best international strategy of the most advanced bourgeoisie, which is 'enlightened' by age-long experience in general, and the 'Russian experience' in particular."* Lenin specially quoted in his letter the section of the theses on tactics adopted at the Third Congress in which the task of uniting all organisations of the working class for the fight against fascism was set before the Italian Communist Party. He did not make it a condition of the struggle for a united front that the rank and file of the reformist parties were to break with their leadership. The thing was to draw the rank and file into the struggle for the united front, in the course of which the need for unity and the correctness of the Communists' policy would be brought home to them and induce them to follow the lead of the Communists. "This winning over is gaining ground steadily in every way throughout the world. Let us make more thorough and careful preparations for it; let us not allow a single serious opportunity to slip by when the bourgeoisie compels the proletariat to undertake a struggle; let us learn to correctly determine the moment when the *masses* of the proletariat *cannot but* rise together with us.

"Then victory will be assured, no matter how severe some of the defeats and transitions in our great campaign may be."**

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 513-14.

** Ibid., p. 522.

Lenin's Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.(B.)

On July 5 Lenin addressed the Congress on the tactics of the R.C.P.(B.). He gave a profound analysis of the international situation and the prospects and tasks of the revolutionary struggle. He characterised the world revolutionary movement as an integral process in which three main forces operated, namely, the country of the victorious proletariat, the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples. He considered the national liberation movement to be an active revolutionary factor, saying that "in the impending decisive battles in the world revolution, the movement of the majority of the population of the globe, initially directed towards national liberation, will turn against capitalism and imperialism".*

Lenin showed the international significance of the socialist transformations in Soviet Russia, where the Communist Party regarded the building of socialism as its international duty, its most important contribution to the development of the world revolutionary movement. "We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy. The working people of all countries without exception and without exaggeration are looking to the Soviet Russian Republic.... The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale."**

In his report at the Third Congress Lenin characterised the general principles of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which were applicable to all countries that took the road of socialism. He showed that NEP was not a local problem, but an important issue bearing on the development of the world revolution. NEP expressed the economic policy of the victorious proletariat during the transition period. Its purpose was to build an economic base for socialism by an all-round development of industry capable of reorganising agriculture as well. Its purpose was to make good the complete victory of socialism over capitalism by the use of the mechanism of money-commodity relationships allowing a certain amount of freedom to private capitalist interests, on the basis of

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 482.
** Ibid., p. 487.

an economic alliance between the workers and the peasants, between industry and agriculture, and the ultimate elimination of the exploiting classes. Lenin demonstrated the necessity of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, which he defined as the highest principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the natural development and strengthening of the economic ties between these classes. The substitution of the tax in kind for the surplus-appropriation system in Soviet Russia formed the economic basis of this alliance, determined the pattern of the peasantry's gradual involvement in the construction of socialism and was a vital factor in the internal economic and political consolidation of the world's first socialist state.

This, Lenin emphasised, "is one of the most difficult tasks of socialist construction that will confront all capitalist countries...".*

In determining the practical paths of socialist construction on the basis of NEP, the R.C.P.(B.) took into consideration the specific transitional features of Soviet Russia's economy with its varied forms, chief of which were: socialism, small-scale peasant economy and capitalism. The Party took into consideration that the concrete forms of transition from capitalism to socialism were bound to vary in accordance with the conditions under which socialist construction was started, primarily depending upon whether it was large-scale machine production or small-scale economy that predominated in the given country.

The New Economic Policy was designed to employ such forms and methods as secured the gradual transformation of the multiform economy into a socialist economy. It aimed, through exchange and a trade tie-up between town and country, at ensuring the influence of the proletarian state on small-scale economy with a view to preparing the peasant masses for their transition to the socialist path. This was possible only on the condition of political leadership by the working class, the socialist industrialisation of the country and the rendering of economic assistance to the peasantry by the state. The New Economic Policy of the R.C.P.(B.) was permeated with Lenin's ideas concerning the organic connections that existed between industrialisation and electrification of the country and the co-operative reorganisation of peasant economy.

Spokesmen of the "ultra-Left" groups—the Communist, Workers' Party of Germany, the Dutch "Left", the "Workers' Opposition" faction within the R.C.P.(B.)—criticised the New Economic

* Ibid., p. 456.

Policy at the Congress. They declared that it created difficulties for the development of the world revolution and helped to strengthen capitalism all over the world. The "ultra-Left" tried to prove that contradictions existed between the interests of the revolutionary proletariat in the capitalist countries and the interests of the Soviet Republic. These "ultra-Left" sectarians were blind to the actual course of the world revolutionary process, to the world-wide historic significance of socialist construction in Soviet Russia; they peddled the slogan of pushing forward with the revolution as quickly as possible and put forward various adventurist demands such as the organisation of universal "sabotage". Meeting with a severe rebuff from the communist parties, the "ultra-Left" tried to bring about a split in the ranks of the international communist movement, ranting about the advisability of having an opposition within the communist parties and the Communist International. Henriette Roland-Holst, speaking for the "ultra-Left", declared at the Congress that the Comintern, for its normal and healthy development, needed the existence within it of "Left" and "extreme Left" parties, even if they refused to submit to the discipline of the Comintern. The existence of such an opposition within the Comintern, they argued, was necessary in order to counteract the influence of the R.C.P.(B.), which for state considerations was retarding the development of the revolution. The behaviour and speeches of the "ultra-Left" at the Congress fully demonstrated the methods of political struggle characteristic of all dissenters in the ranks of the international communist movement, namely: an attempt to impose their dogma upon the communist parties, for which purpose they tried to split the movement and cause a rift, draw a line between the communist parties in the capitalist countries and the Bolshevik Party, which they accused of renouncing the world revolution.

After the Third Congress the "ultra-Left" broke with the international communist movement and quickly degenerated into an insignificant sect without any influence on the working class.

The representatives of the communist parties countered the attacks of the "ultra-Left" and declared their full support for the policy of the R.C.P.(B.). The Congress unanimously approved its activities, stressing that "the Russian Communist Party, which had from the very beginning correctly recognised the threatening dangers in every situation and, true to the fundamental rules of revolutionary Marxism, always found ways and means for mastering them", and it was "only owing to this consistent and clear-sighted policy of the Russian Communist Party that Soviet Russia

is regarded as the first and most important citadel of the world revolution...".* The Congress called upon the workers of all countries to support the working people of Soviet Russia and fight for the victory of the proletariat.

Organisation of the Communist Parties

The task of winning the majority of the working class called for a strengthening of the communist parties organisationally. They could not follow the pattern of organisation of the Social-Democrats. New principles of party building and an organisational structure corresponding to them had to be worked out. In this connection the Congress discussed questions of organisation and the methods and content of party work. The adopted theses spoke of the necessity of Communists carrying on daily work among the masses, since "without the closest ties between the party organisations and the proletarian masses employed in the big and middle industries, the Communist Party cannot carry out any big mass actions and really revolutionary movements".** The problem was raised of reorganising the parties on the territorial-production principle, setting up factory cells and uniting Communists working in mass organisations. Democratic centralism was endorsed as the foundation of inner-party life.

In his address to the Congress expounding the propositions of the theses concerning the need for combining centralism with proletarian democracy in the communist parties, Koenen, the representative of the U.C.P.G., said: "The parties should take good care that they have a genuine centralisation of activity and not a bureaucratic centralism, and for this they must continually improve and scrutinise their apparatus to secure a real concentration of leadership of the mass of workers. A living link between the party headquarters and all the party organs is the surest remedy against bureaucratisation of the apparatus."***

The Comintern Congress gave considerable attention to the questions of communist party unity. The fraternal parties regarded

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* *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit., Moscow, 1921, p. 63.

** Ibid., p. 48.

*** *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale...*, op. cit., Hamburg, 1921, S. 961-62.

the Comintern as a world party, created by the joint efforts of the national sections, each of which was an equal member of an international united organisation responsible for the whole activity of the Third International. On the motion of the U.C.P.G. delegation the Congress passed a resolution stating that the communist parties "must do their utmost to keep in the closest touch with the Executive; they must not only appoint the best representatives of their country to the Executive, but must also keep the Executive constantly supplied with the best information, so that the Executive will be in a position to take a stand on any political problem that may arise, on the basis of real documents and exhaustive materials".* The resolution also stated that there should be organisational and informational contacts by way of reciprocal representation at important conferences and exchange of leading personnel. "This exchange of representatives must be made an absolutely obligatory condition for all the sections that are capable of rendering substantial services to the cause."** It was decided to expand the Executive to include representatives of all communist parties, and this was carried out in practice.

In September 1921 the Narrow Bureau of the Executive Committee was renamed the Presidium of the Executive Committee. In December 1921 the post of General Secretary of the Executive was introduced, to which O. Kuusinen was elected. In December 1922 V. Kolarov became General Secretary.

The delegates to the Third Congress stressed the need for close unity among Communists, a single discipline for all, and a strict obligation to carry out the decisions of the party and the Comintern. During a meeting between the delegation of the U.C.P.G. and representatives of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee on July 9, 1921, Lenin said that the party should observe discipline and should not shrink from baring its shortcomings. Passing them over in silence was a greater danger. At the same time he strongly condemned all forms of factional activity and called upon the membership to strengthen the unity of the parties and the Comintern. "We are here in the capacity of members of the Communist International and demand of all who belong to it that they observe discipline,"*** said Lenin. The unity of the communist parties on a Marxist-Leninist basis, the unity of the whole international communist movement was a pledge of success for the emancipation struggle of the working class.

* *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit., Moscow, 1921, p. 55.

** Ibid.

*** From Lenin's speech on July 9, 1921, delivered in German. Cf. C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/25774/1.

The Third Congress stressed the need for unity of the communist parties, and party discipline; decisions collectively made and adopted by the Comintern were binding upon all the parties who belonged to it, and decisions made by the party and party organisations were binding upon all Communists. The Congress declared that refusal to submit to party discipline and opposition to the party's line in the international communist movement were incompatible with membership of the party. "Any weakening or *breaking of the common united front* is the worst *breach of discipline* and the worst mistake in the revolutionary *struggle*," the Congress recorded. "The highest duty of every member of the party is to defend the Communist Party and above all the Communist International against all the enemies of communism. He who forgets this, or even publicly attacks the party or the Comintern, should be considered an enemy of the party."*

The theses on the organisational question adopted by the Congress, though basically correct, had one serious flaw. At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern Lenin remarked that this resolution was "too Russian". It was based only on the experience of the R.C.P.(B.) and did not take into account the specific conditions and aims of the struggle prevailing in different countries. Lenin drew attention to the importance and necessity of taking into consideration the specific national distinctions in every country and every situation; the experience of the R.C.P.(B.) in this connection was not to be mechanically copied, but reinterpreted and creatively applied to the local conditions of the given country. "If we do not realise this, we shall be unable to move ahead. I think that ... the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study."** The foreign Communists, Lenin said, "must assimilate part of the Russian experience.... We Russians must also find ways and means of explaining the principles of this resolution to the foreigners. Unless we do that, it will be absolutely impossible for them to carry it out."***

Writing at a later date about the deficiencies of the Third Congress theses on the organisational question, Kuusinen said that the tasks which they set before the communist parties were essentially

* *Kommunistichesky Internatsional v dokumentakh* (The Communist International in Documents), p. 222.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 431.

*** Ibid.

correct and needful, but they were set forth in such a way that they applied equally, and therefore inexactly, to the conditions of every capitalist country and to the tasks of every party. Nothing was said to define what tasks were to be given priority, and what tasks came second. The theses merely stated theoretically in the light of the experience of the R.C.P.(B.), what tasks in general the communist parties were likely to be faced with in the field of organisational work. "The resolution, consequently, was really a theoretical programme of organisational Bolshevisation," Kuusinen wrote. "Nevertheless the resolution lay claim to being a practical directive. And that was its mistake."*

The Third Congress on Communists' Work in the Mass Organisations

The Third Congress discussed questions concerning the work of the communist parties in the trade unions, co-operative societies, and women's and youth organisations. The "ultra-Left" sectarians demanded in their Congress speeches that the old trade unions be broken up and new "revolutionary" ones be set up. L. Meyer (Bergmann), speaking for the Communist Workers' Party of Germany, asserted that the reformist trade unions had become "a part, and a very substantial part, of the capitalist state", and therefore "the slogan of the Communists should be, not to win the trade unions, but to destroy them and simultaneously create new organisations".** The Congress rebutted the arguments of the sectarians and called upon Communists "to explain to the proletarians that they will not find salvation in leaving the old trade unions before creating new ones, as this will only turn the proletariat into a disconnected mob; they must be told that it is necessary to revolutionise the trade unions, to expel the spirit of reformism together with the treacherous reformist leaders, and thus convert the trade unions into a real support of the revolutionary proletariat".*** The best indication of a communist party's

* *Lenin and the International Working-Class Movement. Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1934, p. 58 (in Russian).

** *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale...*, op. cit., Hamburg, 1921, SS. 725, 728.

*** *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit., p. 67.

strength was the actual influence it exercised on the bulk of the trade union membership. The party should be able to exercise its influence on the trade unions without displaying a desire to act as their petty guardians.

The Congress came out strongly against the idea, peddled by the reformists, of trade union neutrality in the political struggle, by means of which they tried to keep the trade unions out of the revolutionary struggle. The Congress theses posed the task of fighting the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions as being the mainstay of international capital in the working class, and combating the reformists' attempts to split the trade union organisations.

The discussion of the tasks of the Communists in the trade unions at the Third Congress of the Comintern coincided with the opening of the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions, which was held in Moscow from July 3 to 19. In his message of greeting to the TU Congress, Lenin wrote: "The winning of trade unionists to the ideas of communism is making irresistible headway everywhere, in all countries, throughout the world. The process is sporadic, overcoming a thousand obstacles, but it is making irresistible progress. The International Congress of Trade Unions will quicken this movement. Communism will triumph in the trade unions. No power on earth can avert the collapse of capitalism and the victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie."* By this time revolutionary trade unions already existed independently in a number of countries, and there arose the need to unite them. Preparations for the Congress were made by the International Council of Trade Unions, which was founded in Moscow in July 1920, and was engaged in propaganda of the ideas of revolutionary class struggle in the trade unions.

The TU Congress passed a decision to set up a united militant organisation, a single international headquarters—the Red Trade Union International (the Profintern) and establish close co-operation with the Communist International, the vanguard of the world's revolutionary workers' movement. As regards the attitude of the revolutionary workers towards the old reformist trade unions, the Congress pointed to the need to win them without quitting them and without forming separate, disunited trade union groups. "The revolutionary struggle should be waged and built

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 501.

up around *winning the unions*, i.e., the millioned masses united in the old unions, and *not by destroying them*,"* ran the decision of the Congress.

The Congress elected a Central Council of the Red Trade Union International (the Profintern). S. A. Lozovsky was elected as its General Secretary. The Profintern united the trade union centres and trade unions which did not belong to the Amsterdam International, namely: The All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions, the national revolutionary trade union centres of Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, France, Holland, Indonesia, Ireland, Korea, Lithuania, Mongolia, Persia, Peru, Uruguay, and also opposition groups and trends within the reformist trade unions in a number of capitalist countries. It actively supported the idea of securing unity of the trade union movement on the basis of a revolutionary struggle in defence of the demands of the working class against the attacks of capital and fascism, against the danger of imperialist war, and for closer relations with the working class of Soviet Russia.

The decisions of the Third Congress of the Comintern on the work of Communists in the co-operative societies and among the women and youth, stressed the necessity of getting the various mass organisations of the workers to take a more active part in the struggle of the working class. One of the most important tasks of the Young Communist International and the young communist leagues in different countries was to educate the young generation in the communist spirit, to make these young communist organisations the reserve of and assistants to the communist parties.

Shortly before the Third Congress proceedings started, the Second International Conference of Women Communists was held in Moscow from June 9 to 15. It was attended by 82 delegates from 28 countries. The Conference discussed the forms and methods of communist work among the women and the tasks of the International Women's Secretariat. The Third Comintern Congress approved the decisions of the Conference and called upon communist parties to step up their work among the workers, inasmuch as "the conquest of power by the proletariat, as well as the achievement of communism in those countries where the capitalist state has already been overthrown, can be realised only with

* *I Mezhdunarodny kongress revolyutsionnykh professionalnykh i proizvodstvennykh soyuzov* (First International Congress of Trade and Industrial Unions). Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1921. Appendix to Report, p. 15.

the active participation of the wide masses of the proletarian and semi-proletarian women".*

The Third Congress of the Communist International was an important stage in the history of the international communist movement. Taking into consideration the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle and the new changed conditions, the Congress defined the way Communists should carry on in a situation when the revolutionary tide was at an ebb; it focussed their attention on questions concerned with the struggle to win the majority of the working class and the working masses and to make more thorough preparation for coming revolutionary battles.

The Congress, under Lenin's leadership, emphatically rejected the extremely harmful policy which the "Left" sectarians were trying to impose on the world communist movement by pushing the communist parties onto the dangerous path of "revolutionary" adventurism and premature, unprepared risings, which could result in grave defeats for the proletariat. Lenin, with the support of the more mature and experienced Communists, carried through a correct tactical line at the Congress—the line of fighting for the masses.

The work done by the Third Congress was a real school for the young communist parties. By pooling experience and collectively discussing the parties' tasks and methods of work, the Congress made an important contribution to the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement. The conclusion to which the Congress came was that the communist parties had to draw into the joint struggle for the everyday vital interests of the working class, all its detachments and organisations; they had to defend the everyday economic interests of the working people and uphold their democratic rights and freedoms while at the same time preparing the masses for new revolutionary battles. "It is only through the struggle for the ordinary needs and interests of the workers that we can build up a united front of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and put an end to the splitting up of the proletariat, which is the basis for the continued existence of the bourgeoisie,"** ran the appeal of the E.C.C.I. issued after the Congress closed.

Immersed as he was in all the exacting cares of leadership of the Party and the Soviet state, Lenin constantly met the Com-

* *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, op. cit., Moscow, 1921, pp. 76-77.

** Ibid., p. 96.

munists arriving from abroad, talked with them, and questioned them about the conditions of work and life and the temper among the labour masses. This helped him to keep in constant close touch with the life and struggle of the masses. It helped him better to appreciate the feeling among the workers and correctly determine the tactics of the communist parties.

Early in August 1921 Lenin met Thomas Bell, the representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain on the Comintern Executive. "We talked about the Trade Unions and the Labour Party and their relative strength and influence in the British working-class movement; about our Communist Party, who was who and its influence among the workers,"* Thomas Bell says in his recollections. In Britain during April-June 1921 the miners were waging a hard fight against the pit owners, who had announced wage cuts. The miners' strike, involving over a million men, was defeated as a result of the treachery of the reformist trade union leaders, who wrecked the general strike of solidarity with the miners. Lenin questioned Bell closely about the movement among the miners, their temper, and the work of the Communists among them.

Several days later Thomas Bell sent Lenin a letter informing him of the South Wales miners' current congress and their decision to join the Third International, of the part played by the marines who were sent into the coal-mining areas to suppress the strike, and of the cases of fraternisation between the workers and the marines.

Writing in reply to this letter Lenin commented favourably on the fight which the miners of South Wales had put up and expressed the hope that "perhaps it is the *beginning* of the real proletarian mass movement in Great Britain *in the communist sense*", inasmuch as until then there had been "no really mass communist movement" there.** Lenin emphasised that the British capitalists were crafty and clever and they would support any economic measures (such as communal kitchens) that would draw the attention of the workers away from political aims. He suggested the following, most important, tasks:

"1) To create a very good, really proletarian, really mass *Communist Party* in this part of England, that is, such party which will *really* be the *leading* force in *all* the labour movement in this part of the country. (Apply the resolution on organisation and

* *They Knew Lenin*, p. 207.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 510.

work of the Party adopted by the Third Congress to this part of your country.)

"2) To start a daily paper of the working class, for the working class in this part of the country."* Lenin explained at length to the British Communists how, with the support and contributions of the workers, to organise a newspaper and make it "an *economic and political* tool of the *masses* in their struggle".**

Lenin understood that although strong sympathies towards Soviet Russia existed among the British workers, a revolutionary temper had not yet spread among the mass of the workers. He therefore proposed starting to issue a paper that would be able to rally the masses around it. At that time, however, the British Communists were not in a position to act on this advice. It was not until 1930 that they got the *Daily Worker* running regularly.

Lenin closely followed the activities of the British Communists and wrote that they had to be helped to benefit by the experience of the Bolsheviks. In a letter to Berzin dated September 8, 1921, he wrote: "The British Communists must be taught and taught to work the way the Bolsheviks worked: taught by articles, taught publicly, in the press. Taught also by the resolution of the Third Congress of the Comintern concerning the work of the parties."***

The same day Lenin wrote to V. Vorovsky that the Italian Communists, too, had to be helped by "teaching, teaching and teaching them to work the way the Bolsheviks worked, teaching them by articles, by writing in the press".**** Lenin insistently asked for the more important articles, pamphlets and books coming out in these countries to be sent to him.

In view of the need for wider information about the labour movement in the capitalist countries, Lenin proposed that a bureau be set up in Germany to collect material on this question. He outlined the tasks and methods of work of this bureau in detail. "We need *full* and *truthful* information," he wrote. "And the truth should not depend upon whom it has to serve."***** Lenin's advice formed the basis of the decision of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. of September 6, 1921, providing for the setting up in Berlin of a Statistical and Information Institute, to which E. Varga was appointed head.

Lenin insistently stressed the importance of Communists com-

* Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 510.
** Ibid., p. 511.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/24694/1.
**** Ibid., 2/1/24963/1.
***** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 339.

bining activity of a principled revolutionary nature with the art of maneuvering; he taught them "flexibility, the ability to effect swift and sudden changes of tactics if changes in objective conditions demand them, and to choose another path for the achievement of our goal if the former path proves to be inexpedient or impossible at the given moment".* He warned Communists against haste, against attempts in their practical activities to anticipate the rising wave of revolution, which should be allowed to develop to the full. Communists should not give way to the provocations of the bourgeoisie, who would try to evoke premature uprisings in order to strangle the revolution. "If the bourgeoisie kills 100-300 people, this will not ruin the cause. But if it is able to provoke a massacre, to kill 10-30 *thousand* workers, this *may* delay the revolution *even for several years*."** Lenin therefore taught Communists self-restraint and patience, flexibility and discretion, the ability to wait until the revolutionary tide reached its highest and to prepare the proletarian vanguard for this in daily class battles.

At the request of the E.C.C.I. Presidium Lenin read the theses on the agrarian question published by the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, and on December 11, 1921, in a special article, he gave a profound analysis of the main propositions of these theses, which he declared, on the whole, to be quite correct. Lenin helped the French Communists to evolve a clear programme on the agrarian question, and advised that special attention be paid to devising a "programme of transitional measures" adapted to the peasants' voluntary transition after the victory of the revolution to a collective form of agriculture, while at the same time providing for an immediate improvement in the condition of the vast majority of the rural population, farm labourers and small farmers. He stressed the importance of securing to the small proprietors who worked their own land the right of permanent (hereditary) tenure. "The immediate application... of *integral* communism to small-peasant farming (by no means in France only, but in all countries where small-peasant husbandry exists) would be a *profound* error."***

Lenin considered it necessary to expose more strongly the policies of French imperialism and the illusions among the peasantry, the ideology of pacifism. He called on the party to guide itself by

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 58.
** Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 354.
*** Ibid., Vol. 33, p. 135.

the traditions of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1789, the traditions of the French people's struggle for emancipation.

Lenin dealt in this article with the nature of wars in the new epoch. "There is no doubt that only the proletarian revolution can and certainly will put a stop to all war. But it would be a pacifist illusion to think that a victorious proletarian revolution in one country, say France, could put a stop to all war once and for all."* It was essential, he said, to distinguish imperialist wars from revolutionary and liberative wars. "Just as reactionary wars, and imperialist wars in particular, are criminal and fatal... so revolutionary wars are legitimate and just, i.e., wars waged against the capitalists in defence of the oppressed classes, wars against the oppressors in defence of the nations oppressed by the imperialists of a handful of countries, wars in defence of the socialist revolution against foreign invaders."**

In dealing with the strategy and tactics of the communist parties Lenin strongly urged a policy of alliances with the non-proletarian masses, a united front of all social forces concerned in fighting imperialism.

* Ibid., p. 132.
** Ibid.

THE STRUGGLE FOR A UNITED WORKERS' FRONT

Framing the Tactics of a United Workers' Front

Application of the tactics of the united front mapped out by the Third Congress opened up to Communists the prospect of winning over the majority of the working class, the bulk of the working people. In this connection the struggle for the everyday needs and demands of the working people was of paramount importance, for only by taking the lead in this struggle could the Communists win the popular masses to their side. On August 1, 1921, the E.C.C.I. issued a special appeal, saying: "The struggle to unite the labour masses of all countries against the attacks of capitalism, the struggle at the head of the united working masses for their liberation—that is our task, in the fulfilment of which we shall rally the masses behind the Communist International, *the only living International which is capable* of freeing the proletariat from the influence of the bourgeoisie, uniting it, and making it stand up, as a force, to the bourgeoisie."*

The slogan of the united front evoked a broad response among the working classes in the capitalist countries. It fell in with their own striving to achieve success in upholding and extending the democratic freedoms and the economic and political gains which they had won in the years immediately following the war. However, the split in the working class, the existence of international reformist organisations whose leadership did everything they could to prevent the creation of a real united front of the workers, the weakness and small membership of the young communist parties, the flexible policy of the bourgeoisie, who employed methods of partial concessions along with the direct terror and brutal violence against the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat—all this made it extremely difficult to establish a united proletarian front. The Right Social-Democrats sabotaged unity of action by the workers, declaring that for the Communists the slogan of the united front was a maneuver. In support of this

* *Deyatelnost Ispolnitelnogo Komiteta i Presidiuma IK Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala ot 18 Iulya 1921 do 1 Fevralya 1922* (Activities of the Executive Committee and Presidium of the E.C. of the Communist International from July 18, 1921, to February 1, 1922), Petrograd, 1922, p. 73.

claim they quoted some of the leaders of the Comintern, people like Zinoviev and Bukharin, who interpreted the aims of the united front in a one-sided sectarian manner.

The Communist International, under Lenin's leadership, defined the aims and significance of the tactics of the united front, the methods for achieving unity of action by the working class. "The purpose and sense of the tactics of the united front consist in drawing more and more masses of the workers into the struggle against capital, even if it means making repeated offers to the leaders of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals to wage this struggle together,"* wrote Lenin. In putting forward the slogan of the united front the Communists aimed at rallying the masses against capitalism, against the workers' common enemy. This had to be done by way of securing united action on the most pressing practical issues that directly concerned the workers and through the struggle of the masses themselves. At the same time Lenin spoke of the necessity of attempting talks with the leadership of Social-Democracy for the purpose of paving the way to the achievement of united action. In effect, Lenin's tactics of a united workers' front boiled down to the achievement of united action by the workers in the course of the struggle for the satisfaction of the pressing needs of the masses; it aimed at drawing into the movement the most diverse sections of the working class, including those who were under the influence of the reformists, at educating the proletariat in a revolutionary spirit in the process of this struggle and preparing it tackle its chief tasks—the overthrow of the bourgeois order, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism. The tactics of the united workers' front were not a maneuver on the part of the Communists, they were a principle underlying their activities, a political line in keeping with the vital interests of all the working people.

The Communist International in 1921 made repeated offers to set up a united front on a world scale involving all labour parties and organisations. On July 30, 1921, the Comintern Executive appealed to the working men and women of all countries to render relief to the starving people of Soviet Russia's famine-stricken areas. The Comintern asked the communist parties to get in touch with all workers' organisations with the aim of forming relief committees to carry on agitation among the popular masses to collect funds for the purchase of grain and medical sup-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 411.

plies. On August 12, on the initiative of the E.C.C.I. there was set up in Berlin a Foreign Committee for the Organisation of Workers' Relief for the Starving in Russia, later reorganised into the International Workers' Relief. Clara Zetkin was elected Chairman of the Committee, and Willi Münzenberg its Secretary. Members of the Committee, among others, were Albert Einstein, Martin-Andersen Nexö, Bernard Shaw, Anatole France and Henri Barbusse. The Committee launched a wide campaign of relief for the famine-stricken areas. On August 15 it made a proposal for joint action to the Amsterdam International, and the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, but the leadership of these organisations refused to collaborate with the Committee. The communist parties everywhere set up relief committees and enlisted the co-operation of public figures, writers and scientists. The Comintern and the communist parties took steps to obtain the co-operation of the Social-Democrats in setting up relief committees, but owing to the splitting policy of the reformists such committees were set up only in Czechoslovakia and Italy, and only for a short time at that.

The campaign of relief for the famine-stricken Volga area embraced the broad masses all over the world. It was a real manifestation of proletarian internationalism. Under the pressure of the masses the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions joined the campaign. Despite the economic crisis, wage cuts and unemployment, the workers of the capitalist countries came to the aid of Soviet Russia.

By the summer of 1923 the Relief Committee had collected and sent to Soviet Russia food supplies, commodities and monetary donations to the sum of over five million dollars. About a million dollars was collected by the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions. The solidarity of the international proletariat saved the lives of thousands of people, mostly children, in the famine-stricken areas. Lenin repeatedly stressed the importance which the fraternal aid of the international proletariat had for the economic rehabilitation of Soviet Russia and for the general struggle against world imperialism. "Among the peaceful means of struggle against the yoke of international finance capital, against international reaction, there is no other means with such rapid and certain promise of victory as aid in the restoration of the economy of Soviet Russia,"* wrote Lenin. The relief campaign helped to unite the work-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 527.

ers of the capitalist countries and promoted class consciousness and proletarian internationalism.

The Communist International was an active advocate of aid to the working people in countries where reaction was most rampant. On October 9, 1921, the E.C.C.I. resolved to propose to the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions joint action against the White terror in the Balkans and Spain. The proposal for a meeting and joint action was contained in an appeal of the Comintern Executive and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern dated October 19, 1921. On November 17 the E.C.C.I. Presidium adopted a special letter to the Executive of the Amsterdam International repeating its proposal to arrange with representatives of the Comintern and Profintern "a special meeting to discuss forms, methods and means of struggle"* in support of the working people of Spain and Yugoslavia. The reformist leadership of the Amsterdam International ignored the proposal.

The communist parties worked for joint action of the workers. At the end of October 1921 the Communist Party of Germany proposed to the leadership of the other workers' parties and trade unions joint action in defence of the workers' rights, in shifting the burden of taxation onto the shoulders of the propertied classes, in disarming and disbanding all the counter-revolutionary organisations and setting up self-defence bodies of the workers, in screening the state apparatus and the army under the control of the working class and ridding them of monarchist elements, etc. The Communist Party actively supported the 10 demands put forward by the trade union leadership against the onset of the monopolies. The Party stressed that the democratic freedoms of the working people could be secured only by the struggle of the masses against reaction. With the support of the E.C.C.I. the Communist Party of Germany drew up a programme of democratic demands on the basis of which they tried to secure the establishment of a united workers' front. Its activities were centred on the struggle for a workers' government, which was to pursue a policy in the interests of the working class, and it declared its readiness, under definite conditions, to join such a government.** The Right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy retorted to this by launching a vicious smear campaign against the Communists, accusing the Communist Party of planning a putsch, and rejecting its proposal for a united front.

In order to equip the young communist parties with a correct

* *Deyatelnost Ispolnitelnogo Komiteta...*, op. cit., p. 282.
** *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 3, S. 349-50.

understanding of the tactics of the united front the E.C.C.I., on the initiative of the Politbureau of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee, on December 18, 1921, elaborated the platform of the Third International by drafting and adopting theses on the united workers' front and on the attitude towards the workers belonging to the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals and the Amsterdam International, and towards the workers who supported the anarcho-syndicalist organisations. This document put the case for the tactics of the united front with profound insight and clarity and mapped out the tasks of the communist parties in implementing them. "By the united front of the workers we understand the union of all workers who desire to fight against capitalism"....* stated the theses. "After having assured for themselves complete freedom of intellectual influence on the proletarian masses, the communist parties of all countries are now aiming to attain a more comprehensive and more complete unity of these masses for practical action."**

The principal condition which the Comintern set to the communist parties entering into agreements with the parties of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals was that each retain absolute political independence in setting forth its views and in criticising the opponents of the Communists. On Lenin's proposal an addendum was introduced into the theses on the united front dealing with the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks, who, while carrying on an unintermittent fight against reformism, often concluded agreements with the Mensheviks and entered into alliances or semi-alliances with them. The policy of the Bolsheviks, who pursued a flexible tactic and worked for unity of the masses in a practical struggle for the workers' revolutionary demands against the capitalists, resulted in the Bolshevik Party winning over the majority of the working class to its side. The Comintern Executive warned the communist parties that the Right elements would try to interpret the united front as an ideological agreement with the Second International and would insist on the communist parties becoming absorbed in an unprincipled bloc with the reformists. This opportunist interpretation had nothing in common with the tactics of the united front, which implied a combination of flexibility in its realisation with a firm stand in upholding the principles of revolutionary policy. The Communists' negotiations with other organisations, said the theses, should be brought

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 2, No. 3, January 10, 1922, p. 19.
** Ibid., p. 17.

to the notice of the broad masses of the workers so that they acquire the necessary political experience.

The Communist International repeated its offer to reach an agreement with the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals and the Amsterdam International with a view to defending the vital interests of the working class and fighting the danger of another imperialist war, and declared that the refusal of these organisations to accept one or another of the Comintern's practical proposals would not make it abandon its tactics, which had deep roots among the masses and which had to be systematically and unswervingly developed. On January 1, 1922, the Comintern Executive and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern appealed to "all communist workers... all sincere workers everywhere, in the entire world, in the shop and in the meeting-hall... to unite in one family of workers, who will stand together against capital in all the questions of the day".*

"Only when you, proletarians, in shop and factory so unite, will all parties which rest upon the proletariat and wish to be heeded by it, be compelled to unite for a common defensive fight against capitalism," ran the appeal. "Only then will they be forced to break their alliance with the capitalist parties."** The appeal contained a concrete programme for fighting unemployment and wage cuts, for workers' control over production, against the arms race and the danger of another imperialist war, against the plundering of Germany by the imperialist Entente, for recognition of Soviet Russia. On the basis of this programme, which furthered the interests of the broad masses, the Communist International worked to create unity of action among the working class and its organisations.

It was some time before the slogan of a united front was grasped by some of the leaders of the communist parties. The "Left" elements, as for instance Bordiga in Italy, construed these tactics merely as collaboration in the trade unions by way of economic struggle. Ludovic Frossard in France asserted that the tactics of the united front could involve the Communist Party becoming merged organisationally with the Socialist Party, and proposed that it confined itself to collaboration with the revolutionary syndicalists. On hearing of the proposal which the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany made to the Comintern Exec-

* Ibid., Vol. 2, No. 2, 6th January, 1922, p. 10.
** Ibid.

utive at the end of December 1921 concerning the advisability of offering joint action to the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, Bordiga and Valecki wired the E.C.C.I. expressing concern at "the dismay and fierce internal strife which this act will cause in France and other countries".* The sectarian views of the "Left" prevented the communist parties from working out correct tactics and carrying on work among the broad masses. Meanwhile, the Right opportunists in the ranks of the communist parties tried to use the tactics of the united front to push the communist parties onto the path of reformism.

Lenin and the Comintern carefully followed the application of united front tactics by the communist parties, gave them assistance and helped them to rectify their mistakes. In view of the approaching parliamentary elections in England, Lenin on January 12 tabled a motion that the E.C.C.I. pass "a well-argued resolution demanding of the Communist Party of Great Britain that all Communists campaign and vote for members of the Labour Party with the exception of those very few instances when it can safely be said that voting for a Communist would definitely not entail victory for the bourgeois candidate".** On January 13 the E.C.C.I. Presidium passed a resolution "considering it absolutely essential to recommend the English Communists to give their support to the Labour Party at the elections".*** In March 1922 the Communist Party of Great Britain, following the recommendations of the E.C.C.I., put forward the slogan of fighting for the victory of a labour government at the elections. In accordance with this decision the Communist Party stood down in favour of the Labour Party candidates at the autumn elections and explained to the workers the reasons for this decision.

Analysing the activities of the communist parties, Lenin again and again urged the need for flexible tactics and warned against the grave danger of "Left" opportunism and adventurism. "On the one hand," he wrote, "excessive caution leads to mistakes. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that if we give way to mere 'sentiment' or indulge in the waving of little red flags instead of soberly weighing up the situation, we may commit irreparable mistakes; we may perish where there is absolutely no need to, although the difficulties are great."****

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/110/1.
** Ibid., 2/1/22623/1.
*** Ibid., 495/2/12/11.
**** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 210.

At the same time Lenin stressed that the communist parties, in which there were many former Social-Democrats who had not yet discarded their old habits, their old ideas about the role of the party, were faced with a long process of remodelling the entire structure and the whole work of their parties and converting them into real revolutionary, militant communist parties with a mass membership. "The process of changing the *type* of Party work in everyday life, of getting it out of the humdrum channel; the process of converting the Party into the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat without permitting it to become divorced from the masses, but, on the contrary, by linking it more and more closely with them, imbuing them with revolutionary consciousness and rousing them for the revolutionary struggle, is a very difficult, but most important one."*

Lenin rendered decisive assistance to the communist parties in converting them into genuine revolutionary parties; he showed great care in teaching them to take a stand on high Marxist principles and helped to consolidate them as parties of a new type. He encouraged them to develop their political activity and cultivated in Communists a sense of responsibility for the cause of the world proletarian revolution, for the victory of socialism. Lenin taught the communist parties to work out a correct policy and ably carry it out, remodelling the structure and organisational forms of contact with the masses in accordance with the exigencies of the class struggle. "The quiet, steady, calm, not very rapid, but profound work of creating genuine communist parties, genuine revolutionary vanguards of the proletariat, has begun and is proceeding in Europe and America,"** Lenin wrote in February 1922.

Preparations for an International Workers' Conference. The First Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The idea of setting up a united front and convening for this purpose a world congress of workers' parties and organisations gained ground and was widely discussed in the labour press and at workers' meetings in Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, Great

* Ibid., p. 209.
** Ibid., pp. 209-10.

Britain and other countries. The Congress of the French Socialist Party, which was a member of the Second-and-a-Half International, asked the Bureau of that International to invite representatives of the Second and Third Internationals to a joint conference. Even the leadership of the Second-and-a-Half International turned down a proposal by the British Labour Party to hold a conference only of representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals. Thus, the attempt of the reformist leaders to set up a united front without the participation of the Communists and against the Communists was foiled as a result of the active struggle of the Communist International backed by the urge of the labour masses towards unity of action. On January 13, 1922, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. decided to notify the communist parties that the Executive was placing on the order of the day of the enlarged meeting to be held in February the question of holding a joint conference of the Comintern and all the other international labour organisations to discuss the basic problems of international policy which were to be dealt with at the Genoa Conference (including the question of Germany and revision of the Versailles Treaty, and aid to Soviet Russia). At its meeting in Berlin during January 14-15 the Bureau of the Second-and-a-Half International decided to start talks concerning the convocation of a general conference of all workers' parties, and on January 19, 1922, wrote to the Comintern Executive proposing that a world conference of the three Internationals be held to examine the problems of Europe's economic situation and the action of the working class against the attacks of reaction. On January 21 the E.C.C.I. Presidium declared in favour of accepting this invitation and included the question in the agenda for the Executive's enlarged plenary meeting.

Lenin took an active part in the Comintern Executive's preparations for the forthcoming conference. He mapped out the Comintern delegation's basic line of conduct. "The list of questions to be dealt with at the meeting should be considered beforehand and drawn up in agreement with each of the parties attending the meeting. On our part we should include in this list only questions that have a direct bearing on practical joint action by the working masses and touching on matters that are recognised as indisputable in the official press statement of each of the three participants."* Lenin once more drew the attention of Communists to the importance of working for unity of action by the labour rank and file, a unity which could be achieved despite the radical political differences existing between the revolutionary and reformist organisations. In the event of the reformists trying to wreck the united front by bringing up the questions concerning the attitude to the Mensheviks and others, Lenin suggested responding to this by demanding a discussion on the questions of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals' renegade attitude towards the Basle Manifesto of 1912, of the reformist parties' complicity in the assassination of Communists in Germany through the bourgeois government which these parties supported and a similar attitude of these parties towards the assassination of revolutionaries in the colonies, etc. "We must find occasion to declare officially that we regard the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals only as inconsistent and vacillating participants of a bloc with the counter-revolutionary world bourgeoisie," wrote Lenin, "and that we agree to attend a meeting on the united front for the sake of achieving possible practical unity of direct action on the part of the masses and in order to expose the political error of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals' entire position. . . ."* While urging the need for flexible tactics of the united front, Lenin was strongly opposed to political concessions of principle which might weaken the Communist Party and the Soviet government, and the world communist movement.

The question of the tactics of the united workers' front was discussed in detail at the first plenary meeting of the Comintern Executive, which was held during the period February 21-March 4, 1922. The meeting was attended by 36 communist parties. After studying the draft resolution concerning participation in the conference of the three Internationals, Lenin considered the acceptance of this draft by the plenum to be of paramount importance. He introduced a number of amendments, pointing out that hard names should not be used of the leaders of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals so as not to give them an excuse for rejecting the idea of the conference. "My chief amendment is aimed at deleting the passage which calls the leaders of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals accomplices of the world bourgeoisie. . .," wrote Lenin. "It is absolutely unreasonable to risk wrecking an affair of tremendous practical importance for the sake of giving oneself the extra pleasure of scolding scoundrels, whom we shall be scolding a thousand times at another place and time."**

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 393.

* Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 394.
** Ibid., pp. 400-01.

Following a sharp discussion at the E.C.C.I. Plenum the majority (against the votes of the Italian, Spanish and most of the French delegations) endorsed the December theses on the united front and resolved to attend the forthcoming Conference of the World's Labour Organisations, with the recommendation that all the trade unions and their national and international bodies be invited to attend in order to make the conference fully representative of all the world's labour organisations. "The World Conference of Labour Organisations must set one great task before itself: the organisation of the defensive struggle of the working class against international capital."*

The E.C.C.I. Plenum discussed the question concerning the danger of another imperialist war. "We must set up a strong united front of the proletariat to combat war and imperialism,"** Clara Zetkin said in her speech. The meeting bound the communist parties to make ideological and organisational preparations of the class struggle to avert wars and urged them to rally the masses under the slogan of annulling all unequal post-war treaties, limiting armaments and shifting the burden of the war and reparations on to the bourgeoisie, under the slogan of defence of Soviet Russia. The Communist International, giving expression to the profound hopes of the masses, called upon the working people to fight the threat of new imperialist wars, to fight for peace.

The Conference of the Three Internationals

A conference of representatives of the Executives of the three Internationals to discuss the preparations for the world labour congress was held in Berlin between April 2 and 5. At the first meeting Clara Zetkin, on behalf of the delegation of the Comintern Executive, suggested that "the forthcoming world conference discuss only such questions as directly concern practical joint action of the masses and which do not divide these masses, but unite them".*** The delegation of the Comintern Executive proposed

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 2, No. 29, 25th April, 1922, p. 218.

** *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale gegen die Offensive des Kapitals*, Hamburg, 1922, S. 143.

*** *Mezhdunarodnaya sotsialisticheskaya konferentsiya (Obyedinyonnoye zasedaniye Ispolkomov trekh Internatsionalov)* [International Socialist Conference. Joint Meeting of the Executives of the Three Internationals]. Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1922, p. 15.

including in the agenda of the world conference questions concerning defence against the attacks of capital, against reaction and preparations for another imperialist war, aid to Soviet Russia, the Versailles Treaty and rehabilitation of the ruined areas. Vandervelde, on behalf of the delegation of the Second International, declared, however, that the congress could be convened only on condition that the Communists abstained from setting up their cells in the trade unions, that the Red Army was withdrawn from Georgia and the Menshevik government restored there, and that representatives of the Second International be allowed to undertake the defence of the Socialist-Revolutionary terrorists arrested by the Soviet authorities. It was a patent attempt to provoke the Comintern delegation into renouncing an agreement in view of demands which it could not accept and putting the blame on it for wrecking the conference. Paul Faure of the Second-and-a-Half International supported the demands of the Second International.

In view of this conduct on the part of the delegations of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, a crisis was reached in the deliberations of the conference. On April 3 the delegation of the Comintern Executive wrote to the Presiding Committee of the conference and to the delegation of the Second-and-a-Half International proposing that the polemic be ended and the question be put before all the delegations "whether they are prepared to attend the world congress".* At the conference meeting on April 4 Ramsay MacDonald and Otto Bauer repeated in effect the previous demands. For the sake of reaching an agreement the Comintern delegation made major concessions by agreeing that the Soviet authorities would not apply the death sentence to the S.-R. terrorists and would allow representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals to attend the trial. These unilateral concessions were a violation of the directives of the Comintern Executive. "As a result of the pressure of the representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, the Communist International has made a political concession to the international bourgeoisie and has obtained no concession in return."** In an article entitled "We Have Paid Too Much" Lenin wrote: "Once again, the bourgeoisie, in the person of their diplomats, have outwitted the representatives of the Communist International. Such is the lesson of the Berlin Conference."*** Although Lenin thought

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/86/219.

** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 332.

*** Ibid., pp. 333-34.

the agreement should be ratified, he demanded that it be made a rule not to make any political concessions to the international bourgeoisie unless more or less equivalent concessions were made to Soviet Russia or to other detachments of the international proletariat that were fighting capitalism.

A declaration was adopted at the Conference acknowledging the possibility of holding joint meetings and taking joint action on April 20 and May 1 under the slogan of struggle for an eight-hour day, against unemployment, against the attacks of capital, in defence of the Russian revolution, for relief to the famine-stricken areas of Russia, for resumption of political and economic relations by all countries with Soviet Russia and for the setting up of a united proletarian front. The Conference went on record for the speedy convocation of a world congress of labour organisations, and formed a nine-man steering committee (of three representatives from each International) to organise future conferences and the congress. No explicit arrangement, however, was made as to the date for calling the congress or its make-up.

The results of the Berlin Conference, indecisive though they were, demonstrated that despite the existence of radical political differences, an agreement between the various detachments of the working class on the most pressing issues of practical interest to labour was possible. It was a clear demonstration of the correctness of the Comintern's political line and its tactics of a united workers' front. Though the Comintern delegation made a bad mistake at the Conference in yielding a one-sided concession to the representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, the agreement reached at Berlin opened up prospects for the creation of a united front and made it easier for the Communists to work among the masses. "Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises where the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers; and in this they must not shrink from making certain sacrifices and not be afraid of making mistakes, which, at first, are inevitable to every new and difficult undertaking,"* Lenin wrote in this connection. Stressing the need for Communists to work among large strata of the working class which were still under the influence of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, Lenin pointed out that after the agreement reached in Berlin criticism of the policies of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals should be somewhat modified, given a more

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 333.

explanatory, patient and comprehensive character; it should not frighten away the workers by hard words, but should reveal the irreconcilable contradictions between the slogans which their representatives adopted in Berlin and the entire reformist policy. "We adopted united front tactics in order to help these masses to fight capitalism, to help them understand the 'cunning mechanism' of the two fronts in international economics and in international politics; and we shall pursue these tactics to the end."*

The Communist International regarded the results of the Berlin Conference as a favourable opportunity for organising united action by the working class, first and foremost on the question of the struggle for peace, in support of the programme of general reduction of armaments which the Soviet delegation put forward at the Genoa International Conference. On April 17, over the signatures of Lenin and other members of the R.C.P.(B.) Politbureau, a telegram was sent to the Comintern delegation in Berlin containing an appraisal of the delegation's activities and posing new tasks. The telegram said: "We suggest that the question of the talks at Genoa be raised immediately on the nine-man committee. It has been proved that a break may occur at any minute over the question of disarmament and the Entente's demands for recognition of the private debts of big foreign capitalists. Point out that the demand for disarmament is one of the demands of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals. If they procrastinate in the course of twenty-four hours come out yourselves with a manifesto calling upon all workers to protest."**

On April 18 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. ratified the agreement arrived at at the Berlin Conference and recommended bringing up for discussion by the nine-man committee the question of having a meeting with representatives of the Profintern and the Amsterdam International with the following agenda: (1) The fight against the threat of war; (2) The fight against the onset of capital. The E.C.C.I. Presidium also directed its representatives on the nine-man committee (Clara Zetkin, Frossard and Radek) to take steps towards the organisation of joint action by the three Internationals in connection with the threatened failure of the Genoa Conference.

On April 20 the E.C.C.I.'s representative on the nine-man committee sent a telegram to F. Adler, the leader of the Second-and-a-Half International, and to Otto Wels, the Chairman of the

* Ibid., p. 334.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/25669/1-2.

Social-Democratic Party of Germany, proposing that the Committee of Nine be called together within forty-eight hours to discuss the questions contained in the resolution of the E.C.C.I. Presidium.* The Committee did not meet as O. Wels stated that he did not have the necessary powers to call it.**

The labour masses in the capitalist countries hailed the decision of the Berlin Conference calling for joint action. On April 20 and May 1 powerful demonstrations of workers were held in Austria, Germany, Sweden and Norway under the slogans of a united front. This, however, ran counter to the plans of the reformists, who did everything they could to put off a meeting of the Committee of Nine and sabotaged the preparations for a world labour congress.

On May 16, 1922, the Plenum of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee, in which Lenin took part, directed the representative of the R.C.P.(B.) to submit to the Comintern Executive the draft of a directive (in connection with the meeting of the Committee of Nine) strongly demanding that the World Labour Congress be convened at an early date. "In the event of continued sabotage in this question on the part of the Second International the Comintern will immediately recall its representatives from the Committee of Nine and continue its agitation for a united proletarian front in forms arising from the situation.

"The Russian representative on the Committee of Nine should declare in appropriate form on behalf of the R.C.P.(B.) that we are quite prepared to have the pledge concerning the defence of Soviet Russia crossed out of the common platform and to have the whole struggle focussed on the defence of the 8-hour day, the fight against unemployment, etc.

"At the same time it should be stated that if the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals alter their opinion and give representatives who are prepared, not by word, but by deed, to convene the congress, we are ready to send our delegates back to the Committee of Nine."***

On May 17 the E.C.C.I. Presidium agreed with the proposal of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee and instructed its representatives on the Committee of Nine to declare the following: "The leaders of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals have often declared that the tactic of the united front as far as the Comintern is concerned was dictated merely by the state considerations of Soviet Russia. The statements of the Russian Communists prove the contrary. The Comintern, as a whole, demands from the representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals an official statement in connection with the declaration of the Russian Communists. Should the representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals really insist that the slogan in support of Soviet Russia should be withdrawn in one or another form, the delegation of the Comintern is prepared to take this statement of the representatives of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals into consideration and to have it duly discussed."* The initiative of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee supported by the Presidium of the Comintern Executive, demonstrated that the purpose of the tactics of the united front, as far as the Comintern was concerned, was to unite the labour masses of all countries in their struggle against the bourgeoisie for the workers' immediate demands, and that these tactics were dictated by the interests of the masses themselves and not by any foreign policy aims of Soviet Russia as the leaders of the Second International alleged.

Quite a different policy was pursued by the leaders of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals. On May 21, behind the back of the Committee of Nine, the representatives of a number of parties of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals made arrangements for an international labour conference to be convened without the participation of the Communists. This decided the outcome of the meeting of the Committee of Nine on May 23, at which the delegation of the Comintern announced its withdrawal from the Committee. The splitting tactics of the reformist leaders wrecked the efforts to set up a united proletarian front in the spring of 1922. That this was a deliberate design on the part of the leaders of the Second International was eloquently demonstrated by the admission of the German Social-Democratic newspaper *Vorwärts* that "the unity of the labour movement can be restored and strengthened only in sharpest struggle against the Communists".**

The Conference of the Second International held in London on June 18 and 19, 1922, resolved that the Second International "cannot take part in any further attempts to reach an international agreement with the Third International".***

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/86/18.
** Ibid., 495/18/86/19.
*** Ibid., 17/2/79/2.

* Ibid., 495/2/12/108.
** *Vorwärts*, May 29, 1922.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/33/185/157-158.

The delegation of the Comintern Executive on the Committee of Nine issued on May 24 an appeal to the workers of all countries exposing the splitting activities of the leaders of the Second International and stating that "the experiences of this first attempt to convene the World Labour Congress have proved that in order for it to be possible, it is necessary to break down the first line of resistance of the leaders of the Social-Democratic parties in Germany and England, that it is necessary in these countries, in practical daily struggle, to consolidate the working masses without regard to what party they belong into one united front which will then spread all over the world."* As opposed to the Second International, the enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. held from June 7 to 11, 1922, approved the activities of the Executive delegation in Berlin and resolved to carry on the tactics of the united front. The Plenum criticised the sectarian views on united front tactics held by the Communist Parties in France and Italy and among the "Left" opposition in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The communist parties carried on the struggle for united action of the workers after the Committee of Nine had ceased its activities. In Germany in the summer of 1922 the Communist Party sponsored united action by the working people against the increasing activity of the reactionary monarchist organisations. However, the Right-wing leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany and the trade unions, who took part in this movement under pressure of the masses, subsequently split the united front that was building up and prevented the working class from achieving real successes in its struggle against reaction.

The problem of the united front, primarily that of creating an anti-fascist united front, was brought into critical focus in Italy, where Mussolini's fascist gangs, with the support of the bourgeoisie, landowners and the machinery of state, were making a frenzied bid for power, wrecking labour organisations, and killing and terrorising activists of the labour movement. By aid of demagogy and the propaganda of extreme chauvinism and nationalism, fascism attracted the petty bourgeoisie and the more backward strata of the population, who regarded the struggle of the proletariat as the cause of all their ills.

At this moment the proletarian organisations of Italy proved unable to rally for the fight against fascism the working class, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, all who were concerned in defending democratic rights. The Socialist Party, which had a great influence on the working class, pursued a policy of "passive resistance", and even concluded with the fascists in August 1921 the shameful "appeasement pact" by which both sides undertook to abstain from hostile acts towards each other. This step on the part of the Socialist Party caused enormous damage to the working class's struggle against fascism. It clearly demonstrated that Party's inability to lead the anti-fascist movement.

The young Communist Party of Italy fought actively against fascism. Its leadership, however, headed by Bordiga, held sectarian views. It erroneously identified the coming to power of fascism as a simple change of people or groups at government level within the framework of the previous bourgeois regime; it failed to grasp the essence of fascism and refused to co-operate with other parties and political organisations who were prepared to challenge fascism. This led to the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard, "deprived the working class of the possibility of developing positive activity in regard to the different social groups and their political parties in order to isolate the more reactionary forces and establish the necessary collaboration in the struggle for democracy and socialism".* The Comintern Executive spared no effort to help the Italian Communist Party rectify its sectarian errors, and called upon the Italian Communists and socialists "to close your ranks and unite the millions of urban and rural proletariat under the slogan of a workers' government for the common fight against the growing impoverishment of the proletariat and the increasing onset of fascist reaction".** Despite the sectarian stand of the Bordiga leadership, the Italian Communists were in the front ranks of the anti-fascist fighters, setting to the workers an example of courage, devotion and readiness to fight fascism to the last ditch.

The onslaught of fascism was not stopped. October 1922 saw the establishment in Italy of a terrorist fascist dictatorship. This spelt severe defeat for the working class and all the democratic forces of the Italian people.

Events in Italy clearly demonstrated the emergence on the political scene in the capitalist world of a new and extremely active reactionary force—fascism, which monopoly capital tried to use for suppressing the revolutionary and democratic movement and

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 2, No. 42, May 27, 1922, p. 318.

* Togliatti, Palmiro, *Il partito communista italiano*, Ed. Riuniti, 1961, p. 44.

** *Pravda*, July 29, 1922.

establishing its own undisguised terrorist dictatorship. The Mussolini coup gave a boost to the fascist organisations in Germany, Poland and other countries. The fight against the fascist danger acquired growing importance for the international working class. It was necessary to work out the methods and means of this struggle, to define the political forces that could be rallied against fascism, to determine the place and significance of the anti-fascist struggle for the fulfilment by the proletariat of its revolutionary aims. The world communist movement understood the importance of this struggle and sought an answer to these problems, which life itself had set.

THE FOURTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Fourth Congress on the Tactics of the United Front

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International opened in Petrograd on November 5, 1922, and its subsequent meetings were held in Moscow. The Congress was attended by 58 communist parties and a number of labour organisations with a total of 408 delegates from 66 parties and organisations of 58 countries. According to the information of the Credentials Committee the communist parties at that period had a total membership of 1,253,000, of which 825,000 were in the ranks of the communist parties of the capitalist countries.* Seventeen parties gave no information about their membership.**

At the first meeting of the Congress a message of greeting from Lenin was read out, saying: "Notwithstanding the enormous obstacles confronting the communist parties, the Communist International is growing and becoming strong. The main goal is still to win over the majority of the workers. We *shall attain* this goal in spite of everything.... Soviet Russia considers it a matter of the greatest pride to help the workers of the whole world in their difficult struggle to overthrow capitalism. Victory will be ours.

Long live the Communist International!"***

The Congress discussed the report of the Comintern Executive, Lenin's address "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution" and questions concerning the attacks of capital and fascism, the programme of the Communist International, the tasks of Communists' work in the trade unions, workers' aid for the starving, the Eastern question, the agrarian question, the youth movement, the co-operative movement, work among the women, Communists' educative work, the

* The reduction in the number of Communists in the capitalist countries was due to the continued ebb in the revolutionary tide and the attacks of reaction, and also the resignation of unstable elements. During 1921-1922 a purge was carried out in the R.C.P.(B.).

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 491/1/338/2.

*** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 417.

Versailles Peace Treaty and the situation in some of the communist parties.

The report of the Comintern Executive delivered by the Executive's Chairman Zinoviev and Radek's address on the attacks of capital sized up the international situation, set forth the aims of the working class' defensive struggle, and made out a case for continued application of the tactics of the united front. Zinoviev's report contained grave errors in the evaluation of the prospects of revolutionary development. On the one hand, he declared that capitalism was unable to find a way out of the present situation. At the same time it followed from his words that fascism could be expected to come to power throughout central Europe. Zinoviev affirmed that, taking a broad view, this would be a revolutionising factor, "only an episodic intensification, a stage in the maturing of the proletarian revolution in Italy".*

The Congress did not accept this view. The majority of the delegates, including those of the R.C.P.(B.), rejected these at once Leftist, and capitulatory evaluations of Zinoviev's on questions of the prospects of the anti-fascist struggle. The theses on tactics adopted by the Congress stated that "legitimate" methods of suppressing the revolutionary struggle of the workers were no longer sufficient for the bourgeoisie. "This causes the bourgeoisie everywhere to create special white guards directed against all the revolutionary aims of the proletariat, to crush in most brutal fashion every attempt of the workers to improve their position."** Of great importance in building up the anti-fascist movement was the Congress' statement to the effect that the ascendancy of fascism "is directed also against the foundations of bourgeois democracy as a whole",*** that the bourgeoisie was out to substitute a crude form of whiteguard, terrorist reaction for the regime of democracy. The Congress noted that the fascists were not only forming armed terrorist organisations, but were attempting by means of social and nationalist demagogy to win the support of the masses —the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and even the backward sections of the proletariat. Analysing the nature and origin of fascism, its role and social base, the Congress stressed that the danger of fascism existed in many capitalist countries. The Fourth Congress stated that one of the most important tasks of the communist parties was to organise resistance to fascism. The communist parties had "to take the lead in the struggle of all the workers against the fascist bands and vigorously carry the tactics of the united front also in this field of activity, where the methods of illegal organisation are an absolute necessity".* The Comintern identified the policy of the united front ever more closely with the tasks of upholding the general democratic political demands and everyday needs of the workers.

"The working class always fights to win and hold its democratic rights, even if they are limited by bourgeois rule," Camilla Ravera, a delegate of the Italian Communist Party to the Fourth Congress, quotes Lenin as saying during a conversation with the Italian Communists. "And when it loses them it fights to recover them and at the same time seeks allies for itself. . . ."**

The Comintern considered that the further development of the class struggle in the capitalist countries could either lead to a direct proletarian revolution or have transition stages leading to such a revolution. "Between the present period of the domination of undisguised bourgeois reaction and the complete victory of the revolutionary proletariat over the bourgeoisie, there is a possibility of various intervening stages and transitional episodes," ran the Theses of the Congress. "The Communist International and its sections must bear in mind such eventualities, and prepare for the defence of the revolutionary positions under all circumstances."*** Taking into account the tasks of the transitional stage to the victory of the socialist revolution and generalising the experience of the communist parties, the Congress worked out in detail the questions of the tactics of the united front, which, it stressed, "may be the starting point for a new phase of the movement".****

The Slogan of a Workers' Government

In elaborating the tactics of the united proletarian front the Fourth Congress examined the possibility of creating a workers' government. A keen discussion developed around this slogan at the Congress. The dogmatic Leftist elements tried to interpret it

* *Bulletin of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, No. 3, November 12, 1922, p. 3.
** Ibid., No. 32, December 9, 1922, p. 11.
*** Ibid., p. 11.

* Ibid.
** *O Lenine. Vospominaniya zarubezhnykh sovremennikov*, p. 471.
*** *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, London, p. 28.
**** Ibid., p. 31.

merely as a terminological equivalent of the dictatorship of the proletariat. ("As to the watchword of the workers' government ... it might replace that of the dictatorship of the proletariat").* Similar views were held by Zinoviev, who at the Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in the summer of 1922 had claimed that a workers' government was the same thing as a dictatorship of the proletariat, a pseudonym for Soviet government.** In criticising these views, many delegates to the Fourth Congress, including members of the R.C.P.(B.) delegation, said that the slogan of the workers' government followed directly from the tactics of the united front, making it easier to draw the masses into the struggle, and that it should be regarded as a possible form of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In working out the question of the workers' government the Communist International was guided by the experience of the communist parties, who, in the concrete conditions of their respective countries, were trying to determine the form of approach or transition to the proletarian revolution. In this way they helped to enrich the collective experience of the whole world communist movement. The delegation of the Communist Party of Germany placed before the Congress for discussion a draft programme of the C.P.G. in which considerable attention was given to the question of transitional measures prior to the conquest of political power, among them the slogan of a workers' government. It pointed out that the demand for a workers' government was a suitable means of further liberation of the proletarian masses from the power of the bourgeoisie at a period when the independent mass movement of the proletariat reaches a definite level, when the gulf between the proletariat, the bourgeoisie and the labour leaders associated with them has widened, but the majority of the proletariat is not yet ready to break the framework of bourgeois democracy. In these circumstances the demand for a workers' government might become a broader starting point for the struggle for a proletarian dictatorship. Leaning on the armed workers, the workers' government should carry out a number of political, economic and financial measures, which, while formally within the framework of the bourgeois system, actually restrict the rights of the capitalists to dispose of their property and capitalist profits. The resistance of the bourgeoisie will naturally compel the workers' government to go beyond these half-measures and will make the masses see the need for the complete abolition of bourgeois ownership of the means of production, the need for breaking up the old bourgeois machinery of state and establishing a proletarian dictatorship. On behalf of the delegation of the C.P.G. Ernst Meyer, Edwin Hoernle and Walter Ulbricht submitted to the Drafting Committee amendments to the draft theses on tactics containing a more clear-cut definition of the slogan of a workers' government and characterising different types of such governments. These amendments were accepted by the Committee and adopted by the Congress.

The slogan of the workers' government was designed to counteract the attempts of the reformists to form coalition governments with the bourgeois parties in the interests of the bourgeoisie. The Fourth Congress regarded this slogan as an expression of the united front of all the working people and a coalition of all the workers' parties in the economic and political fields to fight bourgeois rule and achieve its ultimate overthrow. A workers' government could arise on a parliamentary basis too, but only in close connection with the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, only in the course of the mass struggle, given the backing of the masses and an intensified revolutionary movement. The Congress emphasised that the slogan of the workers' government, as a general agitational motto, could be used almost everywhere. But as a real political slogan it had significance for those countries where the alignment of forces between the workers and the bourgeoisie placed the question of government on the order of the day as a practical necessity demanding solution. The aims of a workers' government, which had not yet become a government of proletarian dictatorship, were to arm the working class and disarm the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, to introduce control over production, to place the burden of taxation on the propertied classes and suppress the resistance of the counter-revolution. The consistent application of these measures, by promoting the revolutionary education of the working people and rallying them behind the communist parties, could pave the way to the socialist revolution.

Communists should express their readiness to form a workers' government together with non-communist workers' parties and labour organisations on condition that this government actually fights the bourgeoisie. The communist members of such a government should be under the strictest control of their party and in close touch with the revolutionary organisations of the masses. The

* *Bulletin...*, op. cit., No. 4, November 13, 1922, p. 16.

** *Bericht über Tätigkeit des Präsidiums und der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale für die Zeit vom. 6. März bis 11 Juni 1922*, Hamburg, 1922, S. 123.

communist party should preserve its own face and be completely independent in its agitation. In all countries the establishment of a workers' government and its existence is inseparable from the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The slogan of a workers' government was an important step in the search for a way of bringing the masses to accept the idea of a socialist revolution. It combined in itself the idea of a struggle to uphold the daily economic and political interests of the working people and a fight for general democratic demands involving the masses in the struggle for socialism. It was a creative development of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of proletarian revolution.

Lenin's Report "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution"

Lenin urged Communists to creatively apply Marxist theory and the experience accumulated by the international communist movement to the concrete situation prevailing in their respective countries. The communist parties should provide not only for the possibility of transition to an offensive against the bourgeoisie, but for the possibility of retreat and the need for ensuring such a retreat, urged Lenin. It is not enough for Communists to know how to act when the revolution is on the offensive and is winning. "There are always times in a revolution when the opponent loses his head; and if we attack him at such a time we may win an easy victory. But that is nothing, because our enemy, if he has enough endurance, can rally his forces beforehand, and so forth. He can easily provoke us to attack him and then throw us back for many years."* Communists should learn from the lessons of fascism's victory in Italy. Lenin warned Communists that the danger of fascism brought to the fore the task of fighting reaction and that the experience which the communist parties would gain in this fight would help them to assimilate and apply the revolutionary experience of the R.C.P.(B.). Lenin urged the foreign Communists to assimilate the experience of the Bolshevik Party creatively, and not dogmatically, and learn to apply revolutionary theory in practice. It was most important for the fraternal parties, he said, to

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 421.

get to "really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work".*

Lenin analysed the cardinal problems of Soviet development following the end of the civil war, the tasks of socialist construction and the successes of the New Economic Policy. The leader of the Bolshevik Party showed that the R.C.P.(B.) had charted and carried out the only possible policy ensuring the victory of socialism, and had blazed a trail which other nations were bound to follow. "We have seized power for the workers and . . . our aim is to use this power to establish the socialist system," Lenin said. "Therefore, the most important thing for us was to lay the economic foundation for socialist economy."** The New Economic Policy pursued by the R.C.P.(B.), he stated, was the only correct way for building up the socialist economy, since the application of purely socialist forms of economy and distribution immediately after the victory of the revolution proved to be impossible. Lenin spoke about the need for realistically taking into account the general trend of economic development, saying that attempts to impose upon the national economy an unacceptable rate of development could only cause great dagame; it would undermine the economy and destroy the alliance between the working class and the peasantry.

Lenin, in his report, elaborated the very important theses previously advanced by him concerning the industrialisation of Soviet Russia. "Unless we save heavy industry, unless we restore it, we shall not be able to build up an industry at all; and without an industry we shall go under as an independent country. We realise this very well,"*** said Lenin. He gave special attention to the accumulation of resources for rehabilitating heavy industry and stressed the importance of trade and the need for the most rigid economy as a means of raising these resources. Lenin pointed out that a primary task of the R.C.P.(B.) was to acquire knowledge, learn to administer the state, to properly manage the national economy, to study and study.

Lenin's report generalised the experience which the R.C.P.(B.) had gained in its work of paving the way, politically and economically, to the victory of socialism in Soviet Russia, and he armed the world communist movement with this experience.

The Congress delegates expressed the highest opinion of the

* Ibid., p. 432.
** Ibid., p. 427.
*** Ibid., p. 426.

activities of the Bolshevik Party, which they described as the vanguard of the world communist movement. "The New Policy is not only unavoidable under the conditions prevailing in Russia, it is essential for the transition to communism," Clara Zetkin wrote to Lenin on November 12, 1922. "Mutatis mutandis, the proletariat in other countries, after the conquest of political power, will also have to tread the difficult path of the New Policy, of course in much more favourable circumstances than with you."* The resolution of the Fourth Congress on the question of the Russian revolution stated that Soviet Russia was the richest treasure-store of historical revolutionary experience for the world proletariat. The Congress pointed out that only by the joint efforts of the world's proletariat could the proletarian revolution in Russia be guaranteed from the attacks of the imperialist powers and from restoration of the bourgeois set-up. It called upon the workers of the world to support Soviet Russia. Discussing the question of proletarian aid to Soviet Russia, the Congress emphasised that it was the duty of all workers' parties and organisations, first and foremost of the Communists, to give immediate and effective support to Soviet Russia in her efforts to rehabilitate her economy, not only by conducting a revolutionary political struggle in their own countries, but by organising economic aid carried out by the broad masses, since "every improvement of the conditions within Russia, the first working-class state in the world, strengthens the international proletariat in its struggle against its class enemy, the bourgeoisie".**

Discussion of the Draft Programme of the Comintern

The discussion of the draft programme of the Comintern at the Congress was conducted in a constructive manner. The Second Enlarged Plenum of the Comintern Executive had set up a Programme Committee to draft the programme, consisting of Lenin, Zetkin, Cachin, Šmeral, Kuusinen, Béla Kun, Kabakchiev, Sen Katayama and other communist party leaders. A lively discussion developed on the Programme Committee and in the columns of the communist press on the question of what the Programme of the

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 2/1/23461/1.
** *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, op. cit., p. 90.

Comintern should be. It was agreed that the Programme should contain a characterisation of the contemporary epoch, a characterisation of imperialism, should make out an argued case for the inevitability of the socialist revolution, and the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism and communism. Opinion, however, was divided as to what answers the Programme was to give to the concrete questions of the class struggle in the capitalist countries, and how it was to present the more general slogans and demands of the communist parties, taking into account the specific conditions in their countries during the period preceding the conquest of political power.

Some believed that the Programme should not contain theses concerning the more general transitional demands of the communist parties (the slogan of a workers' government, workers' control over production, and others), which formed the content of the phase in which the masses were to be introduced to the aims of the proletarian revolution. They considered that these questions belonged to the sphere of the parties' practical activities and were therefore against having them generalised in the Programme of the Comintern.

Other participants in the discussion, including Zetkin, Šmeral and Varga, considered that the Programme should provide the communist parties with a strategic plan that would contain not only the bare principles of labour movement struggle, but concrete, practical methods of struggle for establishing the political rule of the proletariat in different countries, the more general transitional demands serving to mobilise the labour masses for the struggle against capital. This discussion, which centred around the problems of bringing the transitional demands into correlation with the ultimate aims of the socialist revolution, was continued at the Congress itself.

The Programme, drafted by Bukharin, confined itself to a characterisation of capitalism and imperialism, to general theses on communist society, and to a statement of the tasks confronting the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.* It contained no analysis of what the communist parties had to do to prepare and make good the victory of the proletarian revolution. Bukharin generally denied the need for giving theoretical substantiation in the Programme of the Comintern to the more

* Cf. *K voprosu o programme Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. (Materialy)*, On the Question of the Programme of the Communist International (Materials), Moscow, 1924, pp. 56-66.

general transitional and local demands. His point of view was sharply criticised by the Congress delegates, notably the spokesmen of the German and Bulgarian Communist Parties, who argued the need for having these transitional demands included in the Programme. "The programme of the communist party," said Kabakchiev, the Bulgarian Communist, "should not be a platform containing provisional demands of the moment, but a theoretical and principled statement of our historical world outlook, embracing at the same time the basic demands which the revolutionary proletariat is fighting for during the transition period prior to the conquest of power and during the period of proletarian dictatorship."*

Bukharin's draft had not been preliminarily discussed by the R.C.P.(B.) delegation. In his report at the Congress Lenin proposed that the Congress confine itself to a general discussion of the draft Programme, whose adoption should be put off to a later date. He considered necessary a more profound and many-sided elaboration of the Programme, especially the problems of strategy and tactics, the problems of transitional slogans, of "possible retreat, and preparations for it. Yet that is a question which, in view of such fundamental changes in the world as the overthrow of capitalism and the building of socialism with all its enormous difficulties, absolutely requires our attention".** The delegation of the R.C.P.(B.) asked the Presiding Committee to be given an opportunity to discuss the question of the place of the transitional demands in the Programme of the Comintern at a meeting of the delegation. The Presiding Committee granted this request.

On November 20 the Bureau of the R.C.P.(B.) delegation chaired by Lenin discussed the question of the draft Programme and went on record for having the transitional demands included in the communist parties' programmes and theoretically formulated in the preamble to the Programme of the Comintern.*** The decision adopted by the Congress called for work to be continued on the drafting of the Programme, which definitely had to contain a theoretical substantiation of all transitional and partial demands and clearly set forth the basic historical types of transitional demands of the different national sections in keeping with the basic distinctions in the economic and political structure of the different countries, such as, for instance, Britain, on one hand, India, on

* *K voprosu o programme...*, op. cit., p. 101.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 420-21.
*** Ibid., Vol. 42, p. 427.

the other, and so on. The Congress strongly condemned "all attempts to represent the inclusion of the transition demands into the programme as opportunism, and also all attempts to gloss over or to replace the basic revolutionary task by partial demands".* All decisions of the Congress urged the Communists to seek concrete ways which would make the task of introducing the labour masses to the revolution easier for them.

The decisions of the Fourth Congress on the agrarian question gave concrete expression to the slogans which the communist parties put forward in defence of the day-to-day interests of the working population of the countryside during the period preceding the victory of the proletarian revolution (defending the interests of the agricultural proletariat, against all forms of exploitation of the poor and middle peasants by capital, for securing exemption from taxation for the poor peasants, improving the condition of peasants working under the half-and-half system and reducing rents, for providing the land-poor peasants with land, livestock and the means of production, etc.). The communist party in every country should prove by ceaseless efforts on behalf of the rural working people that it is really a party of all the working people and the oppressed.

For a United Anti-Imperialist Front

The Fourth Congress thoroughly analysed the state of the national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries. By this time the war of the Turkish people for independence had ended in victory. The growth of the liberation movement in India, Egypt, Morocco, China and Korea, the awakening of the labour movement in the countries of the East and the emergence of communist parties strikingly demonstrated the correctness of the Comintern's Leninist policy in the national-colonial question, the Leninist teaching, which showed the national liberation movement to be a component part of the world proletarian revolution. The Communist International considered it a primary task of the Communists in the colonial and semi-colonial countries to create the core of communist parties, support the anti-imperialist national-revolutionary movement in every possible way, turn the com-

* *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, op. cit., p. 92.

munist parties into the vanguard of this movement and awaken and strengthen the social movement within the framework of the national liberation struggle.

A Congress of Revolutionary Organisations of the Far East was held in Moscow and Petrograd between January and February 1922. It was attended by delegates from China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, India, Indonesia and the peoples of Siberia. The Congress declared its complete solidarity with the decisions of the Comintern congresses on the national and colonial questions and made special mention of "the need for a correct understanding of the relationships between the national revolutionary movements and the workers' struggle for their social emancipation, as only in alliance with the international proletariat could the working masses of the Far East, enslaved by imperialism, win their national and social liberation".*

Speaking at the Fourth Congress, Sen Katayama, the veteran leader of the Japanese labour movement and founder of the Communist Party of Japan, said that at this Congress "we established a united front. The starting point was that the Japanese, Chinese and Korean Communists were to create a united front against Japanese imperialism."**

Elaborating the policy of the Comintern on the national-colonial question, the Fourth Congress advanced the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front. Its programme stood for winning an independent republic, abolishing all feudal rights and privileges, introducing an agrarian reform and progressive labour legislation and democratising the political system, etc., that is, carrying out an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic revolution. A condition of success for such a revolution was the alliance between the international proletariat and the Soviet republics. The Fourth Congress pointed out the inconsistency of the national bourgeoisie and stressed the necessity of supporting the national-revolutionary movement and making use of the national bourgeoisie's vested interest in achieving the basic aims of the anti-imperialist struggle. "The labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the position of an independent factor in the common anti-imperialist front. Only on the basis of recognition of this independence and the maintenance of complete independence is a temporary agreement with bourgeois

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/154/170.
** *Bulletin...*, op. cit., No. 19, December 1, 1922, p. 30.

democracy permissible and necessary."* The working class was to strive unremittingly towards an alliance with the peasant and semi-proletarian masses of these countries.

The Congress emphasised that the revolutionary movement in the colonies could not succeed unless it was based on the action of the broad peasant masses. The agrarian programme put forward by the Communists in the countries of the East called for the complete abolition of feudalism and its survivals and aimed at drawing the peasant masses into active struggle for national liberation. The Theses stated that Communists should see to it that the national-revolutionary parties adopt a radical agrarian programme. The Comintern made it clear that an important task of the communist parties in the backward countries was to make use of the progressive tendencies among the national bourgeoisie of these countries in the interests of fighting imperialism and feudalism. While describing the role of the feudalists and the feudal bureaucracy as a mainstay of foreign imperialism in the colonies, the Fourth Congress at the same time pointed out that where the feudal-patriarchal way of life had not yet disintegrated to the extent of being able to dissociate the native aristocracy completely from the popular masses, "those upper classes" could "take up the active leadership of the struggle against imperialism violence."** This directive gave the Communists of a number of countries in Asia and Africa an answer to the question as to the possible ways of struggle in these countries.

"While being completely aware that the will of a nation for political independence in varying historical conditions can be expressed by the most diverse classes, the Communist International supports all national revolutionary movements against imperialism. At the same time it does not lose sight of the fact that only a consistent revolutionary line of policy based on the active support of the masses, and the unreserved break with all advocates of compromise with imperialism in the interests of maintaining class domination, can lead the oppressed masses to victory."*** The Congress stressed that the proletariat of the East was faced with the long task of working "on its own training and that of the social classes closely allied to itself" in order to prepare itself for the role of political leadership. "The refusal of the Communists in the colonies to participate in the struggle against imperialist op-

* *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, op. cit., p. 59.
** Ibid., p. 54.
*** Ibid., p. 55.

pression on the pretext of alleged 'defence' of independent class interests, is opportunism of the worst kind calculated only to discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. Not less harmful must be recognised the attempt to isolate oneself from the immediate and everyday interests of the working class for the sake of 'national unity' or 'civil peace' with bourgeois democracy."* The Congress came to the conclusion that the communist parties of the East, "which are still in a more or less embryonic stage, must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses,"** that the working class of the colonies and semi-colonies can assume the role of revolutionary leader only by way of struggle against imperialism and that the economic and political organisation of the working class increases the revolutionary scope of this struggle.

The Theses of the Fourth Congress, as we see, clearly defined the close connection which exists between the class and national aims of the proletariat in the oppressed countries. These aims, far from being regarded as alternatives, supplemented each other. The tactic of the united anti-imperialist front in the East was closely bound up with the slogan of the united workers' front in the West. They were different aspects of the same tactic in the implementation of which the leading role of the proletariat and the communist party in the revolutionary process was achieved through an unremitting daily struggle within the framework of the united front. Recognition of this leading role was by no means considered a condition of "admission" of one or another political force to this front. The Congress pointed out that the struggle for a united anti-imperialist front "will facilitate the exposure of the wavering and hesitation of certain bourgeois nationalist groups in the East."***

The subsequent development of the national liberation movement showed that the new conditions could give rise to new ways and forms of drawing the popular masses into the revolutionary struggle.

The Comintern came out strongly against the nationalist and racial prejudices which prevented closer ties between the working-class Europeans living in the colonies and the indigenous population. It emphasised that "work in the colonies should be based not on these elements, who were steeped in capitalist and nationalist prejudices, but first and foremost on the native working-class youth".* The Theses on the Eastern question adopted at the Fourth Congress were imbued with Lenin's teaching about the need for the closest alliance between the socialist proletarian state, the revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries and the national liberation movement. The slogan of the united anti-imperialist front advanced by the Fourth Congress became an important contribution to the struggle of the oppressed peoples for freedom and independence.

* *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, op. cit., p. 58.
** Ibid., p. 59.
*** Ibid., p. 59.

The Fourth Congress on the Work of the Communist Parties Among the Masses. The Significance of the Congress

The more active work of the Communists among the masses demanded of every Communist an ability to act as organiser, propagandist, agitator and educator of the masses. The Congress dealt specially with the question of the communist parties' activities in the sphere of educating and cultivating the masses. The reports on this question were made by the German Communist Hoernle and by Nadezhda Krupskaya. They said that educative work should be carried on both within the parties themselves and among the broad masses of the working people. This work should be closely linked with the daily practice and everyday struggle of the masses and serve the aims of their political education and the training of revolutionary class fighters; it should make for the greater fighting efficiency of the party and of its organising and propaganda forces. Krupskaya cited the experience of the Bolshevik Party to illustrate the importance of ideological work. "The Communist Party has never separated the questions of agitation and propaganda from its fundamental work," she said. "Agitation and propaganda constituted the essential work of the Party."**

The Fourth Congress analysed the work of the Communists in the mass organisations—the trade unions, the co-operatives, and the women's and youth organisations. Its decisions orientated the

* *Kommunistichesky Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 349.
** *Bulletin...*, op. cit., No. 25, December 5, 1922, p. 8.

communist parties towards converting the different proletarian organisations into an instrument for defending the interests of the working people, a means for their revolutionary education. In the Theses concerning the tasks of the Communists in the trade union movement adopted on Lozovsky's report, the Congress stressed the need for working to prevent a split in the trade unions, to preserve the unity of the trade union movement and restore it where it had been disrupted by the reformists. The slogan of unity of the trade union movement formed the basis of the decisions adopted by the Second Congress of the Red Trade Union International, which was held in Moscow between November 19 and December 2, 1922.

On November 30, on the motion of Felix Kon, a member of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, a resolution was adopted for founding the International Red Aid, whose object was "to help our imprisoned comrades not only materially, but also morally".* This international organisation played an important role in developing and strengthening international solidarity among the workers and rendering aid to the victims of White terror and to fighters against fascism and war. The I.R.A. was run by prominent leaders of the international labour movement such as Julian Marchlewski, Clara Zetkin, Yelena Stasova and Wilhelm Pieck.

The Fourth Congress devoted considerable attention to the state of affairs in the various sections of the Comintern. The activities of the Communist Parties of France, Spain, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the U.S.A., Yugoslavia, Poland, Denmark and other countries were discussed at the plenary sessions of the Congress and in the committees. The decisions of the Congress and the committees were of great assistance to the parties in overcoming Social-Democratic survivals and sectarian dogmatic errors, and turning the sections of the Comintern into Marxist-Leninist parties of a new type. At its closing session on December 5, 1922, the Congress elected the Executive Committee. The election of the Executive at a meeting of the Congress (previously it was constituted on the basis of party representation) was proof of the successful process of consolidation of the Comintern as a united world party and of the growth of unity in the world communist movement.

The Fourth Congress took a new step towards the setting up of a united front of the working class. The Comintern made use of the fact that in December 1922 the Amsterdam International, under pressure of the labour masses, who came out against the

* *Bulletin...*, op. cit., No. 27, December 7, 1922, p. 16.

threat of a new world war, called an International Peace Congress at the Hague. The parties of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals, bourgeois pacifist organisations, trade unions and co-operative societies, including the Soviet trade unions and co-operatives, were invited to this Congress. The Fourth Congress of the Comintern, in an open letter to the Hague Congress, to the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals and the trade unions of all countries, called for joint action against the attacks of capital and the danger of war, for control over production, for an eight-hour day and a living wage for the proletariat, for a government of workers' parties united by common objectives, as an instrument of struggle for the immediate interests of the working class.* The delegation of the Soviet trade unions used the platform of the Hague Congress to fight against the danger of war and for the creation of a united workers' front, but the opportunist majority at the Congress rejected the proposals of the Soviet delegation.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International holds an important place in the history of the international labour and communist movements. The Congress elaborated the tactic of the united proletarian front, which it linked with defence of the general democratic demands, first and foremost with the tasks of fighting reaction and fascism. The Congress orientated the communist parties towards a creative search for new ways of introducing the masses to the proletarian revolution by citing the workers' government as a possible form of the working class's coming to power and its transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In generalising the experience of the national liberation struggle in the oppressed and dependent countries, the Fourth Congress advanced the slogan of the united anti-imperialist front and outlined a programme of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic revolutions in these countries.

In evolving the theory and tactics of the world communist movement the Comintern was guided by the analysis of the world revolutionary process contained in the works of Lenin. In these works was expounded the plan for building socialism in the U.S.S.R. which formed the basis of the activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Analysing the prospects of the world revolutionary movement, Lenin drew attention to the fact that in the struggle against imperialism there were united the

* Cf. *Voprosy istorii K.P.S.S.* (Questions of C.P.S.U. History), 1962, No. 1, pp. 144-48.

forces of the country where the proletarian revolution had won, of the labour movement in the capitalist countries and of the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples, constituting the absolute, gigantic majority of the world's population. He taught Communists revolutionary creativeness, the ability to grasp the peculiarities of the class struggle and of the development of the revolution in the concrete conditions of their respective countries, and the need for pursuing a correct policy in keeping with the situation, the alignment of class forces and the aims of the revolutionary struggle in their own country, the aims of the world revolutionary movement. The international communist movement is invariably guided in its activities by the precepts of the founder and leader of the Communist International—Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE COMINTERN DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY EVENTS IN THE AUTUMN OF 1923

The Struggle for a United Front in the Conditions of an Aggravated International Situation

In its appraisal of the international situation the Fourth Congress of the Comintern pointed out that despite the continued attacks of the bourgeoisie the situation remained objectively a revolutionary one capable at the slightest cause of becoming the starting point of great revolutionary battles. This forecast was confirmed in the course of the revolutionary events of 1923.

The military occupation of the Ruhr by the French imperialists sharply aggravated the international situation. A conference was held at Essen in January 1923 which was attended by Communist Party representatives from Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, France and Czechoslovakia, by delegates from the revolutionary trade unions of Germany and France, and by delegations from the Profintern and the Young Communist International. The conference warned the working people of Europe of the serious threat to peace as a result of the occupation of the Ruhr and called for a joint struggle against the attacks of capital and the menace of war.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern together with the Executive Bureau of the Profintern made a proposal to the II and Amsterdam Internationals to start talks for taking joint action to avert another war.* On January 15 another proposal was made to the leadership of the reformist unions to organise joint practical measures to combat fascism and support the Italian proletariat.** All the Comintern's proposals were rejected by the reformist leaders. The Communist International appealed directly to all workers, peasants, and soldiers to start an international campaign of protest against Franco-Belgian aggression in the Ruhr and launch an active struggle against the mounting fascist menace.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, No. 13, p. 105.
** Ibid.

The occupation of the Ruhr, the adverse effect which this had on Germany's economy and the increased exploitation of the German workers put a new impulse behind the class struggle within the country. In the van of this fight by the German working class for social emancipation and national liberation stood the Communist Party of Germany, which had the fullest support of the Comintern. The Communist Party took the lead in the strikes and actions against the foreign military intervention, against chauvinism and the anti-national, reactionary policy of the government, against the ruin and impoverishment of the working people, against fascism and separatism. The German Communist Party Congress, which was held at Leipzig during January 28-February 1, 1923, orientated the Party towards a mass struggle in defence of the workers' social and democratic rights and of the interests of the nation as a whole, towards the defensive struggle evolving into offensive action and the establishment of a workers' government. The Leftist elements at the Congress (Ruth Fischer, Arkadi Maslow and others) attempted once more, in effect, to get the tactic of the united front rejected. They interpreted the slogan of workers' government as the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Congress rejected their views and described the workers' government as a transitional stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus, with the help of the Comintern, the Communist Party of Germany arrived at the correct conclusion that the dictatorship of the proletariat could not be established "at a leap" and took the line that a workers' government was to be achieved as a transitional stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. This was giving concrete form to the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and signified a new important step by the German Communists towards practical determination of the ways of introducing the masses to the revolution in a country like Germany. At the same time the theses on the tactics of the united front and a workers' government and several other decisions of the German Communist Party Congress contained inaccurate and erroneous formulations which were conducive to the spread of Right-opportunist illusions about the possibility of a workers' government existing for a long time within the framework of bourgeois democracy, whereas the Communist International regarded the workers' government as a means of struggle against the bourgeoisie for its final overthrow, that is, as a transitional stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. In its resolution on the differences within the German Party the Comintern Executive pointed out the erroneous formulations contained in the resolutions of the Leipzig Congress. "The Workers' Government can be established on the basis of existing democratic institutions, which, however, will be abolished when the attack of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat will compel the broad masses of the workers including those following Social-Democracy to realise that democracy does not provide a sufficiently powerful weapon in the fight for proletarian interests," stated the resolution of the Comintern Executive. "The moment the workers' government begins to carry out its programme and is compelled to combat the bourgeois menace to its existence, it must break up the bourgeois instrument of power and establish a proletarian instrument of power."*

The Comintern warned the C.P.G. that the question of the workers' government could not be satisfactorily solved within the framework of separate parts of Germany and that it was necessary to aim at an all-German workers' government. The Comintern Executive pointed out that the task of the C.P.G. was "to take advantage of the danger which threatens the Social-Democratic Government in Saxony on the part of the Imperial Government and the menace of fascism over the whole country, to commence an energetic campaign for the establishment of a national workers' government".** This recommendation of the Comintern Executive mapped out a clear perspective for the German Party's activities.

During March 17-20 an international Conference was held at Frankfurt am Main called by the Rheinisch-Westphalian Shop Stewards Committees for the purpose of organising a campaign against the occupation of the Ruhr and fighting fascist reaction and the menace of another war. The Second, Second-and-a-Half and Amsterdam Internationals refused to participate in the Conference. The Conference was attended by representatives of the Comintern, the Young Communist International, the Profintern, the communist parties and revolutionary trade unions of the European countries and a number of German Social-Democratic organisations and Shop Stewards Committees. The Conference issued a manifesto "To the Workers of All Countries!" and adopted a resolution concerning the predatory attack of French imperialism on the Ruhr and the menace of another war, the fight against fascism and the establishment of a united proletarian front.

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* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1923, No. 25, p. 6847.
** *The Communist International*, 1923, No. 25, p. 112.

The Conference elected an International Committee of Action Against War Danger and Fascism headed by Clara Zetkin, Fritz Heckert and Henri Barbusse, which was entrusted with the task of campaigning for the creation of a united front of the proletariat on an international scale.* The Frankfort Conference adopted a decision to send a delegation to the reformist unions proposing the organisation of a united anti-fascist front, but this attempt, too, was sabotaged by the Right-Centrist splitters.**

The Comintern Executive warned the workers that the abolition of all democratic rights and freedoms, the regime of terror and violence, which the fascists had established in Italy, was a menace to the peoples of other capitalist countries. "Fascism does not fight merely against this or that political tendency in the working class, but against the class as a whole, for the bourgeoisie sees the sole possibility of a capitalist reconstruction only in intensified exploitation and absolute political subjugation of all workers."*** The rule of fascism was bound to lead to imperialist wars, in which it would act with the same brutality with which it wages the social war. The Comintern Executive called upon the workers of France, Germany, Britain, America and other countries to extend practical aid to the workers of Italy in their fight against fascism. "In fighting against Italian fascism, you are fighting for your own liberty, and are showing the ruling classes that you will never permit the rule of despotism and murder now raging in Italy to spread to other countries,"**** ran the appeal of the Comintern Executive of January 18, 1923. And the danger of this spread of fascism was becoming more and more obvious.

Owing to the marked deterioration in the economic situation the fascist organisations in Germany rose rapidly on the crest of the nationalist and chauvinist wave. Hitler's so-called National-Socialist Workers' Party backed by monopoly capital was subsidised by the most reactionary circles of the big bourgeoisie. The fascists resorted widely to social demagogy, peddled chauvinist and revanchist slogans in an attempt to win support among the declassed elements and among the petty-bourgeois and middle strata of town and country. The nazis organised militarised squads, attacked workers' meetings, killed Communists and prepared to seize power.

In view of the growing threat of fascism and the menace of

* *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, 1923, N. 52, S. 406-24.
** Ibid., N. 75, S. 651-52.
*** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 3, No. 16, Berlin, 1923, p. 129.
**** Ibid., p. 129.

war, and the striving towards unity of the workers demonstrated at the Frankfort Conference, the Comintern Executive sent a letter to the communist parties to prepare for a demonstration on May 1st. This letter of the Comintern's Secretariat stated: "Our Mayday demonstrations should, in our opinion, be directed chiefly against fascism. The primary and most important condition for an effective struggle against fascism is the development of the united proletarian front.... Our Mayday demonstrations should be directed against the menace of war."* "Workers, demonstrate against fascism on the 1st of May, against the danger of war—for the united front of the proletariat, for Soviet Russia!"** said the Mayday appeal of the Comintern Executive. The communist parties proposed joint action on May 1st to the Social-Democratic parties, but the latter refused. A 500,000-strong demonstration took place that day in Berlin. The demonstrators carried placards demanding the overthrow of the Cuno and Poincaré governments and the formation of armed self-defence detachments against the fascists, and a mock gibbet from which dangled an effigy of Hitler.***

In Italy, Spain, Poland, Latvia and Japan the workers, who came out to celebrate the First of May, were savagely attacked by the police and fascists.

While the striving towards unity among all contingents of the working class was steadily gaining ground, the reformist leaders, at a Congress held in Hamburg in May 1923, arranged the amalgamation of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals into the Socialist Labour International on the platform of Right-wing Social-Democracy. The Centrists from the Second-and-a-Half International capitulated to the Right leaders by renouncing even a verbal admission of the necessity of a social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The amalgamation of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals strengthened the position of the Right leaders of Social-Democracy and deepened the split in the international labour movement. The parties belonging to the new Socialist Labour International had a membership of over 6,700,000 in 1923.****

The Hamburg Congress refused even to give a hearing to the

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/44/236.
** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 3, No. 33 (15), Berlin, April 19, 1923, p. 272.
*** *Pravda*, May 3, 1923.
**** *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaft, Politik und Arbeiterbewegung 1923-1924*, Hamburg, S. 51.

delegation from the International Committee of Action Against War Danger and Fascism, which proposed discussing at one of the sittings the question of joint struggle by the workers of all countries, regardless of party or trade union allegiance, against the common menace of fascism and war.

The Third Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

In contrast to the splitting policy of the reformists the Third Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, which was held in Moscow from June 12 to 23, 1923, and attended by the representatives of twenty-six communist parties, devoted considerable attention to questions concerned with the struggle for a united front of the working class against the fascist menace. The Executive described the amalgamation of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals at Hamburg as capitulation by the Centrists to the reformists and called upon the communist parties to step up the fight against reformism in the labour movement. "But this can and should be carried out only on the platform of a struggle for the united front of the proletariat on a national and international scale. This struggle for a united front should be waged in all countries more and more systematically and determinedly, in the most concrete and popular manner. The united front of the social-patriots and the bourgeoisie should be countered by a fight against the bourgeoisie for a united front of all the exploited; the coalition of the labour parties with the capitalists should be countered by the joint struggle of all the workers' parties for a workers' and peasants' government and against the capitalists."*

The relationship between the working class and the peasantry is one of the cardinal issues of the international proletarian revolution. On the basis of the programme on the agrarian question framed at the Second Congress and concretised at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, the Plenum of the Executive put forward the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government as a concentrated political formula embodying and amplifying the decisions of these two congresses. "The communist party must be prepared already tomorrow to defeat the bourgeoisie," said the decision of the Plenum, "and therefore its task already today must

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 376.

be to set itself nation-wide aims and try to win to the support of the proletariat all those sections of the population, whose social position enabled them to give support to the proletarian revolution at the crucial moment."** An important role in strengthening the ties of the revolutionary workers with the peasant masses in the capitalist countries in the twenties was played by the International Peasants' Council (the Peasant International), a non-party peasant organisation affiliated to the Comintern. It was founded at the International Peasant Conference in October 1923. The International Peasants' Council strove to unite the peasants and free them from the influence of the landowners and capitalists. Its basic slogans were: "Workers and peasants of all countries, unite!" and the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government.

In defending the economic interests of the peasantry and other non-proletarian working masses, the communist party—the party of the working class—carries along with it all sections of the working people and stirs them to action against capitalism. The slogan of the workers' and peasants' government expressed the nation-wide aims of the struggle against the attacks of capital, reaction and fascism, and above all, the importance of bringing about an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. It gave concrete expression to the slogan of a workers' government put forward by the Fourth Congress and, as noted in the Decision of the E.C.C.I. Plenum, broadened the basis for applying the tactics of the united front and "paved the way to the dictatorship of the proletariat".** It saw the further elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the Communist International.

Zinoviev's report at the Plenum on the question of the united front gave a sectarian interpretation of these tactics, which it described as "a strategic maneuver" designed to expose the Social-Democratic parties, inasmuch as it was clear that these parties would not agree to a united front.*** Such an interpretation amounted in effect to a distortion of Lenin's teaching on the tactics of the united front and discredited, in practice, the slogan of the united front. Zinoviev's point of view found no confirmation in the decisions of the Plenum.

The report at the Plenum on the fight against fascism was made by Clara Zetkin. The discussion of this problem was most impor-

* Ibid., p. 371.
** Ibid.
*** *Rasshirenny plenum Ispolnitelnogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala (12-24 iyunya 1923). Otchot.* (Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I., Report), Moscow, 1923, p. 13.

tant in view of the fascist military coup in Bulgaria on June 9, 1923, the overthrow of the democratic government of Stamboliski and the establishment of a military fascist dictatorship. During these events the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party adopted a wrong stand by declaring that the fight was between two camps of the bourgeoisie—the rural and the urban, and that the Communist Party would take no part in it. The leadership of the B.C.P. failed to understand that this was not a question of a simple change of one bourgeois government by another, but the establishment of a reactionary terrorist regime and the liquidation of democratic freedoms. The E.C.C.I. Plenum comprehensively criticised the sectarian and doctrinaire attitude of the Bulgarian Party leadership, which led to the Party's opportunist inaction during the fascist military coup.

Clara Zetkin said in her report that fascism had to be reckoned with as "an extraordinarily dangerous and formidable enemy.... The fight against fascism is the business of the whole proletariat."* Zetkin rejected the vulgar concept of fascism as being merely an instrument of bourgeois terror. Fascism, she said, differed from other forms of reactionary bourgeois dictatorship in that it had the backing of a considerable part of the population—the petty bourgeoisie, the declassed elements and even the backward strata of the proletariat. The reaction made skilful use of this support to brutally crush even bourgeois democracy in general. "Fascism bears different aspects in the various countries, according to the concrete conditions prevailing there," she said. "But two features are common to it in all countries: first, a sham revolutionary programme most skilfully adapted to the temper, interests and demands of the broad social masses, and secondly, the use of the most brutal terror."** To fight fascism a flexible policy was needed, which would enable you to isolate fascism and rally against it the broadest sections of the population and win over the middle strata, the peasantry and the intellectuals, "all those sections, whose economic and social condition place them in opposition to big capital".*** The workers had to be made to realise that they would share the same fate as the Italian working class unless they took vigorous revolutionary action against the ruling class to prevent the influx to fascism of the less class-conscious elements, said the resolution of the Plenum. The workers' organi-

* *Protokoll der Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau, 12-13 Juni 1923*, Hamburg. 1923. S. 204-205.
** Ibid., S. 211-12.
*** Ibid., S. 226.

sations should therefore attack capitalism with the greatest energy in order to protect the broad masses from exploitation, oppression and profiteering, and challenge the pseudo-revolutionary, demagogic slogans of fascism by a serious and organised mass struggle. "They must do everything in their power to prevent initial attempts to organise fascism in their own countries and always bear in mind that the best way to fight fascism in Italy and the rest of the world is to fight it energetically in their own country."*

The Communist International never tired of calling upon the workers to close their ranks against fascism. "In Germany, fascism is rearing its head," said the Open Letter of the E.C.C.I. to the Executive Bureau of the Profintern and to the Socialist Labour and Amsterdam Internationals dated August 25, 1923. "The international organisations of the proletariat must help the German revolutionary workers in repelling fascism."** The Comintern Executive proposed holding an international conference of solidarity with the German working class and discussing at it the questions of fighting for peace. Again the proposals of the Comintern were ignored by the reformist leaders.

The Problems of a United Anti-Imperialist Front in Indonesia and China

The Comintern Executive took concrete steps to have the decisions of the Second, Third and Fourth Congresses of the Comintern on the national-colonial question consistently carried out. Most characteristic in this respect was the Executive's stand on the questions of national policy relating to the liberation struggle in Indonesia and China.

The Comintern Executive had repeatedly pointed to the advisability and necessity of the Communists in Indonesia working in the revolutionary-nationalist organisations, notably the Sarekat Islam, which bore a mass character at the time. Some of the leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party objected to these tactics.

In a letter to the Indonesian C.P. leadership early in 1923 the Comintern Executive drew attention to the anti-imperialist nature

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 383.
** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 3, No. 59 (87), September 6, 1923, p. 652.

of the national-revolutionary movements in the countries of the East. "You know only too well," said this letter, "how important the Sarekat Islam movement is for us. There is no need to write about this importance, because our party has been striving towards co-operation with the Sarekat Islam from the very outset. The Third International, too, is greatly interested in this movement.... The difficulties which two or three leaders of the Sarekat Islam might create are nothing compared to the advantage which the mass of the Sarekat Islam would mean for us." In a letter to Omar Said Tjokroaminoto, a prominent leader of the Sarekat Islam, sent through the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party, the Comintern Executive pointed out that the Sarekat Islam organisation put forward demands which were in keeping with the interests of the broad masses and were most strikingly demonstrated beginning with March 1921, when the congress of this organisation formulated the slogans of "restoring all the land to the peasants, introducing common ownership at factories and mines, and workers' control". In the view of the E.C.C.I., said the letter, the Sarekat Islam was "more than an ordinary nationalist movement". "We know that our cause does not always fall in with that of the Sarekat Islam," ... "but this could not be an obstacle to a joint anti-imperialist struggle". The aim of the Comintern Executive, the letter went on, was to establish "unity of action between the Sarekat Islam and the Third International".*

The leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party at that time considered this tactic unacceptable. It adopted a course aimed at a break with the Sarekat Islam, and took away from this organisation the greater part of its sections, which formed the Red Sarekat Islam, and then the Sarekat Rakjat (Union of the People), a predominantly peasant organisation. The leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party had no clear idea as to the place and role of the communist party in the system of democratic political forces and mass organisations, and this was fraught with the danger of the Communists being engulfed in the democratic movement. In particular it had no clear-cut dividing line in its relations with the Sarekat Rakjat organisation. The Comintern advised the Indonesian Communists to take the line of strengthening their leading role and turning the Sarekat Rakjat into a separate national-revolutionary party acting in close alliance with the Communist Party, which was to strengthen its influence in this organisation to the utmost.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., Collection of unsorted documents.

While advocating the establishment of national-revolutionary and worker-and-peasant parties in the East, the Comintern Executive had no intention whatever of supplanting the activities of the communist parties, nor did it consider the national-revolutionary parties with a mainly worker and peasant membership to be a guarantee of a worker-and-peasant policy on the part of their leadership. The question at issue was that of mass organisations in which the Communists were to challenge the bourgeois elements for a controlling influence and hegemony.

The Comintern Executive gave especially serious attention to the problem of a united front with the national-revolutionary forces in China. The First Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in July 1921, rejected the tactic of collaboration with other parties. "We must... defend the interests exclusively of the proletariat and not enter into any relations with other parties,"* stated one of its resolutions. Many Chinese Communists at that time saw the socialist revolution as their immediate task. The representatives of the Comintern in China commented in their reports on the Chinese Communists' isolation from the working class and the national-revolutionary movement. This was a specific form of " 'Left-wing' infantile disorder" characteristic of many communist parties of the East. It required the experience of the struggle to bring home to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party that the line which the Comintern had recommended was the correct line.

A step forward in shaping a correct policy was the decision of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of China, which adopted a resolution calling for a united front with the nationalists (that is, with the Kuomintang). Among other things the resolution said: "We must unite with all revolutionary parties and organise a united front in order, by our joint efforts, to overthrow the party of the militarists and imperialists, and lay the foundation of a real democratic and independent nation."**

On January 12, 1923 the E.C.C.I. adopted a resolution "On the Attitude of the Communist Party of China to the Kuomintang Party". The Executive concluded that "the central problem for China was a national revolution against the imperialists and their internal feudalist agents",*** that "the only serious national-

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 514/1/13.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 514/1/33.
*** *Strategia i taktika Kominterna v natsionalno-kolonialnoi revolutsii na primere Kitaya* (The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution as Exemplified by China), Moscow, 1934, p. 112.

revolutionary grouping in China was the Kuomintang Party, which had the backing of part of the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie and part of the intellectuals and workers",* and that the working class was directly concerned in the victory of the national revolution, and recommended the members of the Chinese Communist Party to work within the Kuomintang. This by no means entailed any loss or weakening of the Communist Party's independence. Taught by the hard experience of the struggle (the defeat of the Peking-Hankow strike of the railwaymen in February 1923) that the Communist Party of China stood in need of mass allies, its leadership came to the conclusion that the tactics recommended by the Comintern were correct. Riding through the resistance of the sectarians and Right opportunists, the Third Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (June 1923) adopted a decision based on the ideas of the E.C.C.I.'s resolution of January 12, 1923.

The Comintern considered that the national anti-imperialist aims of the proletariat of the oppressed countries and its own class aims in no way contradicted each other. In view of this, the strengthening of the communist parties' positions in the national-revolutionary organisations of the East was in keeping with the direct class interests of the proletariat and tended to promote the national-revolutionary movement, to prepare for those "great battles and revolutions" of whose approach in the East Lenin had spoken.

In its policy on the national-colonial question the Comintern was guided by Lenin's thesis stressing the need for an alliance between the international labour movement and the revolutionary movement in the East. When M. Borodin went to China in 1923 in the capacity of representative of the Comintern he received instructions to be guided in the fight against imperialism above all by the interests of the national liberation movement in that country.

The E.C.C.I. rendered systematic assistance to the revolutionary forces of China. In November 1923 the Executive adopted a "Resolution on the Question of the National Liberation Movement and on the Party of the Kuomintang".** The resolution drew the attention of the Kuomintang to ineffective nature of the political struggle among the leadership without the backing of the broad masses of the peasantry and the urban population. The keynote

* Ibid.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 514/1/36.

of the resolution was the statement of the Comintern's point of view on the substance of the Kuomintang's "three popular principles" (nationalism, democracy and public welfare).

The principle of nationalism was interpreted as a struggle by the Kuomintang against world imperialism and its hirelings, for the independence of China, backed by the broad strata of the peasantry, workers, intellectuals and trade and industrial circles, i.e., as an anti-imperialist nationalism. For the working population nationalism meant abolition of the feudal-despotic yoke and unrestrained exploitation by foreign as well as national capital. Another aspect of this principle was collaboration between the national movement in China and the liberation movement among the nationalities oppressed by the Chinese ruling circles and recognition of these nationalities' right to self-determination.

Democracy was interpreted as the principle of securing all rights and freedoms for the population and organisations sharing the platform of struggle against imperialism.

The principle of "public welfare", in the opinion of the Comintern, could have a revolutionising significance for the masses if interpreted in the sense of nationalisation of foreign firms, enterprises, banks, railways and waterways, the transfer of the land to those who worked it, and the easening of the burden of taxation.

The resolution pointed to the necessity of setting up a united anti-imperialist front between the liberation movement in China and the workers' and peasants' state—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The First Congress of the Kuomintang (January 1924) showed that the leadership of this organisation, headed by Sun Yat-sen, accepted the recommendation of the Comintern in the matter of building up the national-revolutionary movement.

The Comintern's decisions on the Chinese question, its practical assistance in reorganising the Kuomintang into a mass national party, and the Soviet Union's support of the national government of China—all these gave effect to Lenin's idea about a united anti-imperialist front. The Kuomintang, with the Communists as its revolutionary vanguard, became a party based on a bloc of China's anti-imperialist forces. The Kuomintang's conversion into a national party—a process to which the Comintern actively contributed—stirred the masses of China's people and was an important factor in the preparation of the Chinese revolution. Within the framework of this peculiar "multi-class" party there developed a struggle for leadership between the revolutionary elements and the bourgeois-landowner circles.

Lessons of the September Uprising in Bulgaria and the General Strike in Poland

The E.C.C.I. at this time rendered considerable assistance to the Bulgarian Communists. Thanks to the help of the Comintern the Communist Party of Bulgaria was able to discard its erroneous sectarian policy and take a firm course towards rallying all the anti-fascist forces into a single bloc of working people of town and country. Preparations were started for an uprising within the country. The aim of the uprising was defined as a general democratic one: the overthrow of the monarcho-fascist dictatorship and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. The uprising was being prepared as a popular one, involving all the democratic forces. An important part in framing the Party's new course was played by V. Kolarov and G. Dimitrov. Dimitrov's articles published in the Party's central organ *Rabotnichesky Vestnik* dealt with the questions of the united front, demonstrated the vital necessity of co-operation between all the working people and the country's democratic forces for an all-out struggle against the fascist dictatorship and clarified the general democratic content of the anti-fascist struggle. "Fascism is by no means only *anti-communistic*, it is also *anti-people*," wrote Dimitrov. "The general vital interests of the masses and the intellectuals, as well as of their political parties and economic organisations, now demand that their freedoms, rights, honour and lives be defended by their joint efforts and that bourgeois reaction and its most typical manifestation—fascism—be nipped in the very bud."* A united front of the masses and their political parties and economic organisations, wrote Dimitrov, would guarantee the country a really popular rule by a worker and peasant government, which would mean channeling the country's economic, cultural and political life and all social development in the direction of satisfying the needs and ensuring the rights, freedoms, lives, welfare and peace of the working people. Thus, on the basis of a concrete analysis of the aims and tasks of the anti-fascist struggle in the international communist movement there arose and developed the concept of new ways of development of the liberation movement

* G. Dimitrov, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya* (Selected Works), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, pp. 100-01.

in which the tasks of the general democratic struggle against reaction and fascism, for wider democratic rights became more and more closely linked with the tasks of the struggle for socialism.

The Comintern worked for the creation in Bulgaria of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. "The workers and peasants of Bulgaria must reply to Zankoff's provocatory policy by closing their ranks, by organising illegal groups all over the country, by mass agitation among the hundreds of thousands and millions of toilers, and, when the moment arrives, by the formation of a workers' and peasants' government," said the Appeal of the Comintern Executive dated September 1923. "The wave of hate against the government of the White executioners mounts higher and higher; the moment will come when the Bulgarian workers and peasants will mete out just retribution for the brutality they have suffered."*

The Bulgarian Communist Party proposed the formation of a united front to the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, the Social-Democratic Party and other democratic parties. The proposal was accepted only by the Left wing of the Agrarian Union. In co-operation with them the Bulgarian Communist Party took the lead in the armed uprising of the people in September 1923. This was the first anti-fascist Communist-led uprising in history. Though it suffered defeat, it served as a great lesson for the Communist Party and the masses, for the entire world communist movement. The Communist Party's gallant fight for an anti-fascist front, the heroism shown by the Communists and proper linking of the tasks of the proletarian class struggle with the general democratic aims of the struggle against reaction and fascism, drew the Party closer together with the masses and created "the prerequisites for turning the Party into the real leader of the working people of town and country in the fight for democracy and socialism".**

In the autumn of 1923 turbulent manifestations of the working class shook the foundations of Poland's bourgeois-landowner regime. The strike movement developed with unprecedented power. Often the strikes bore a political character and were accompanied by street demonstrations and clashes with the police. The Communist Labour Party of Poland marched in the van of the workers' struggle. In August 1923 it made a proposal to the Polish Socialist

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 3, No. 64 (41), October 4, 1923, p. 717.

** G. Dimitrov, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1957, p. 590.

Party and the "Wyzwolenie" Peasants' Party to form a united front for establishing a workers' and peasants' government capable of defending the interests of the masses, making the landed estates over to the landless and land-poor peasants without payment, recognising the right of the national minorities to self-determination, ensuring Poland's independence of the imperialist powers and effecting closer relations with the U.S.S.R. The Second Congress of the C.L.P.P., which was held during September 19-October 2, 1923, called upon the working people of Poland to set up a united workers' front, to form an alliance between the working class, the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities under the leadership of the working class, and to join forces to overthrow the bourgeois-landowner system and establish a workers' and peasants' rule. The decisions of this Congress drafted by Adolf Warski, Maria Koszutska, G. Walecki, E. Pruchniak and other prominent leaders of the Party, exemplified the creative application of Lenin's teachings to Polish conditions.

One of the centres of the mass strike movement in the autumn of 1923 was Upper Silesia, where the congress of shop stewards committees elected an organ of the united front—the "Committee of 21"—made up of Communists, socialists and trade-unionists. The Committee was headed by the Communist J. Weczorek. A general strike sponsored by the "Committee of 21" broke out in Upper Silesia on October 15, involving miners, metal workers, railwaymen, postal workers, municipal workers, and so on. The government reacted to the mounting strike wave by introducing a state of emergency in the country. Yielding to the pressure of the workers the leadership of the Polish Socialist Party and the reformist trade unions were compelled on November 5 to declare a general strike of protest against militarisation of the railways and the introduction of court martials. Simultaneously the leaders of the opportunist parties entered into negotiations with the government in the hope of securing certain concessions and then calling off the strike. The Communist Party called upon the working people to carry on the struggle in a united front to overthrow the bourgeois government.

The strike of November 5 affected many districts throughout the country. In Cracow it developed into an armed clash. The insurgents, however, had no leading centre. Most of the Cracow Communists were in prison, and those at large were unable to take the lead of the uprising. The leaders of the Polish Socialist Party made a deal with the authorities and contrived to disarm the workers. They followed this up with a decision to call off the

general strike. The Communist Party, weakened by harsh repressions and still lacking influence on the majority of the working class, was unable to get the general strike to continue.

Summing up the events in Cracow, the E.C.C.I. pointed out "that the alliance of the worker and peasant, sealed with blood in Cracow, was the chief condition for the victory of the Polish revolution: this was the chief lesson to be learned from the Cracow events, the chief task of the Communists".* The E.C.C.I. exposed the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party, who had betrayed the Cracow insurgents, and called upon the Polish workers and peasants, the working people of the national minorities oppressed by the Polish capitalists and landowners, to unite under the banner of the Comintern and fight to overthrow the government of the capitalists and landowners and establish a workers' and peasants' government.

The German Question in the Comintern

In 1923 the attention of the international proletariat was riveted on the events in Germany. Under the leadership of the C.P.G. a mass movement was launched in the country against the anti-national, reactionary policy of the Cuno Government. The strike movement became widespread in the spring and summer of 1923. The Communist Party's prestige was enhanced. The influence of the Right leaders of Social-Democracy and the trade unions declined, although they still had the majority of the working class behind them. The workers' urge towards united action found expression in the setting up of bodies of the united front—shop stewards committees and committees of unemployed—and the formation of proletarian self-defence squads against the menace of fascism and war. In May 1923 the Central Committee of the C.P.G. called for a struggle to overthrow the Cuno Government and establish a workers' government. The C.P.G. devoted great attention to the growing fascist menace within the country. On July 29 the Party organised throughout the country an Anti-Fascist Day in which hundreds of thousands of workers took part. The slogan for the overthrow of the Cuno Government acquired growing popularity among the Social-Democratic workers as well, who exercised pressure on their leaders. On August 11 the Berlin

* *Pravda*, November 17, 1923.

Committee of Revolutionary Shop Stewards issued a call for a general strike to overthrow the Cuno Government. The strike of the Berlin workers began the same day. On August 12 the C.C. of the C.P.G. and the National Committee of Shop Stewards called for a general strike throughout the country. The Right Social-Democratic leaders were compelled to withdraw their support of the government. The Cuno Government fell. Stresemann formed a coalition government in which the Right-wing Social-Democrats were represented.

Frightened by the course events had taken, the German bourgeoisie concentrated all its forces on suppressing the revolutionary movement. On September 27 a state of emergency was introduced in the country. The abolition of bourgeois-democratic freedoms testified to the fact that the ruling class was no longer able to retain power by the old means. At the same time the continued deterioration in the workers' economic condition led to an aggravation of class contradictions and to intensification of the class struggle.

The C.P.G.'s strategic line of action, worked out at the Leipzig Congress early in 1923, consisted in the establishment of a united proletarian front by way of a struggle in defence and for the extension of democratic freedoms, for improvement in economic conditions, for an alliance between the working class and other strata of the working people, and developing the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government. In the concrete conditions that prevailed in Germany, with the bourgeois government disposing of considerable military strength and the fascist bands becoming steadily more active, the Communist Party had to link the leadership of the mass struggle with preparations for an armed uprising.*

After the general strike and the fall of the Cuno Government the C.P.G. and the Comintern Executive proceeded from the assumption that a revolutionary crisis was rapidly coming to a head in Germany. On August 28 the Politbureau of the C.C. of the C.P.G. appointed a group of six C.C. members to carry out the preparatory work of organising the uprising. A Military Council was set up, which worked out a plan for the military organisation of the uprising and started to form, train and arm the proletarian fighting units.** The Party organisations gave their chief attention to the military technicalities of the planned uprising. However, the leadership of the Party, headed by Heinrich Brandler, underestimated the importance of continuing to build up the mass movement in defence of the working class's social and democratic rights. "After the Cuno strike the mistake was made of wanting to put off spontaneous movements until the decisive struggle took place," the E.C.C.I. noted in January 1924. "The feverishness of the technical preparations during the decisive week, the view that the struggle was only a Party struggle, and the concentration on the 'final blow' without preliminary and accumulative partial struggles and mass movements, made it impossible to examine the true relation of forces and to fix proper dates."* The Party's leadership overestimated the degree of readiness of the masses for the decisive battles and the rate at which the revolutionary crisis was building up, and underestimated the maneuverability of the imperialist and militarist forces.**

With a view to rendering assistance to the Communist Party of Germany the E.C.C.I. called a Conference of representatives of the Communist Parties of Germany, France, Czechoslovakia and the R.C.P.(B.). The Conference opened on September 21, 1923. Lenin was seriously ill at the time and did not attend the Conference.

A report on the situation in Germany was made by Heinrich Brandler. He exaggerated the degree of preparedness of the Communist Party for the decisive battles to win power and gave a wrong picture of the state of affairs in the Social-Democratic Party. The participation of the broad masses of the workers in the general strike against the Cuno Government was construed by him as readiness on the part of the German working class to join the struggle throughout the country under the leadership of the Communist Party. Seizure of power by the Communist Party, he asserted, would not meet with serious resistance. "We all top-level functionaries consider that the seizure of power will be a quite feasible and not difficult task,"*** he said.

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* Cf. *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 3, S. 416.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/70/6.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 4, No. 14, February 27, 1924, p. 109.

** Cf. *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 3, S. 422-23.

*** *Pravda*, September 22, 1923. O. Kuusinen, who attended this conference, afterwards wrote: "Brandler at this point even let his revolutionary imagination run wild. The seizure of power now seemed to him an easy and sure job. He greatly exaggerated the Party's readiness for the struggle and military preparedness, thereby making it very difficult for the Executive to get a correct idea of the immediate difficulties and requirements of the German movement" [O. Kuusinen, *Neudavsheyesya izobrazheniye 'nemetskogo Oktyabrya'* (A Faulty Portrayal of the 'German October')], Moscow-Leningrad, 1924, p. 11.

In estimating the German Communist Party's preparedness for revolutionary battles, Brandler declared that the Party disposed of proletarian fighting units amounting to 250,000 strong,* and had started to form them into fifteen divisions. He claimed further that the problem of arms had in the main been settled, and the only technical difficulty was distributing these arms without having the police upset the arrangements for arming the detachments.**

The exaggerated optimistic picture painted by Brandler was challenged by Ernst Thälmann and Hugo Eberlein. Thälmann said that Brandler's report was based not on an analysis of the situation and the alignment of forces all over the country, but merely on an appraisal of the situation in Saxony and Thuringia, where the movement of the united workers' front was most widespread. Pointing out that the general strike had demonstrated that the masses were becoming aware of the need for an armed uprising, Thälmann declared that Brandler nevertheless had overestimated the line-up of forces. The proletarian units, he said, were entirely unprepared for military action and had no weapons. He repudiated Brandler's optimistic statement claiming that they could speedily be armed. "We spoke very seriously in Moscow that you can't play at proletarian revolution if preparations, both political and military, have not been properly made," Thälmann emphasised at the meeting of the C.C. of the C.P.G. on November 3, 1923. "Brandler talked about divisions, but as a matter of fact the situation was such that we had no possibility of arming our fighters."*** Thälmann warned that the Party ideologically and politically was unprepared for civil war.

Eberlein said that the Party was unanimous in its appraisal of the situation and the prospects of the struggle and that in speaking of the fighting organisations and arms Brandler was doing wishful thinking. These detachments, he said, were still in the process of formation and there was a shortage of weapons. The meeting, however, did not take into consideration these serious arguments of Thälmann and Eberlein.

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* Actually, by the middle of October 1923, they numbered about 133,000. C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/70/29.

** In its letter to the C.C. of the C.P.G. dated November 5, 1923, the E.C.C.I. stated: "Your reports in Moscow concerning the degree of organisation and technical preparedness, especially in regard to arming, were grossly exaggerated." C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/70/85.

*** *Ocherki po istorii vooruzhonnogo vosstaniya* (Articles on the History of the Armed Uprising), Vol. II, Moscow, 1931, pp. 60-61.

Fischer and Maslow, representing the "Left" opposition in the C.P.G., demanded, instead of a workers' and peasants' government, that the Party should make it its immediate task to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power, to shape a policy towards direct seizure of power. Zinoviev actively supported them. Summing up the discussion, he said on October 4 that for the present stage of development in Germany the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government was insufficient and he urged that the masses be told that a workers' and peasants' government signified nothing more than the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets.

Zinoviev informed the Conference of the theses "The Coming German Revolution and the Tasks of the R.C.P." drafted mainly by Zinoviev and adopted on September 23 by the Plenum of the R.C.P. Central Committee. The theses stated that conditions in Germany were ripe for the victory of the proletarian revolution. "It is now quite clear that the proletarian revolution in Germany is not only inevitable, but already quite near, close at hand. The German Communist Party has won over the majority of the active sections of the proletariat. In the very near future the German Communist Party will be in a position to rally behind it the majority of the whole proletariat."* The theses stated that German Social-Democracy was in the grip of an acute crisis and had lost its prestige among the masses. The majority of the Social-Democratic workers, the theses stated, were on the side of the "Left" opposition and "would take the road pointed out by the Communist Party as soon as they saw the 'new' leaders of the Social-Democratic Party pursuing the old policy". The Stresemann Government was described in the theses as a government that had no real power.

On October 1 the E.C.C.I. at a meeting with representatives of the C.P.G. adopted a decision concerning the advisability of representatives of the C.P.G. joining the governments of Saxony and Thuringia on condition that the Left Social-Democrats at the head of the governments expressed their readiness to defend Saxony against Bavaria, where the fascists had become active, that 50 to 60 thousand workers be armed and that resistance be offered to General Müller, who had been sent to Saxony by the German Government to suppress the revolutionary struggle. The same applied to Thuringia. This decision was based on the conviction

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* C.P.A., I.M.L., 17/2/101/6.

that an armed uprising was bound to take place in the country within the next 4-6 weeks and that by joining the governments of Saxony and Thuringia the Communists would help the revolution come to a head.*

The plan of the Party's action, drafted at the meeting, was based on the following: the proletariat was to take action in Saxony and come out in defence of the workers' government. The proletariat of Saxony was to use the state power to arm itself and was to form a bulkhead in the densely populated proletarian areas of Central Germany between the Bavarian counter-revolution in the south and fascism in the north. Simultaneously the Party was to rally the masses and take action throughout the country.**

In the analysis of the situation in Germany the ripeness of the situation was overestimated and the strength of the opponent underestimated.*** By the autumn of 1923, despite the fact that revolutionary moods were strong among the German working class and the Party held stronger positions in the most important trade unions and shop stewards committees at the biggest enterprises, the Communist Party had not yet achieved the leadership of the majority of the working class. Social-Democracy, which had the backing of the trade unions, still retained its influence over the bulk of the German proletariat.

The decisions of the meeting were based on an unduly optimistic appraisal of the situation in Germany. Instead of orientating the Party towards rallying the masses to the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government in Germany, as demanded by the moment, they set tasks which meant skipping phases of the struggle; the quest for ways of introducing the masses to the revolution, as mentioned in the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, was underestimated. On October 8 the leadership of the C.P.G., in an Appeal "To the German Proletariat", advanced the slogan stating that the White dictatorship should be opposed by a Red dictatorship, and instead of the Reichstag, power should be taken over by a congress of Soviets. "The demand for a Soviet government for the whole country was ill-timed, and, naturally,

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* *Uroki Germanskikh sobytii* (Lessons of the German Events), p. 55.

** Ibid., p. 5.

*** In its letter of February 4, 1924, to the C.C. of the Polish Communist Party the C.C. of the R.C.P.(B.) wrote: "The Executive of the Comintern admits that in October we all overestimated the stage of ripeness of the situation and underestimated the strength of the opponent." *Nowy przegląd*, Gliwice, 1924. No. 3, S. 666.

incompatible with the simultaneous declaration for joining a coalition government with the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in Saxony and Thuringia,"* Walter Ulbricht commented in this connection.

The real state of affairs in Germany was quite unlike the "glowing picture"** which Brandler had painted at the meeting in Moscow. Failing as he did to correctly evaluate the situation, Brandler virtually orientated the Party towards activity in the parliamentary spirit. An opportunist interpretation of government activity within the framework of bourgeois laws and underestimation of mass struggle in a united front resulted in the C.P.G. being unable to make use of the workers' governments of Saxony and Thuringia to build up the revolutionary movement in the country. Through the fault of the right Brandlerite opportunists the necessary efforts to arm the proletariat were not made.*** The Right opportunist policy of the C.P.G. leadership during the October days of 1923 adversely affected the activities of the Party. "Uncertainty in the question of state power and the Right-opportunist and ultra-Left interpretations prevented the Party from winning the majority of the working class,"**** remarked Ulbricht.

On October 20, after it became known that Reichswehr units had been sent to Saxony, the leadership of the C.P.G. decided to get a resolution passed for a general strike at the conference of shop stewards committees, trade unions and control committees of Saxony to be held on October 21. The strike was to have been developed into an armed uprising in Hamburg. However, the attitude to the strike on the part of the Left-wing Social-Democrats had not been ascertained,***** and when the latter came out against it at the Chemnitz Conference the C.P.G. leadership dropped the plan.

The refusal of the Left elements in the S.D.P.G. to support the proposal for a general strike at the crucial moment, and the wavering, indecisive policy of the Left Social-Democrats during the autumn 1923 events in Germany caused tremendous harm to the

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* W. Ulbricht, Referat zum "Grundriss der Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung", *Einheit*, Sonderheft, August 1962, S. 36-37.

** As he himself later admitted in a letter to Clara Zetkin dated November 13, 1923. C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/70/136.

*** On October 21 the proletarian fighting units had only about eleven thousand rifles. C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/70/29.

**** *Einheit*, Sonderheft, August 1962, S. 37.

***** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/67/51.

revolutionary struggle. The Communist Party failed to cope with the instability of the Left Social-Democrats and to unite them with the Communists despite the Right leaders. The workers' governments in Saxony and Thuringia were dismissed. An active part in suppressing the revolutionary movement was played by the Right leaders of Social-Democracy.

In face of the attacks of the reactionary forces, the Brandler leadership of the C.P.G.'s Central Committee organised no broad movement of protest. It virtually capitulated to the reactionaries. The only exception was the heroic rising of the revolutionary workers in Hamburg led by Thälmann. The uprising was isolated, however, and after sixty hours of hard fighting it was stopped. The revolutionary struggle of the working class in Germany in the autumn of 1923 ended in defeat. This was due to the unfavourable balance of forces resulting chiefly from the active support given to the forces of counter-revolution by the Right leaders of Social-Democracy and the irresolution and vacillations of the Left Social-Democrats. The Communist Party failed at the crucial moment to win the majority of the working class and the broad masses of the peasantry. The Party's leadership headed by the Brandler-Thalheimer group committed a number of grave errors of both a Right-opportunist and Leftist kind, which prevented the Party from developing and intensifying the revolutionary movement within the country.

The German events in the autumn of 1923, like those in Bulgaria and Poland, became an object of close study in the international communist movement.

The slogan of the workers' and peasants' government was of great significance as a way towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, an attempt to unite the struggle against the attacks of reaction and fascism with the fight for a workers' and peasants' government and a striving on this basis to achieve unity of action by the working class, to win for the workers the support of the broad masses of the working people. At the moment when the decisive events in the autumn of 1923 were being enacted, however, the communist parties had not yet fully and deeply mapped out this strategic line. The idea that the victory of the revolution could be achieved at a single "decisive blow", bypassing the intermediate stages of the struggle, was still strong in some people's minds. The communist parties failed to win over the majority of the working class, the majority of the working non-proletarian masses, failed to make good an alliance between the working class and the peasantry. Both the heritage of Social-

Democratic, opportunist survivals and sectarian-dogmatic mistakes told on the activities of the communist parties.

The ideological and organisational consolidation of the fraternal parties, their mastery of all forms and methods of work among the masses and the development of strategy and tactics acquired decisive significance for the world communist movement. In the struggle against Right-opportunist deformations of united-front tactics, mistakes of a Left-sectarian nature were committed.

This was largely due to the reaction to the anti-communist policy of the Right Social-Democrats, who persisted in helping the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the revolutionary movement and for this purpose pursued disruptive activities in the international labour movement. At the same time the Left wing of Social-Democracy during the period of sharpened class struggle in Germany in the autumn of 1923 refused to take decisive action. This deepened the split among the labour masses.

The opportunist practice of the Brandler leadership of the C.P.G., the indecision of the Left Social-Democrats, the defeat of the workers' governments of Saxony and Thuringia, and the counter-revolutionary activities of the Right-wing leaders of the S.D.P.G. were used by the Leftist elements in the German Communist Party and in the Comintern Executive as grounds for repudiating the idea of transitory forms of power. They asserted, on this basis, that a workers' government was to be interpreted merely as a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, while the tactic of the united front was regarded by them in the restrictive sense as a method of exposing the Social-Democrats.

A number of leaders of the communist movement (Clara Zetkin, W. Pieck, the leadership of the Polish Communist Party and others) commented on the Leftist-sectarian nature of these appraisals. In a letter to the Comintern the Polish Communist Party leadership stated that any formulations that could be construed as condemnation of the tactic of the united front were fallacious. These arguments, however, were not taken into account. Social-Democracy was declared to be "a wing of fascism". A statement to this effect was made by Zinoviev at a meeting of the E.C.C.I. Presidium in January 1924 during the discussion of the German question.* He also advanced the theses that the chief enemy was Left Social-Democracy and that the fight had to be waged not only without them, but against them, and that the united front should be carried out only from below, without any

* *Uroki germanskikh sobytii*, pp. 57-67.

negotiations with the leadership of Social-Democracy. These theses were reflected in the resolution of the E.C.C.I. Presidium.* The Left-sectarian-dogmatic mistakes were to cause serious harm to the international communist movement and to the struggle for unity of the working class. These mistakes were overcome and rectified on the basis of new historical experience accumulated in later years.

The lesson which the communist parties learned from the defeat in the autumn of 1923 was, first of all, the necessity of creatively mastering Marxist-Leninist theory, developing the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement and turning the communist parties into mass militant parties closely linked with the broadest sections of the working class and all the working people.

* Ibid., pp. 92, 99-100.

Chapter Three

THE COMINTERN DURING THE YEARS OF PARTIAL STABILISATION OF CAPITALISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION IN THE U.S.S.R. THE COURSE TOWARDS IDEOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

(1924-1928)

The Stabilisation of Capitalism

By the beginning of 1924 the revolutionary upsurge of the early post-war years came to an end. Already in 1921-1923 a gradual consolidation of the bourgeois regimes was to be observed in a number of capitalist countries, but the stabilisation of capitalism, which had then begun, had not yet acquired really world-wide significance. After the defeat of the proletarian uprisings of 1923 in Germany, Bulgaria and Poland the capitalist world entered a period of temporary, partial stabilisation.

Failure of the direct assault on the bourgeois regimes was the principal factor determining the transition to a period of slowdown in the revolutionary process in the capitalist countries. But there were other factors operating here too.

Capitalist economy had emerged from the state of post-war crisis and entered a phase of resurgence. This was accompanied by a technical and organisational reconstruction of industry, a growth in labour productivity and in the volume of production. The concentration of production and centralisation of capital developed on an unprecedented scale, leading to the appearance of gigantic monopoly corporations.

The business boom of the twenties was attended by a consolidation of the bourgeois regimes. The bourgeois parties began to regain some of their lost ground.

The temporary stabilisation of capitalism spread also to the sphere of international relations. The redivision of the world as fixed in the Versailles and Washington treaties became the basis for a provisional agreement on spheres of influence among the leading capitalist powers. The victor countries were able to come to an arrangement at the Washington Conference (November 1921-February 1922) for the joint exploitation of the Chinese people on the basis of preserving and strengthening China's semi-colonial position. The Washington Conference led to the establishment of a temporary balance of power among the imperialist states in the Pacific, but did not remove the antagonisms between them.

In 1924, on the insistence of the ruling circles of the U.S.A. and Britain, who were interested in creating an anti-Soviet force in the centre of Europe, the Dawes Plan was adopted under which reparation payments by Germany were considerably reduced and Germany received Anglo-American loans to restore her military-economic potential. The Dawes Plan, which temporarily softened the antagonisms between Germany and the victor countries, was designed also to turn the Soviet Union into a market for Germany's industrial goods and wreck the Soviet Union's plans of industrialisation. Under the Locarno Agreement (October 1925) the imperialists of the Entente guaranteed the frontiers between Germany and France and Germany and Belgium established by the Treaty of Versailles. Side by side with this, they refused to guarantee the frontiers between Germany and Poland and Germany and Czechoslovakia, thereby indicating an "Eastern outlet" for Germany's future aggression.

The partial stabilisation of capitalism witnessed a strengthening of the bourgeoisie's influence upon the working people ideologically and politically. The economic boom, the drop in unemployment and the slight rise in the standard of living among certain sections of the workers strengthened belief among the population at large in the permanence of the existing relations. There was a spread of bourgeois-parliamentary and pacifist illusions, the belief that capitalism had got over its worst sides. The Right Social-Democrats succeeded in drawing the mass reformist labour organisations into collaborating with the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois and Right socialist ideologues and politicians proclaimed the advent of an era of capitalism's perennial prosperity.

The Comintern and the communist parties emphatically swept aside the bourgeois-reformists' claim that capitalism had emerged from its period of decay and overcome its antagonisms.

The stabilisation of capitalism could not be durable, because it was taking place under the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, the chief index of which was the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the cleavage of the world into two systems and the narrowing spheres of imperialism. The existence of the Soviet Union, the growth of its power and prestige were potent factors undermining the stabilisation of capitalism. The consolidation of the proletarian state and the progress of socialist construction in the Soviet Union had a tremendous revolutionising impact upon the whole world.

Stabilisation could not "repeal" the objective operation of the laws of capitalism. Exploitation of the workers and other sections

of the population was intensified: capitalist rationalisation led to a sharp increase in the intensity of labour; unemployment became chronic. The development of capitalism engendered factors that were bound to lead to a further aggravation of all the antagonisms inherent in it.

Under the conditions of capitalist stabilisation the proletariat continued the class struggle, which was often of a bitter nature. The anti-fascist strike in Italy in July 1924 in which nearly half a million people were involved; the mass demonstrations and strikes in France in October 1925 against the colonial war of French imperialism; the general strike in Britain in May 1926, which paralysed the economic life of the country; the barricades in the streets of Vienna in July 1927; the struggle of the working class in Germany, Czechoslovakia and other countries—all these actions struck at the roots of capitalist stabilisation. Another factor undermining it was the deepening crisis of imperialism's colonial system. The peoples of the East, awakened by the October Revolution of 1917, embarked on a determined struggle for national liberation. The flame of anti-imperialist uprisings spread during those years to Syria, Morocco, and Indonesia; the years 1925 to 1927 saw the launching in China of the national revolution. More and more peoples of Asia and Africa rose to the political struggle. The movement against United States and British imperialism gained momentum among the popular masses of Latin America.

The fluidity of stabilisation was due also to the the growing unevenness of development of the different countries, which inevitably led to a further aggravation of interimperialist antagonisms. The economic power of the United States, Japan and Germany was increasing rapidly, while Britain's share in the world's economy declined, and France was practically at a standstill. New intricate knots of interimperialist contradictions were formed.

All these factors, as the Communists had predicted, were bound to lead to the breakdown of capitalist stabilisation and produce an upsurge of the revolutionary struggle. This was a scientific prognostication of the prospective course of events. But so long as capitalist relations were temporarily being strengthened, the rate of development of the world revolutionary process was bound to slow down, entering upon a phase of "a more or less protracted development of the world revolution".*

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* *International Press Correspondence. Special Number*, Vol. 5, No. 47, June 4, 1925, p. 614.

The international communist and labour movement was confronted by world capital, a historically doomed, but still powerful enemy in full possession of its material, political, military and ideological resources. A long hard fight was in prospect. The mainstay of the revolutionary forces in this struggle was the Soviet Union.

The Right Social-Democrats acted as a most effective "stabiliser" of the capitalist system. Their leaders advocated among the workers the opportunist idea that the condition of the masses could be radically improved and social emancipation achieved without destroying the foundations of the capitalist system. The Social-Democrats made skilful use of the fact that large sections of the working class had succeeded as a result of the struggle in securing a certain rise in real wages.

During the years of capitalist stabilisation the reformist labour parties affiliated to the Socialist Labour International had a membership of 6.5-7 million. The Amsterdam International of Trade Unions and the reformist trade union centres of the U.S.A., Canada, Japan and India had a membership of 17.5 million workers. About 25 million people during that period gave their votes to the reformists.

The decisions of the Marseilles Congress of the Socialist Labour International in 1925, which spoke about capitalism evolving into socialism, disoriented the workers. The programme of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, adopted at Heidelberg in 1925, represented the concentration of capital as a process by which the means of production gradually passed into public ownership. R. Hilferding, the theoretician of German Social-Democracy, proclaimed the advent of an era of "organised capitalism" capable of coping with the crisis and anarchy of production. The consolidation of the trusts and cartels, the strengthening and expansion of their international connections, and state-monopoly regulation of economy were seen by Hilferding as "the principled substitution of the socialist principle of planned production for the capitalist principle of free competition".* These ideas were advocated by the Right-wing leaders of all the parties of the Socialist International.

Expressing the moods of the petty-bourgeois strata and the labour aristocracy of Europe, the reformist leaders virtually justified the policy of colonial oppression. This was reflected in the decisions of the Brussels Congress of the Socialist International (1928). The illusion was spread among the masses that capitalism had ceased to be imperialistic, that it was no longer interested in the seizure of colonies and markets, and that perpetual peace was now possible between the capitalist countries.

All these deductions formed the ideological basis for a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie on the widest scale. Never before had Right Social-Democracy succeeded in drawing such a vast mass of labour into the practice of collaboration with the bourgeoisie as it did during those years.

The partial stabilisation of capitalism created serious difficulties for the development of the revolutionary struggle. The new situation demanded of the Communist International and its sections that the immediate tasks and prospects of the international labour and communist movements and the world revolutionary process as a whole be defined anew. The problems of consolidating the parties of the working class and expanding and strengthening their ties with the masses faced the Communists in all their magnitude.

* *Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Kiel*, Berlin, 1927, S. 168.

THE FIFTH CONGRESS OF THE COMINTERN. ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE IDEOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

The Opening of the Fifth Congress

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern opened in Moscow on June 17, 1924. It was the first congress held without the founder and leader of the Communist International—Lenin. The death of the leader of the revolutionary proletariat was a stunning shock to millions of the working people in all corners of the globe. The irretrievable loss suffered by the world communist movement drew its ranks still closer together.

The Fifth Congress was attended by 504 delegates representing 49 communist and workers' parties and one people's revolutionary party, and 10 international organisations (the Profintern, the Young Communist International, International Workers' Relief, and others). At the time of the Fifth Congress the communist parties had a membership of 1,319,000, about half of which were members of the R.C.P.(B). The total membership was somewhat below that of 1922. This was due to the defeat of the working class in the battles of 1923, to the difficult conditions of the underground in which a number of communist parties in capitalist countries were obliged to work, and to the defection of unstable elements who joined the reformists.

The delegates of the Fifth Congress were to deal with a number of theoretical, programmatic and tactical problems which had come to stand before the world communist movement during the eighteen months since the last, Fourth, Congress.

The key issue at the Congress was that of rallying the ranks of the working class and of the whole world revolutionary movement in face of the attacks of capital, especially the task of strengthening the communist parties. This could be successfully tackled only on the basis of the further development of the theoretical, programmatic and tactical deductions of Marxism-Leninism and their application to the concrete conditions of this or that country by way of creative utilisation of the historic experience of the R.C.P.(B).

The Congress had to deal with the question of the policy and tactics of the communist parties in the new conditions. The "Left" elements in the Comintern considered that the events in Germany, Bulgaria and Poland in the autumn of 1923 augured a new epoch of revolutions. From this appraisal they drew the conclusion that it was necessary to aim at the direct establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the capitalist countries and abandon the tactic of the united front, in which they saw merely a maneuver, and a short-lived one at that, instead of a basic principle of the struggle to win the labour masses. In the national-colonial question, which was another talking point at the Congress, the "Left" concentrated the weight of their attack against the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front.

The solution of the complex problems of theory and practice facing the Congress was rendered extremely difficult by the fact that the Communists of all the world had this time assembled at their Congress without Lenin. The death of the leader of the international communist movement was indeed an irreparable loss for the Comintern.

Expressing the feelings of the labour millions throughout the world, the Executive of the Comintern and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern, in their Appeal issued on January 23, 1924, wrote that the grief caused by Lenin's death did not shake the Communists' courage; stimulated by the great example of their leader, they would strive to carry out his historic behests. "Like Marx, Lenin will forever remain our leader, despite his death," said the Appeal, which ended with the words: "We appeal to the millions of our comrades-in-arms throughout the world: 'Follow the precepts of Lenin, which are living on in his Party and in everything created by his labour.' Fight as Lenin fought, and, like Lenin, you will win."*

In opening the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, V. Kolarov, General Secretary of the E.C.C.I., said: "Our last congress was held only eighteen months ago. That is a very short period, but during that short period a multitude of momentous events, tremendous changes both in international relations and in the life and development of our respective parties have taken place.... In this struggle we have experienced partial defeats, but also important victories. And the toll has been very heavy. The first thing we must speak about in starting this congress is our enormous

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* *Pravda*, January 23, 1924.

losses. And our very first word must be for the loss of the greatest leader of the world revolution—Comrade Lenin."*

On June 18 the Congress delegates gathered at the Lenin Mausoleum, where they were addressed by M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R., on the subject of "Leninism and the Comintern". Kalinin said: "Comrades, I believe that long before this Congress it was clear to every one of you that the first word uttered at the Congress would be about Lenin. That goes without saying. The leader of the Russian revolution, the leader of Bolshevism, was also the leader of the Communist International. This was no historical accident. What we call 'Leninism', contains within itself the most consistent, the fullest and most effective internationalism."**

Ideological and Organisational Strengthening of the Communist Parties. The Slogan of Bolshevisation

Outlining the basic aims of the communist movement, the Fifth Congress pointed out that "the stage of the organisation of the proletarian ranks and of their communist vanguards (parties) becomes the most important question of the entire historical epoch".*** The Congress emphasised that the slogan "To the Masses!" advanced by the Third Congress of the Communist International, remained fully in force. It condemned the tendency among the Right-wingers, who demand the preliminary winning of a statistical majority of the labour masses and believe that there can be no question of any serious revolutionary battles until the Communists have won almost 99 per cent of all the workers.**** On the other hand, the Fifth Congress firmly repudiated the views of the "ultra-Left", who failed to grasp the importance of the slogan "To the Masses!". As pointed out at the Congress, the sectarians held that the communist parties were in a position to lead the workers into battle at any moment, even though they had not become mass parties.*

The directives of the Fifth Congress, which continued the line of the Third and Fourth Congresses, were timely, since in a number of communist parties there were influential elements who, while pointing to the existing Right danger, lapsed into an "ultra-Left" deviation. This is what happened in the Communist Party of Germany, which operated in one of the most critical sectors of the international class struggle. At the beginning of 1924 in Germany and afterwards at the Fifth Congress in Moscow the Brandler-Thalheimer group tried to justify their capitulatory errors in connection with the events of October 1923, which, in the final analysis, were due to an underestimation of the opponent's strength. On the other hand, the "ultra-Left" group in the German Communist Party's Central Committee (Fischer, Maslow, and Scholem) maintained that the events in Saxony and Thuringia showed that the idea of the united front was fallacious. This group took the line of a complete break with Social-Democracy, and concentrated its attacks against the Left wing. The "ultra-Left" demanded that the fight for trade union unity both in Germany and on an international scale be abandoned. Taking advantage of the criticism of Brandler's and Thalheimer's Right-opportunist errors and the strong feeling which the behaviour of the Social-Democratic leaders aroused among the revolutionary-minded workers, the "ultra-Left" group came into control of the C.P.G.'s leadership. The Frankfurt Congress of the C.P.G. (April 7-10, 1924), under pressure from this group, came to the conclusion that a new revolutionary upsurge was rapidly approaching. Despite the objections of the E.C.C.I.'s representatives—Kuusinen, Manuilsky and Lozovsky—the "ultra-Left" succeeded in getting a resolution passed which virtually rejected the tactic of the united front.

"Ultra-Left" tendencies were also strong at that time in the Italian Communist Party. The fallacious views of the Bordiga group found concentrated expression in Bordiga's speech at the Fifth Congress. Completely ignoring the political realities and the influence of reformism in the labour movement, he said: "If we do not want to discredit all the work we have done for the revolutionary and political training of the proletariat, we must dismiss the very idea that any workers' party other than the

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* *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna* (The Fifth Congress of the Comintern). Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1925, Part 1, p. 5.

** Ibid., p. 33.

*** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 649.

**** Ibid., p. 650.

* Ibid., p. 650.

communist party exists. . . ."* This implied the negation of any policy whatsoever of the united workers' front.

Under the circumstances, it was particularly important for the Fifth Congress to condemn the "ultra-Left" deviation, which threatened to isolate the communist party from the labour masses. The Congress stated in its theses "Questions of Tactics": "Bolshevism took form as a movement of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia, not only in the fight against Menshevism and Centrism, but also against 'ultra-Left' tendencies. As an international Bolshevik organisation, the Comintern has carried on an implacable struggle against Right opportunism and 'ultra-Left' deviations that are often merely the reverse side of opportunism."**

The Fifth Congress stressed the importance of strengthening the parties of the working class ideologically and organisationally and advanced the slogan of Bolshevisation of the sections of the Communist International. The Bolshevisation of the communist parties, which were to be turned into ideologically steeled mass organisations, was regarded by the Fifth Congress as the central task of the Communist International's activities. In a situation where direct assault of the bourgeois regimes had given place to a protracted "trench warfare" of the working class against capital, it was necessary to make use of every opportunity to strengthen the proletarian organisations, first and foremost the vanguard and leading force of the revolutionary proletariat—the Communist Party.

During the revolutionary battles of 1918-1923 there was often felt a lack of organisation of the communist parties, a lack of durable ties with the broad masses, an absence of necessary experience and toughness. In view of this the Comintern put forward the task of eliminating these weaknesses. It considered that at the moment when the objective conditions for a revolutionary upsurge had ripened once more, all the subjective prerequisites for it should be ready too. The working class should meet this new upsurge in possession of tough, well-steeled communist parties capable of leading the working people to victory. Bolshevisation of the communist parties was thus an important element in girding the communist and labour movement for the coming battles.

From the very first steps of the Comintern's activities Lenin gave tremendous attention to this problem. His reports and speeches at the congresses of the Comintern, his book *"Left-wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, all his theoretical and practical activities were directed at strengthening the young communist movement, making it more fighting-fit. Lenin often spoke about how important it was for the fraternal parties to creatively master the experience of Bolshevism, which held good as a model of tactics for all, since it had behind it the experience of three revolutions, had assimilated and developed all that was most valuable in the world revolutionary movement of the proletariat, had shown itself utterly true to the interests of the working class, displayed a stand of high principle in defence of these interests, had gone through what Lenin has described as years of unheard-of ordeal and sacrifices, unmatched revolutionary heroism, incredible energy and dedicated search, training, testing, verification, comparison with the experience of Europe. Lenin constantly impressed upon Communists that mechanical stereotyping of the Russian pattern was impermissible; he strongly criticised vulgar absolutisation or mechanical application of the experience of the Bolsheviks, especially when this experience was used in an attempt to cover up dogmatism, or an incapacity to apply the science of Bolshevism to the concrete conditions of one's own country. While calling on the fraternal parties to learn from the Bolsheviks, Lenin considered it the international duty of the R.C.P.(B.) to do its utmost to promote the assimilation and application of the Russian experience.

Lenin's ideas concerning the mastery of Bolshevik experience formed the basis of the Congress decisions on the ideological, theoretical and organisational strengthening of the Comintern's sections. It was on this ground that the Fifth Congress of the Comintern defined the concrete tasks of Bolshevisation, Bolshevisation was a long and difficult process for turning the party into a truly communist party and building up a mass revolutionary movement under the banner of the ideas of Marx and Lenin; it stood for an ability to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism to an analysis of the concrete situation.

The basic conditions and prerequisites for turning the communist parties into mass organisations were held by the Congress to be: a reorganisation that would make the party cells at the factories the foundation of the party; proper communist work within the trade unions; a correct policy towards the peasantry; a Marxist-Leninist policy in the national question.

The Congress defined the basic features of a truly Bolshevik party as follows:

* *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 1, p. 383.

** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 651.

The party must be really a mass party maintaining the closest and unseverable ties with the mass of the workers both in legal and illegal conditions and serve as the expression of their needs and aspirations.

The party must follow a flexible tactic free from dogmatism or sectarianism, it must be able to draw on all strategical reserves to fight the class enemy.

It must essentially be a revolutionary, Marxist party, undeviatingly and under all circumstances working towards its main goal, that of bringing nearer the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

It must be a centralised party with a strict discipline that is not merely mechanical, but expresses the unity of party will and party action.

The slogan for Bolshevising the Party was an appeal for the creative study and application of the experience of the entire world communist movement. "Bolshevising the Party," stated the Fifth Congress, "means the application to our sections what in Russian Bolshevism was and is international and of general application."* This slogan, the Congress pointed out, by no means implied that the experience of the Bolshevik Party in Russia was to be mechanically applied to all other parties. "The Bolshevisation of the Communist Party is to be pursued in exact accordance with the behests of Lenin, attention being paid, however, to the concrete circumstances in each country."**

"The beginnings of this process already exist," the Congress pointed out. "The party leaderships, the organisations, and the individual members in many sections are beginning to display increasing, if slowly increasing, activity. In case after case the best parties are beginning to show the revolutionary initiative, the determined energy and striking capacity, the shrewd ability to manoeuvre, and the conscious iron discipline of a truly revolutionary fighting organisation."***

One of the major aims of Bolshevisation, the Congress pointed out, was to combat the perversions of Marxist-Leninist theory. "Right and Left political deviations, deviations from Marxism-Leninism, are due to deviations from the class ideology of the proletariat."**** "The communist parties," stated the "Theses on Propaganda Activities of the Comintern and Its Sections" adopted at the Congress, "must not limit themselves to propagating the main principles of Marxism-Leninism among the masses, but must, by methodical and systematic propaganda, make the party members acquainted with Marxism-Leninism as a whole.... Thus one of the most important and urgent concrete tasks of the Communist International is the concentration of energy in the widest possible propaganda of these teachings (Lenin's teachings.—*Ed.*) and establishing organisational guarantees for the systematic development of this propaganda."* The Congress expressed approval of the decision of the Thirteenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) to publish a complete edition of the works and correspondence of Marx and Engels.**

The slogan of Bolshevisation, that guideline towards the creative application of the experience of the R.C.P.(B.), the systematic and persistent ideological and organisational consolidation of the communist parties, the extension of their ties with the masses, the utilisation of the coming period for preparing the working class and its communist vanguard for the future decisive battles, the careful selection and ideological training of the Marxist-Leninist cadres, fully answered the demands created by the political realities during the period of capitalism's partial stabilisation. This slogan, advanced, to its great credit, by the Comintern's Fifth Congress fully supported by the world communist movement.

An essential condition of Bolshevisation was the strengthening of the unity of the Marxist-Leninist party. The struggle for unity was all the more necessary since the principle of unity had been the target for attacks on the part of the factional groups.

In the autumn of 1923 an anti-Leninist opposition headed by Trotsky began to take shape organisationally within the R.C.P.(B.). The oppositionists tried to play off the rank-and-file Communists against the Party apparatus; they demanded freedom for factional activity and a virtual abandonment of the New Economic Policy, and came out against the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. They forced a controversy upon the Party. Meeting with a firm rebuff within the R.C.P.(B.), the opposition sought support among the young communist parties in the capitalist countries, especially among the "ultra-Left" elements. The expe-

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 653.
** Ibid., No. 52, July 30, 1924, p. 550.
*** Ibid., p. 550.
**** *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 2, p. 97.

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, pp. 661-62.
** Ibid., Vol. 4, No. 64, September 5, 1924, p. 696.

rience of the Soviet Communists' struggle against Trotskyism was therefore of great importance for the ideological and organisational consolidation of the communist parties.

On June 27, the C.C. of the R.C.P.(B.) submitted to the Fifth Congress a report "On the Economic Condition of the U.S.S.R. and the Discussion Within the R.C.P.". The Communists of the Soviet Union reported to the international communist movement on the progress of socialist construction, its successes and its difficulties. The report stressed the need for combating the groups and factions within the Party; it pointed out that the opposition had become the centre of attraction for anti-Party forces, and condemned the typical Trotskyist method of playing off the young Communists against the old Party guard.

On June 26, 1924, the German, French, American and British delegations tabled a "Motion on the Russian Question", which read: "The undersigned delegations speak on behalf of parties which from the very beginning have been following the Russian party discussion with close attention and grave concern and have come out strongly in favour of the Central Committee of the R.C.P. They have done this because they see in the proposals of the opposition a menace to the dictatorship of the proletariat and to the unity of the Party.... The Fifth Congress of the Comintern must confirm the decision of the Thirteenth Congress of the R.C.P. and emphasise that the views of the opposition signify a petty-bourgeois opportunist deviation. We stress here that the Russian question is not a national question, but one of international significance."*

The Congress adopted a resolution in the spirit of these delegations' motion. It confirmed the resolution of the Thirteenth Party Conference and the Thirteenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) condemning the platform of the opposition "and its actions as a menace to the unity of the Party and consequently to the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R."** The international communist movement rendered great assistance to the R.C.P.(B.) by its strong condemnation of the Trotskyist opposition.

The Fifth Congress on Communist Party Tactics

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern dealt with the question of tactics on the assumption that the labour movement stood, as

* *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 1, p. 550.

** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 64, September 5, 1924, p. 691.

it were, between two revolutionary waves. The report of the E.C.C.I. on the international situation noted the fact that there was an ebb in the revolutionary tide, but at the same time expressed the hope that the revolutionary crisis would speedily gather head. The decisions of the Fifth Congress did not yet contain the thesis about the beginning of capitalism's stabilisation. Some of the delegates evaluated the class battles of 1923, which were actually of a rearguard nature, as the beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge. This appraisal, which reflected not so much the existing realities as the desire of the Left-inclined revolutionaries to regard the situation as favourable for direct action, had a definite influence on the decisions of the Fifth Congress on some of the questions of tactics, notably on the united workers' front, the workers' and peasants' government, and the fight for the workers' immediate demands. Speaking about the lessons of the class struggle of 1923, especially of its defeat in Germany, Zinoviev and his supporters came to the conclusion that the tactics of the united front, formulated at the Third and Fourth Congresses, had fallen short of expectations and that therefore these tactics had to be revised. Zinoviev stated in his report that as far as the Comintern was concerned the tactics of the united front were merely a method of agitation and rallying of the masses, a maneuver. He proposed that the decisions of the Fourth Congress on this question be waived.

Speaking about the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, Zinoviev called it a "pseudonym" for the dictatorship of the proletariat, thereby subjecting the decisions of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern to revision and stripping the slogan of its real political meaning as a transitory stage. In his view the guidelines of the Fourth Congress towards unity of action by the Communist and Social-Democratic parties, towards a united front of all the working people, were nothing but a "bible of opportunism". In keeping with this sectarian interpretation of the tactics of the united front, Zinoviev proposed that the spearhead of attack should be directed against Social-Democracy, especially against its Left wing.

Zinoviev's stand met with a rebuff on the part of a number of delegates, who rightly considered that the idea of the united front should be embodied in the communist parties' real policy. Kolarov, the representative of the Bulgarian Communists and General Secretary of the Comintern Executive, in his analysis of the Bulgarian Communist Party's activities in 1923, emphasised: "I must say that at the very source of our Party's mistakes lay its failure

to apply united front tactics broadly enough. The united front with us was practised only from below. We ignored the peasant organisations, just as we did the Bulgarian Mensheviks and Social-Democrats.... After the June defeat the situation changed completely and our Party adopted united front tactics from above as well as from below.... How does the question stand at present? United front tactics from above and below, in all directions and in all varieties."*

Zinoviev's stand was sharply criticised in a well-argued speech by Clara Zetkin. The correct interpretation and application of the united proletarian front, she said, was of tremendous, decisive importance not only for Germany, but for all sections of the Comintern. "I must confess, Comrades," she said, "that neither the report of Comrade Zinoviev nor the discussions have dealt with sufficient clarity with the question as to how the united front is to be concretely carried into effect."** In order to correctly apply the tactics of the united front, Zetkin went on, "we must be capable day by day of improving our contact with the masses, making a careful study of their needs, desires and temper, carefully planning our own actions and strongly upholding the interests of the proletariat."*** On the question of the workers' and peasants' government Zetkin said: "I cannot accept the statement of Comrade Zinoviev to the effect that the workers' and peasants' government was only a pseudonym, a synonym, or some other 'nym' for the dictatorship of the proletariat."****

"For Canada and the United States a solution of the problem of the workers' and peasants' government was urgent," said Tim Buck. "The statement that this slogan was a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat was not true for Canada and the United States. A Farmer-Labour Government in Canada ... would be a Liberal-Labour Government."*****

Zinoviev was supported by sectarian elements at the Congress. Fischer attacked the delegates who disagreed with Zinoviev's interpretation of united front tactics. A similar stand was taken by Bordiga, who demanded that the Congress should openly retract the decisions of the Fourth Congress on the questions of the united

* *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 1, pp. 277-78.
** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 47, July 23, 1924, p. 487.
*** *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 1, p. 322.
**** Ibid., p. 323.
***** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 45, July 24, 1924, p. 503.

front and the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, even as "a means of agitation".

On the question of the united front tactics the decisions of the Congress stated that these tactics were and remained essential as a means of drawing the majority of the decisive sections of the proletariat into the struggle and thereby prepare the ground for launching an attack against the bourgeoisie.*

The Congress particularly stressed the importance of carrying out the tactic of the united front from below, and excluding this from being done *only* from above. At the same time the Congress stated: "Unity from below in the rank and file, and at the same time negotiations with the leaders—this is the method that will have to be applied very often in those countries where the Social-Democrats are still strong."**

The Sub-Committee of Congress on Technical Questions, under "Left" pressure, drafted the theses on tactics in which the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government was treated not as a transitory slogan in the struggle for power, but in a sectarian vein, as a slogan of direct assault upon the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The decisions reflected the Leftist theses to the effect that Social-Democracy, on occasion, became a wing of fascism.***

Certain miscalculations in tactical decisions were a hindrance to the Communists in their struggle for a united front, for united action by the communist and Social-Democratic parties and the trade unions. In many ways these conclusions reflected the reaction of the young communist movement to the behaviour of the Right Social-Democratic leaders, who during the years of the post-war revolutionary upsurge gave direct support to the class enemies of the proletariat, and often in concert with them suppressed the revolutionary actions of the working people from positions of aggressive anti-communism.

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern also adopted important decisions aimed at securing unity of the trade union movement. The report on this question was made by Lozovsky, who said that "without winning the trade unions it is impossible to win the masses".**** He sharply criticised the practice of a number of communist parties who underestimated the importance of work in the reformist trade unions and urged their adherents to quit

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 408.
** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 651.
*** Ibid.
**** *Pyaty vsemirny kongress Kominterna*, Part 1, p. 805.

them. Quitting the trade unions was not a sign of activity on the part of the Communists, but an act of desperation. In countries where there were parallel trade union centres, as in France and Czechoslovakia, the main slogan should be "unity through a general congress". "We cannot by any means allow the secessionist reformists to have the monopoly of unity".*

The delegation of the R.C.P.(B.) tabled an important motion aimed at strengthening the unity of the international trade union movement. It considered it advisable that the Profintern should propose to the Amsterdam T.U. International the convening of an international congress of all trade unions on the basis of proportional representation with the aim of uniting the Red Profintern and the Amsterdam International into a single International Association of Trade Unions. "We Communists," ran the proposal of the delegation of the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee, "stand in principle for unity of the trade union movement, and in Russia, during all the party splits, the unity of the trade unions remained intact."**

The Fifth Congress adopted a resolution on Lozovsky's report in keeping with the tasks of working for a united workers' front. "The fight for unity in the world trade union movement has occupied a very prominent place in all the activities of the Comintern. This is the case, not because the Comintern makes a fetish of organisation, but because it is convinced that by fighting for unity within the trade unions, Communists are extending the sphere of influence of the communist parties and of the Communist International, while keeping all the time in contact with the masses. The fight for the unity of the trade union movement is the best means and method of winning the masses. That is why the Comintern and the communist parties adhering to it, must not allow anything to interfere with the lines they have adopted on this question. The old slogans of the Comintern—Winning and not Destruction of the Trade Unions, Opposition to Desertion of Trade Unions, Efforts to Bring Back into the Unions Those Who Left Them, Fight for Unity—are still in force and must be put into practice with the utmost determination and energy."***

The Fouth Congress of the Profintern was held in Moscow in July 1924. It advanced the slogan of a united International of Trade Unions and resolved to commence negotiations with the Amsterdam International and the General Council of British trade unions, the Left wing of which stood in favour of unity of the trade union movement.

In proposing the slogan of unity of the trade union movement the Fifth Congress of the Comintern was actually going against certain sectarian recommendations on questions relating to the tactics of the united workers' front.

In view of the special menace to the revolutionary movement on the part of fascism and the aims of the anti-fascist movement in Italy, the Congress examined the question concerning the methods of struggle against fascism. The Congress pointed out that the outcome of the fight against fascism depended on the degree of activity of the broad masses, chiefly of the whole working class and the Communist Party. It considered as feasible the prospect of both the direct overthrow of fascism as a result of a victorious proletarian revolution and its replacement by one or another variety of bourgeois democracy. A flexible approach to Italy's political problems was worked out during discussions with the Bordiga sectarian group, who held that fascism, in all circumstances, could be superceded only by a proletarian dictatorship. At the closing session of the Congress an Executive Committee of the Communist International was elected.

The Comintern, which was constantly enriched by the practical experience of the parties and generalised this experience theoretically, and linked as it was by a thousand threads with the living activities of its sections, had its finger on the pulse of this great movement. Its tactical moves, as a rule, and in the long run, reflected the state of affairs in its sections and on the general world front of the struggle against capital. The historical task was to unite all these detachments of the world communist movement on a sound Marxist-Leninist ideological and organisational foundation in order that each of them give an impetus to the movement of the masses of the oppressed and exploited. The live practice of the struggle quashed all schemes which did not meet the demands of reality. A tremendous role in this was played by the process of Bolshevisation, which developed among the communist parties in the spirit of the decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern.

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* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 4, No. 55, August 5, 1924, p. 583.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 492/1/134/19.

*** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 4, No. 62, August 29, 1924, p. 665.

THE EFFORTS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL TO UNITE THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST CAPITAL FOR A UNITED ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT

The Struggle of the Communist Parties for a United Front in the Different Countries

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—the first state of the proletarian dictatorship and pillar of the world revolutionary process—by the middle of the twenties had achieved important progress in socialist construction. The period of rehabilitation was nearing completion. The country was faced with the immense tasks of industrialisation, of the building up of an advanced socialist economy.

The Trotskyites chose this moment to launch an attack on the fundamental principle of Leninism concerning the possibility of socialism beeing victorious in a single given country. The Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) (April 27-29, 1925) emphatically condemned Trotsky's theses that socialism could not be built without state assistance from the European proletariat, and pointed out that the task of the Party was "to go ahead boldly and determinedly building socialism right now".*

Shortly after the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.(B.) the "New Opposition" came into being. Gradually, at first in a masked form and then openly, Zinoviev and Kamenev began to support Trotsky. The opposition's attacks had a damaging effect on the cause of socialist construction.

The Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), which was held in December 1925, defeated the "New Opposition" headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, which revealed a community of ideas with Trotskyism. The condemnation of the oppositionists, who were shown up to be opponents and saboteurs of socialist construction, raised a barrier to the Trotskyites and Zinovievites, who were seeking support among the communist parties of the capitalist countries.

* *K.P.S.S. v resolyutsiyakh* (C.P.S.U. in Resolutions), Moscow, 1954, Part II, p. 170.

The line of the C.P.S.U.(B.) towards industrialisation of the country meant that the U.S.S.R. would rapidly become a great economic, political and military power exercising a growing influence on the world revolutionary process.

During the period when the Soviet people, led by the Communists, started on the industrialisation of the country, the communist parties in the capitalist countries were waging a hard fight to secure the daily and pressing needs of the working people. In Germany this was a fight against the attacks of the monopolies, against the reactionary monarchist groups, against capitalism's attack upon the eight-hour day, against the aftermath of the Dawes Plan. In France the Communists in 1925 launched a wide campaign against the colonial war in Morocco under the slogan of an immediate peace treaty with the Riff Republic and the independence of all the colonial peoples. The Communist Party sponsored the campaign for setting up committees of unity at the factories, which drew communist, socialist and non-party workers into the anti-war struggle. In Czechoslovakia the Communists launched a campaign against the high cost of living.

In Britain the Communists were in the vanguard of the National Minority Movement among the trade unions, which they helped to organise. The first National Minority Movement Conference was held in August 1924, at which Tom Mann was elected Chairman and Harry Pollitt General Secretary. The Left wing of the British trade unions, represented by the Minority Movement, called for the establishment of workers' control over production, for a fight against the menace of war and for the achievement of trade union unity.

In the summer of 1925 the attempt by the pit owners to reduce the miners' pay came up against the workers' determination to fight for their rights. In this situation the ruling circles were forced to yield. July 31st, 1925, the day which brought victory to the British working class, was called by them "Red Friday". The Communist Party warned the workers to be prepared for new class conflicts.

In a number of colonial and dependent countries the young communist parties energetically joined the fight for national independence. In Indonesia the Communist Party rallied the masses against Dutch imperialist rule and became an authoritative political force.

The communist parties everywhere, under the leadership of the Comintern, came out as active champions of the interests of the working masses. They staunchly defended the workers'

democratic rights and freedoms, fought against the danger of a new imperialist war, came out in defence of the Soviet Union and promulgated among the masses the principles of proletarian internationalism, the ideals of communism.

The activities of the communist parties aimed at uniting and consolidating the revolutionary forces came up against tremendous obstacles, met with stubborn resistance on the part of the bourgeoisie and the Right Social-Democrats. The ruling bourgeoisie, which had learnt a lot from the experience of the stormy post-war years, made skilful use of all kinds of stratagems, major and minor concessions, and methods of bourgeois parliamentarism to fool the masses, while at the same time letting loose on the workers a flood of cynical slander and harsh repressions whenever the situation got out of hand. The British Conservatives, for example, just a few days before the parliamentary elections in October 1924 published the fake document known as the "Zinoviev Letter" purporting to contain Comintern instructions for organising an armed uprising in Britain with the aim of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie. This provocation played no little part in influencing the outcome of the elections, which led to the fall of the first Labour Government.

The Right Social-Democrats, who preached the idea of "organised capitalism", pursued in many countries a policy of so-called "economic democracy", which, in practice, lent support to state-monopoly measures. The interference of the capitalist state in the economic life of the country was represented to the masses as a cardinal measure which shook the very foundations of capitalism and undermined the absolute rule of capital.

Reformism, which was the greatest danger in the labour movement, infected various groups of Communists and gave rise to Right deviations in the communist parties. The Comintern constantly drew the attention of its sections to the need for waging a ceaseless struggle against these deviations. In April 1925 the Executive Committee of the Comintern strongly condemned the Right-wing Bubnik group which appeared in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and disorganised the mass actions of the workers. It qualified the activities of this group as "political betrayal", demanded a determined and effective struggle "against the burden of the Social-Democratic heritage" and pointed out that under the conditions prevailing in Czechoslovakia at that time it was necessary to concentrate attention on the Right danger.*

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 5, No. 47, June 4, 1925, p. 627.

In March 1926 the Comintern, evaluating the situation in the French Communist Party, pointed out that the greatest danger lay in "an underestimation of the Right danger within the Party. However, this Right danger is already knocking loudly at the doors of the Party".* The E.C.C.I. described the Rosmer-Monatte group and the group of Souvarine as vehicles of Right-wing influence in the French Communist Party (eventually these groups aligned with Trotskyism and adopted an openly anti-Party stand).

An important contribution to the work of strengthening the communist parties ideologically and organisationally was made by the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. (March 21-April 6, 1925), the highlight of which were the theoretical and practical key problems of the communist movement.

To begin with, the Fifth Plenum elaborated and concretised the decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern concerning Bolshevisation. The Plenum adopted the "Theses on the Bolshevisation of the Parties of the Communist International", which said: "Already at the Third World Congress of the Comintern it became clear that we were on the eve of a more or less protracted development of the world revolution. This became still more evident at the Fifth Congress. With the slowing down and protracted rate of development of the revolution, the slogan of Bolshevisation gains rather than diminishes in importance."** The Plenum decision stated that Communists must work still harder "to weld together a proletarian nucleus fitted to prepare for, and organise the proletarian revolution under all and any conditions".***

The proper development of the revolutionary party and its consolidation, the Plenum pointed out, could be assured only by a struggle on two fronts, namely: both against the Right danger and against the "ultra-Left" deviation, since both objectively aided the hostile forces.

The Fifth Plenum drew special attention to the necessity of raising the ideological and theoretical level of the communist parties as a decisive means of strengthening and improving their fighting efficiency. It set before each party the task of mastering Leninism, which represented a new stage in the development of Marxism, which it enriched with the experience of three Russian revolutions and the experience of the world revolutionary movement. The Plenum pointed to the organic connection that existed

* Ibid., Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 635.
** Ibid., p. 614.
*** Ibid.

between Marxism and Leninism, emphasising that there could be no Leninism without Marxism, and no revolutionary Marxism without Leninism. The Plenum defined the essence of Leninism in its application to the conditions of its time, and described it as Marxism of the epoch of monopoly capital (imperialism), of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions. The Communist International, said the Plenum decision, set itself the task of becoming an international organisation embodying in its activities the theory and practice of Leninism. Mastering the theory of Leninism was regarded by the Plenum as an important precondition for the ideological and organisational consolidation of the parties.

The policy of Bolshevisation hammered out at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern and at the Fifth Plenum of the Executive played an important part in raising the ideological, political and organisational level of the communist parties, helping them to master the principles of Marxism-Leninism and improving their fighting efficiency. The Bolshevisation campaign, wrote Palmiro Togliatti, which was designed to help foreign comrades assimilate "part of the Russian experience", went over big.

"In every country it served to advance the formation of the parties and their leading cadres, eliminating individuals and groups who refused seriously to assimilate the Marxist-Leninist principles and strongly resisted the discipline and methods of work of a revolutionary party."*

In the process of Bolshevisation the structure of the parties underwent a change; activities were centred in the local cells and this had a political as well as organisational significance: it hammered out a collective leadership.

At the same time there were cases during the application of the policy of Bolshevisation when insufficient allowance was made for the specific concrete conditions under which the communist parties of different countries operated.

The Fifth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. warned of the special danger of Trotskyism, which was a blend of "European opportunism and 'Left-radical' phrase-mongering", stated the resolution of the Plenum. "Trotskyism is . . . a system of fighting Leninism of many years standing. Neither is Trotskyism merely a Russian phenomenon but an international one."**

* Togliatti, Palmiro, *Sul movimento operaio internazionale*, Roma, 1964, p. 301.
** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 5, No. 47, June 4, 1925, p. 616.

The question of the proletariat's allies in the revolution was decided in the Leninist spirit. This "consisted in the ability to discover a concrete ally for a given concrete task".* Criticism was levelled against the incorrect sectarian attitude to the peasantry of which some parties were guilty in the past, and which mistakes "are being committed now by a number of sections of the Comintern".** The tactics of the united front were defined as the Leninist method of drawing the masses into the revolutionary struggle. With regard to a number of countries in Western Europe it was stated that large strata of white-collar workers in the towns —officials, technicians, etc.—in the present alignment of forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat could to a certain extent become the allies of the fighting proletariat, and under certain circumstances could even play a part somewhat similar to that which the peasants played at certain stages of the proletarian revolution in Russia.

A characteristic feature of the decisions passed by the Fifth Enlarged Plenum was the reference to the importance which was attached to immediate, limited political demands, first and foremost to the campaign for democratisation of social and political life.

The national question was dealt with in detail at the Plenum. The proposals outlined in the course of the discussion of this question at the Fifth Congress were concretised. The report made at the Fifth Congress by Manuilsky, a member of the R.C.P.(B.) delegation, stated that events had confirmed the correctness of the Comintern's ideas about a united revolutionary front between the proletariat and the oppressed nations and colonies. The speaker called for a generalisation of the rich factual material on the question of applying the united revolutionary front between the proletariat and the oppressed nationalities in different countries; the mistakes in this question made by the communist parties in a number of countries should be analysed, and proper account should be taken of the significance of "the establishment in Soviet Russia of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an experiment of the solution of the national question under proletarian dictatorship in a peasant country comprising many nationalities".***

In view of the tendency towards establishing workers' and peasants' parties with a comparatively radical programme of

* Ibid., p. 618.
** Ibid., p. 616.
*** Ibid., No. 54, August 4, 1924, p. 570.

struggle against imperialism, the communist parties of the East had to define their attitude to these organisations. The Comintern suggested to the Java Communists that they "take an active part in the work of the local workers' and peasants' parties there",* and to the Chinese Communists that they join the Kuomintang as a means of helping it to make a more determined stand against imperialism. Manuilsky, in his speech, spoke about the danger of nihilistically "ignoring the phenomena which are revolutionising the East" and at the same time "of losing their proletarian character by collaboration with the petty-bourgeoisie".**

The Plenum discussed the experience of Communists' participation in the national liberation movement and on April 6 adopted a resolution evaluating the political situation in India, Indonesia and Egypt and offering to the Communists of these countries a number of recommendations on programmatic and tactical questions.

The Plenum stated that "the hardening repressive policy of British imperialism against communist elements, the labour movement and consistent nationalists on the one hand, and the contradictions within the national movement, on the other, temporarily weakened the organised resistance of the Indian masses to British imperialism".*** Considering this state of affairs to imply neither defeat nor breakdown of the national liberation movement in the country, but merely a temporary crisis within the existing national parties, the Plenum found that "one of the most important tasks for our comrades in India at the present time is to work actively towards shaping the national liberation movement on the basis of a determined struggle for India's independence".**** The Communists of India were recommended to continue working in the National Congress Party—the biggest mass national organisation in the country—in order "to create a mass national-revolutionary party and an all-India anti-imperialist bloc",***** and find a way "to make the Indian bourgeoisie wage a more vigorous political struggle and support its every act of resistance to imperialism on the basis of a *united anti-imperialist front*".****** The Plenum regarded it as the major task of the Indian Communists

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 5, No. 54, August 4, 1924, p. 570.
** Ibid.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/163/178/1.
**** Ibid.
***** Ibid.
****** Ibid.

"to work to unite the communist groups and elements into a strong party of the working class—the Communist Party".*

In its appraisal of the situation in Indonesia the Plenum stated that the Communist Party "should advance the slogan of an anti-imperialist bloc of all the national-revolutionary parties existing on Java". Some of the leaders of the Indonesian Communist Party, however, prematurely skipped the phase of the anti-imperialist democratic revolution and continued "using the slogans of Soviet rule for Java, slogans which could not rally the broad masses of the peasantry and the urban bourgeoisie behind the national-revolutionary Sarekat Rakjat Party".**

To the Egyptian Communists the Plenum recommended "active support of all forms of the national liberation movement and every possible assistance in widening its base and deepening its struggle".***

The Plenum also adopted a resolution on the question of the tactics of the Communists of the U.S.A. in regard to the liberation movement in the countries oppressed by the United States imperialism. The American Communists were recommended "to most actively assist the national-revolutionary movements in the countries which are at present in the position of colonies or semi-colonies of the United States"**** (in particular Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Cuba); to help establish the Philippine Communist Party and consolidate the revolutionary trade union movement in that country; together with other communist parties of the entire American continent to work towards setting up an all-America anti-imperialist league with the aim of organising propaganda against American imperialism in Central and South America.

The Comintern Executive held that from the historical angle the national liberation movements were on the upswing and it orientated the communist parties towards a vanguard participation in them. At the same time it warned the Communists of the oppressed countries against hasty action unsupported by the masses.

The Comintern orientated the Communists towards active struggle in the midst of the proletariat as vanguard of the liberation movement capable of rallying behind it all the working people

* Ibid.
** *Kommunist*, 1969, No. 4, pp. 16-17.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/163/180/2.
**** Ibid., 495/163/180/3.

and the exploited and all the anti-imperialist forces. At the same time, considering that the working class in the colonies and semi-colonies was still in the making and that the communist parties there were only taking their first steps, the E.C.C.I. found it premature to advance the slogan of achieving proletarian hegemony and communist leadership of the liberation movement; this was not to be tackled as an immediate task even in the most developed of these countries.

The Comintern pointed out the tremendous possibilities that opened to the communist parties of the oppressed countries when they took a more active part in the national liberation struggle. The participation of the communist parties in the struggle gave greater scope and power to the national liberation movement, which they revolutionised, helping the more resolute anti-imperialist forces to assume the leadership of this movement.

The E.C.C.I. put forward the slogan of forming "popular-revolutionary", "people's", "workers' and peasants' " parties and urged the Communists of the East to work hard and consistently within these parties—always maintaining their own political independence—in order to turn them into political organisations of the anti-imperialist front.

These decisions amplified the ideas of the Second and Fourth Congresses and were a creative generalisation of the experience of the practical activities of the Comintern and the communist parties of the colonial countries. The communist movement arose and took shape organisationally in more and more countries oppressed by or dependent upon imperialism. August 1925 saw a Communist Party set up in Cuba, which presently became a section of the Comintern. In 1925 there were 7,500 Communists throughout Latin America. Closer contacts between the young parties and the Communist International and assimilation of Lenin's ideological heritage helped the communist parties of Latin America to cope with the traditions of anarchism and creatively apply Marxist-Leninist theory to the national realities.

The decisions of the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. played no little part in developing the mass policy of the communist parties both in the capitalist countries of the West and in the oppressed countries of the East.

During 1925-1926 the Communists in the capitalist countries achieved considerable progress in developing a united workers' front.

The Comintern recommended the communist parties to make concrete offers to the leadership of other workers' or anti-fascist

parties with a view to achieving unity of action by the working class. On November 26, 1925 the Presidium of E.C.C.I. wrote to the leadership of the Italian Communist Party about applying the tactics of the united front in order to rally the anti-fascists. "The Party applied the united front from below, advocating the need for developing united front activities chiefly among the labour masses at the factories. This is quite correct, but it does not preclude the usefulness of making simultaneous offers to the leading bodies of other parties. . . ."*

On January 9, 1926, the Central Committee of the French Communist Party issued an appeal in connection with the convocation of an emergency congress of the Socialist Party. The Comintern Executive wrote to the C.C. of the French Communist Party drawing attention to oversights in this appeal. The Executive considered that the Party should have addressed itself directly to the Congress delegates. "Your appeal, however, is addressed to the French workers and socialist workers. In doing this you have ruled out the possibility of the Congress responding to your proposal for a united front. . . ."** The E.C.C.I. also considered it a mistake "to lump together" different trends within the Socialist Party. "You are making it easier to bring the socialist workers closer to their leaders," said the letter, "whereas our policy is to widen the gulf that divides them."*** "The very tone you use in addressing this proposal to the Socialist Party precludes any chance of achieving a united front. . . . You forget that you should first have approached the leaders, and not in this tone, and only afterwards, in the event of refusal, to act the way you did, that is, address yourselves to the rank and file over their heads. You should duly expose them only in the event of their refusal."****

In the course of the struggle for the united workers' front the communist parties gained strength and overcame the Right and "Left" deviations. The struggle for the united front helped the Communists to realise the harm caused by the Left-sectarian groups, who influenced the policies of the parties. It was at this period that ultra-Left groups, representing petty-bourgeois adventurist tendencies, were removed from the leadership of a number of parties. In Germany the "ultra-Left" policy of the Fischer-Maslow group, which headed the leadership of the C.P.G., caused serious harm to the Party and the labour movement and consid-

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/43/40.
** Ibid., 495/2/47/122.
*** Ibid.
**** Ibid., 495/2/47/122-123.

erably weakened the positions which the Communists held in the trade unions. At the Reichstag elections in December 1924 the Fischer-Maslow group came out under the slogan "For a Proletarian Dictatorship and Socialisation" (the slogan of workers' and peasants' government was discarded as an electioneering slogan). The Party at these elections lost about a million votes as compared with the elections in the spring of 1924. In 1925 the German "ultra-Left" declared their solidarity with the "New Opposition" in the U.S.S.R. The political line of the "ultra-Left" was so obviously at variance with the demands of the revolutionary struggle and the Party's development that it lost them the support of the masses. In November 1925 the "ultra-Left" were removed from the Party leadership, the helm of which was taken over by tried and trusted leaders of the working class headed by Thälmann. Great assistance to the C.P.G. in removing the "ultra-Left" leadership was rendered by the Executive of the Comintern, which sharply criticised the Fischer-Maslow group and supported the Thälmann workers' group.*

The E.C.C.I. pointed out that the "ultra-Left wing in Germany was the main obstacle to winning of the masses".**

The struggle against the Bordiga "ultra-Left" deviation within the Italian Communist Party reached its conclusion too. At its Third Congress held in Lyons the Party rallied behind its Marxist-Leninist core headed by Gramsci and Togliatti.

In Japan the Communist Party at that period was coping with the Leftist deviation of Fukumoto; this trend underestimated the importance of the mass proletarian organisations and the fight for limited demands of the working class.

The blow at the "ultra-Left" elements eliminated serious obstacles which had prevented the development of mass work by the communist parties.

The consistent fight which the Comintern and the communist parties waged against the Right and "Left" deviations helped to strengthen the parties ideologically and organisationally, and made for their Bolshevisation.

Wherever the communist parties creatively applied united front tactics they achieved notable successes in the development of the mass movements. An admirable example of the effectiveness of these tactics was the campaign for the confiscation of the properties of the sovereign princes in Germany (at the close of 1925 and

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 558/2/6373/2.
** *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 579.

during the first half of 1926). The communist and socialist workers and trade union members, acting together in a united front, were backed by the masses of the peasantry, the artisans and a number of intellectuals. Under pressure of the masses the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany were compelled to come to an agreement with the C.C. of the Communist Party of Germany for conducting a joint campaign to have the princes' property confiscated without compensation. In the course of the referendum fourteen and a half million of the electorate voted for the expropriation of the princes' property. This was considerably more than the total number of votes gained by the C.P.G. and the S.D.P.G. at the previous elections to the Reichstag.

Thälmann commented very favourably on this campaign, which, he said, had strengthened the proletariat's class struggle, weakened the Social-Democratic Party's links with the bourgeois parties and compelled it to support the initiative of the Communists, and by setting up unity committees at the factories had broken down the strong wall which had stood for so long between the Social-Democratic and communist workers.* The Right leaders of Social-Democracy, however, continued their line aimed at splitting the labour movement.

The Communist Party of Italy waged an active struggle to rally all the democratic forces against the fascist dictatorship within the country. At its Third Congress (January 1926) the Party profoundly analysed the class contradictions in Italian society and stated clearly that the working class should tackle the national problems which had not been solved in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Congress pointed out that the Party should lead the proletariat and its allies to the proletarian revolution "through a series of limited actions"** not necessarily only of an economic nature, and that in order to facilitate its activities the Party could "propose intermediate solutions of general political problems and agitate for them among the masses".*** Special attention in this connection was given to the slogan calling for a struggle against fascist legislation, against the monarchy, and for democratic freedoms for the working people, for an agrarian reform, etc.

The Comintern's and Profintern's policies towards unity of action by the working class on an international scale found expression in the strengthening of ties between the trade union

* Cf. E. Thälmann, *Izbranniye statyi i rechi* (Selected Articles and Speeches), Vol. 1, 1919-1928, Moscow, 1957, p. 235.
** *Trenta anni di vita e lotte del P.C.*, I., p. 98.
*** Ibid., p. 103.

centres of different trends, particularly between the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. and those of the capitalist countries. The spring of 1925 saw the organisation of the Anglo-Russian Committee of Trade Union Unity (ARC). An important part in sponsoring it was played by the "Minority Movement" under whose pressure the British trade union leaders agreed to this step. The ARC set itself the aim of developing contacts between the Soviet and British trade unions, and organising joint action by them for unity of the international trade union movement against the attacks of capital and the threat of an anti-Soviet war.

The importance of united front tactics was reaffirmed by the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. (February 17-March 15, 1926), which pointed out once more to the communist parties the need for co-operation with the Social-Democratic workers. The Plenum stated that the members of the Left wing of Social-Democracy, who were opposed to collaboration with the bourgeoisie and to continued participation in coalition governments, expressed—albeit in a weak degree—the dissatisfaction of the rank-and-file Social-Democratic workers with the policy of compromise. "The Communist International and its sections must meet with determination and sincerity these honest endeavours of the Social-Democratic workers for unity."*

The Comintern considered the establishment of unity of action with the Left Social-Democrats an important step towards uniting the different detachments of the labour movement, as this would draw broad strata of the working class and all the working people into the struggle against capitalism and show up to the masses in the course of the class battles the irresolution, inconsistency and vacillation of the reformist leaders.

Key factors in the application of united front tactics the E.C.C.I. considered to be: assistance to the Left elements in the trade unions, support of their urge towards unity of the working class, efforts to restore unity of the trade unions in every given country and set up a united International of Trade Unions. Demands that were clearly unacceptable to reformist-minded workers should not, it was pointed out, be made a condition for joint action; at the same time the E.C.C.I. considered that freedom of communist agitation should not be relinquished. "United front tactics is primarily calculated on joint activities of the workers," the E.C.C.I. pointed out. "But the united front tactics is by no

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 6, No. 40, May 13, 1926, p. 618.

means exhausted thereby. If favourable circumstances exist, Communists should also put forward partial demands, capable of attracting semi-proletarian and bourgeois classes."*

The Comintern declared that "it will conduct the united front tactics with greater energy than ever before, i.e., it will propose to the Social-Democratic workers (and non-party workers) a joint struggle, joint activities against the bourgeoisie on all the most important problems of politics and economics, upon which accord can be reached between Social-Democratic workers and Communists".**

The recommendations to the French Communists stated that "the tactics of the united front must not only aim at exposing the treachery of the leaders, but must demonstrate to the unorganised masses our readiness to work with them for the realisation of their ordinary and immediate demands".*** "The most important task of the Communist International during the coming years is to pay more attention to the political training of the communist parties, to their tempering, organisational consolidation, ideological firmness, revolutionary energy and capability of approaching the masses,"**** the Plenum stated in its resolution. The Executive emphasised once more the important significance of the slogan: "Workers of all lands and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!"

The Comintern's Work in Training Cadres and Promulgating Marxism-Leninism

One of the most important fields of the Comintern's activities aimed at strengthening the communist parties was the training of theoretically and politically educated party workers. Thousands of Communists received training at educational institutions such as the International Leninist School,***** the Communist University of Workers of the East, and the Sun Yat-sen University, which

* Ibid., p. 622.
** Ibid., p. 618.
*** *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 596.
**** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 6, No. 40, p. 620.
***** Up to 1928 this School, which was founded in 1926, was called the International Leninist Courses.

were sponsored by the Executive of the Comintern. The Communist University of Peoples of the East was attended in the twenties by revolutionaries from China, India, the Arabian countries, Indonesia, Indochina, Mongolia, Japan, the Philippines, Latin America and other countries and areas of the world. They studied Marxist-Leninist theory, the principles of party building and methods of agitation and propaganda work among the masses, and pooled experienced. Many activists of the communist parties in the Comintern who graduated the school of practical struggle and mastered Marxist-Leninist theory and principles of proletarian internationalism became genuine leaders of the labour masses.

Of great significance in the Marxist-Leninist tempering of the communist parties was the publication and wide dissemination by the Comintern and its sections of the works of the founders of scientific communism. The works of Marx, Engels and Lenin were translated and published legally wherever the Communists were able to do so. In the countries where the Communists worked illegally these works were printed in underground printing shops, published under pseudonyms, or published abroad and smuggled into the country. The communist parties circulated books and pamphlets of the Comintern containing the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the resolutions, letters and appeals of the E.C.C.I., verbatim reports of its meetings, and speeches and articles of the Comintern's leaders. The E.C.C.I.'s Information Bulletin (Inprecorr) was issued in many languages. Altogether, up to 1929, the Comintern's publications appeared in 38 countries in 40 languages.*

On January 22, 1924 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. decided to issue a volume of Lenin's *Selected Works* in foreign languages.** Miscellanies of Lenin's works shortly appeared in German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Japanese, Polish, Finnish and other languages. By 1929 as many as 15 separate editions of Lenin's works had been published in Austria, 29 in Britain, 16 in Hungary, 82 in Germany, 13 in Italy, 18 in the U.S.A., 22 in Czechoslovakia, and so on. Beginning with 1927 the Comintern, with the co-operation of the Lenin Institute, started publication of Lenin's *Collected Works* in German, English and French. Most frequently published during those years were Lenin's: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, The State and Revolution, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, "Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, Lenin's theses and reports at the Comintern's congresses and many others. Lenin's ideological legacy became the communist parties' principal guide to action. The propaganda of Leninism and the promulgation of Lenin's works among the workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals were one of the most important historical services rendered by the Communist International.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/78/58.
** Ibid., 495/2/27/1.

THE COMINTERN AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT UNDER THE NEW CONDITIONS. THE DEFEAT OF TROTSKYISM

Socialism in the Making in the U.S.S.R.—Its Historical Significance. The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

In the course of the class struggle the Comintern and its sections were faced with the necessity of tackling many complex problems of everyday routine. At the same time, in the second half of the twenties, there arose the need for concretising strategy and tactics in view of the changed conditions. The prospects of building socialism in a single country, which was surrounded by a capitalist world, and the role of that country in the world revolutionary movement were brought into sharp focus.

This question was of paramount importance not only for the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but for the whole Communist International. Clarity on all these key issues was vitally essential for the proper handling of the concrete tasks facing the proletariat's class struggle.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union firmly adhered to Lenin's view that the successful building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., even under the difficult conditions of capitalist encirclement, could be wholly ensured. The building of socialism, with its attendant stupendous socio-economic problems, did not signify withdrawal within "national limits" or diminution of the Soviet Union's role in world revolutionary development. On the contrary, it was the most powerful factor of world revolution. The efforts of the working class in the Soviet Union to build socialism was not only the internal affair of that country, it was fulfilment of a great international duty, an important sector of the general front along which the revolutionary battles were being fought throughout the world.

Another reason why it was vitally important and urgent to concretise the programmatic and tactical issues confronting the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.) was the united anti-Leninist, anti-Party bloc formed by the Trotskyites and the "New Opposition" in the summer of 1926, which launched an attack on the general line of the Communist International and the C.P.S.U.(B.). Trotskyism advanced its platform on both the programmatic guidelines of the communist movement and on concrete political questions, particularly those concerning Britain and China.

The general strike which broke out in Britain in May 1926 was the biggest and most determined mass action taken by the European proletariat in the years of capitalism's temporary stabilisation. An active role in the preparation of this strike was played by the Communist Party of Great Britain and the "Minority Movement" in the trade unions.*

Analysing the growing conflict in Britain, the Executive of the Comintern called upon the international proletariat to organise a sweeping movement of solidarity with the British workers. On April 23 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. issued a statement calling for a united front of the miners in a number of countries and united action by the Amsterdam International and the Red International. The Communist International declared anew that "in the interests of solidarity in the international action of the world proletariat, which we are determined to achieve at all costs and under all circumstances" it was necessary to sink all differences between the revolutionary and the reformist organisations.** The leaders of the reformist organisations, however, ignored the proposals of the E.C.C.I. The direct aid rendered the British bourgeoisie by the Right-reformist leadership of the General Council of Trade Unions was one of the primary causes of the defeat of the general strike. The General Council put every possible obstacle in the way of calling together of the Anglo-Russian Committee to discuss the question of the strike and of assisting the miners for which the Soviet trade unions were pressing.

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* About four million workers were involved in the strike at its peak. It was started by the coal miners. The strike committees and "Councils of Action" set up by the workers during the strike assumed the functions of government bodies in the local areas. Owing to the policy of compromise on the part of the General Council of Trade Unions, however, the movement lost its character of a general strike. The miners fought on until the end of November when they, too, were compelled to terminate the strike. The workers of the Soviet Union gave great moral and material support to the British workers.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/55/106.

The defeat of the general strike in Britain, after which the miners fought on manfully alone, served the Trotskyite opposition as an excuse to further their own factional interests aimed at combating the tactics of the united front and discrediting the C.P.S.U.(B.) and its policy. The opposition pulled no punches in their violent criticism of the policy of the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.) towards the Anglo-Russian Committee.

In July 1926 the delegation of the Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions in the Anglo-Russian Committee received instructions "to avoid a break if possible and do your utmost to secure the co-operation of the British side of the Anglo-Russian Committee in rendering the greatest possible aid to the striking miners. . . ."* The opposition, on the other hand, tried to force upon the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Comintern a policy that virtually fell in with the interests of the British trade union bureaucrats. The theses which Zinoviev submitted to the Politbureau of the C.P.S.U.(B.) Central Committee contained a demand for the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet trade unions from the Anglo-Russian Committee. Zinoviev considered that the stabilisation of capitalism was ended or nearing its end, that the capitalist system was entering upon a period of revolutionary explosions and that in view of this the tactic of mustering strength retreated into the background. Zinoviev was followed by Trotsky and Kamenev, who demanded withdrawal from the Anglo-Russian Committee and proposed that the main blow be dealt to the Left wing of the General Council. The Politbureau of the C.P.S.U.(B.) Central Committee rejected Zinoviev's theses and the Kamenev-Trotsky proposal.

On June 8 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. endorsed the "Theses on the Lessons of the British General Strike". It stressed that the strike had demonstrated the correctness of the Comintern's evaluation of the world situation, which it described as a period of relative and temporary stabilisation of capitalism. The Theses denounced the treacherous role of the reformist leaders of the British trade unions and pointed out that "Without smashing opportunism in the labour movement it is impossible to smash the capitalist regime". The Theses went on to say: "The initiative for exit on the part of the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. . . . would be a very 'heroic' gesture, but politically childish and inexpedient."**

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 17/3/576.

** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 47, June 17, 1926, p. 769.

At the Joint Plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.) in July D. Manuilsky, a member of the E.C.C.I. Presidium, addressing himself to the

Already on May 7 Zinoviev's conclusion that the Left wing of the reformists was now the "greatest enemy" in Britain had been rejected at a special meeting of the E.C.C.I. Presidium which discussed the report by T. Bell concerning the British strike.

The attitude of the E.C.C.I. Presidium towards the policy of trade union unity was expressed by Togliatti in his speech before the July Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) (which was attended by members of the E.C.C.I. Presidium). Togliatti said: "What is the ARC? It is a modus for our tactics of the united front, a method we have discovered for establishing contact with the masses. . . . Has ARC been a bloc with the leaders? There has been that element in ARC too, of course. In one or another degree there is always an element of that kind in our tactics of the united front. It is a method which we use to establish closer ties with the masses and which enables us to maintain contact with them. . . . We must make use of the united-front tactics not only from below, but also from above; we are obliged, in order to make the masses follow our lead, to still stand beside the leaders." Quitting the ARC would entail disruption of the tactics of trade union unity in France and of the tactics of the united front which were being applied by the Italian Communist Party. "In short, it would be the liquidation of the tactics of the united front throughout the International."*

In May 1926 Zinoviev came forward with another sectarian thesis—he moved that the E.C.C.I. should recommend the Chinese Communist Party to quit the Kuomintang. At the Politbureau of the C.P.S.U.(B.) C.C. this proposal was rightly assessed as a line aimed "at the liquidation of the revolutionary movement in China".** The practical line of the E.C.C.I. in the national-colonial question was in keeping with the decisions of its Sixth Enlarged Plenum, whose tactical course—the establishment of a united front—was of general, global significance, taking in the East a form which was specific for colonial and semi-colonial countries, namely, as a policy of rallying all anti-imperialist forces.

The Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition came out against the line of the Comintern and demanded a revision of its basic appraisals

opposition with reference to its sectarian tactics, remarked: "Your banging the door is banging the idea of trade union unity" (C.P.A., I.M.L., 17/2/246/1/24).

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 17/2/246/1/81-82.

** Ibid., 558/1/5297/1.

and conclusions in regard to the prospects of the world revolutionary process. The main issue on which the struggle with the opposition was fought out was that of the possibility of socialism being built in a single given country.

At the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) (October 26-November 3, 1926) Trotsky and Zinoviev demagogically pointed to the difficulties of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and came out openly against Lenin's theses, which maintained that socialism could be victorious in a single given country; they tried to prove the "inevitability" of a conflict between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, and prophesied its downfall. The Party Conference firmly rebuffed them. The Trotskyite opposition, nevertheless, continued its disruptive factional activities and tried to form an anti-Leninist bloc on an international scale.

Dimitrov said at the time with full justification that "an international faction is forming at the present time in the Communist International". The struggle against it should therefore be an international one. It was a struggle "for the existence of the Communist International".*

Trotskyism denied the possibility of socialism being built in the U.S.S.R. without "direct state support" from the proletariat in the West. The opposition alleged that the construction of a socialist society in the U.S.S.R. was a renunciation of the prospects of world revolution, neglect of proletarian internationalism. The task of building socialism in the Soviet Union was artificially and demagogically divorced from the task of further developing the world revolutionary process and was contraposed to it. The opposition's credo was the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution which was committed to the idea of "skipping" the bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution, and was to be the general rule for all countries, and which dismissed the task of building up an alliance between the working class and the peasantry—Lenin's most important precept.

Trotsky asserted that only the victory of the revolution on a world scale could save proletarian rule in the Soviet Union from "degeneration and decay"; that under the economic and political pressure of imperialism the socialist economy was bound to collapse and open the way for the restoration of capitalist relations in the U.S.S.R.; that a way out of the difficulties should be sought in the artificial "prodding" of the world revolution by all and every means, not excluding that of war. In this connection Trotsky

* C.P.A., I.M.Z., 495/2/63/42.

dubbed as "apostasy" the Soviet Union's foreign policy, which aimed at preserving peace as a means of ensuring the successful construction of socialism and furthering the development of the world revolutionary process.

These arguments, as we know, drew from Lenin as early as 1918 the following comment: "Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push,* and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength."*

The Trotskyites tried to force the communist parties to renounce these conclusions of Lenin's.

What drew the greatest ire of the factionalists was the Leninist principle of unity within the ranks of the Communist Party, following which the C.P.S.U.(B.) waged an irreconcilable struggle against the disruptive activities of the opposition.

An important role in charting the paths of the world revolutionary process and in the ideological defeat of the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc on an international scale was played by the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. (November 22-December 16, 1926), which expressed the unanimous will of the world communist movement.

The report on the situation within the C.P.S.U.(B.) was made by Stalin, who played a prominent role in rallying the Party's forces to fight the opposition. "The most urgent question in our Party today," he said in his report, "is that of the building of socialism in our country. Lenin was right when he said that the eyes of the whole world are upon us, upon our economic construction, upon our achievements on the front of constructive work. But in order to achieve successes on this front, the principal instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat, our Party, must

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 27, pp. 71-72.

be ready for this work, must realise the importance of this task, and must be able to serve as the lever of the victory of socialist construction in our country.'"* The speaker emphasised that "the national and international tasks of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. merged into the single common task of liberating the workers of all countries from capitalism". The report and the speeches by representatives of the communist parties—Sémard, Šmeral, Togliatti, Thälmann, Kolarov, Zetkin, Katayama and others—criticised the anti-Leninist views of the opposition and its disruptive activities.

It was brought home to the opposition at the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. that they had failed to secure the support of the communist parties in the capitalist countries on which they had staked. The discussion of the Russian question at the Plenum demonstrated the complete isolation of the Trotskyites. The delegates as one man condemned the opposition's theoretical, organisational and tactical platform and its activities, which played into the hands of the enemies of the proletarian dictatorship. The Plenum emphatically rejected Trotsky's theses concerning the impossibility of the socialist revolution being victorious in a single given country and pointed out that "the C.P.S.U.(B.) is conducting an absolutely correct policy of socialist construction in the firm conviction that the U.S.S.R. possesses in the country 'all that is necessary and sufficient' for the complete construction of socialist society".** The accusation of "narrow nationalism" which the opposition levelled against the Leninist Party was strongly rebuffed by the delegates, who spoke on behalf of their parties. The keynote of all the speeches at the Plenum was that the C.P.S.U.(B.), in carrying out the construction of a socialist society in the U.S.S.R., was rendering tremendous support to the international revolutionary labour movement, to the national liberation struggle of the peoples, to the international army of Communists.

"The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.," stated the resolution adopted by it, "believes that Soviet Russia is the principal organising centre of the international revolution. The Enlarged Plenum places on record that the C.P.S.U.(B.) in its past as well as in its present work has proved its internationalism not in words, but in deeds, and has represented a magnificent example of internationalism. The Enlarged Plenum considers the

* J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 63.
** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 11, February 3, 1927, p. 238.

charges of narrow nationalism brought against the C.P.S.U.(B.) as slander.'"*

The Plenum enjoined all sections of the Comintern to wage a determined fight with Trotskyism and the opposition's attempts to impair the ideological and organisational unity of the Communist International. This fight, the resolution stressed, was all the more necessary in a situation where the imperialist powers were trying to encircle the Soviet Union. The resolution of the Fifteenth Conference of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on the opposition bloc was endorsed.

Zetkin, Togliatti, Geschke, Šmeral, Kuusinen, Valetsky, Dimitrov, Katayama, Manner, Codovilla and other prominent leaders of the international communist movement tabled a motion on October 23 on behalf of their parties concerning Zinoviev's work in the Comintern. This document stated that the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. considered Zinoviev's further work in the Comintern undesirable.**

The Presidium agreed with this proposal and submitted it for consideration to the Seventh Plenum. Zinoviev was relieved of his duties as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

The ideological and political defeat of the opposition was an important landmark in the history of the international communist movement. A serious obstacle in the way of the general line of the Communist International was removed. The Comintern gave clear and explicit guidelines as to the ways of development of the world revolution, the strategy and tactics of the communist movement and the achievement of unity within its ranks on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

The Seventh Enlarged Plenum examined the question of the international situation and the tasks of the Comintern and emphasised that the present period was a period of stabilisation of capitalism. Among the specially important factors which gave capitalist stabilisation its temporary and precarious character were listed: the growth of socialism in the Soviet Union, the decline of British capitalism, the aggravation of the class struggle in Britain, and the national revolution in China.

The Plenum examined the lessons of the strike struggle in Britain and condemned the capitulatory stand of the reformist leaders of the British trade unions. It pointed out that the activities of the representatives of the Soviet trade unions who had

* Ibid., 1927.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/64/198-199.

remained in the ARC and criticised the apostasy of the General Council, and the policy pursued by the British Communists, who tried, in concert with the local branches of the Independent Labour Party, to organise aid for the striking miners, "have demonstrated the importance of the tactics of the united front as a means of rallying the workers for the fight against the capitalists and of compelling the reformist leaders to come out in their true colours".*

In dealing with organisational questions, the Plenum decided to effect changes in the structure of the Comintern's governing bodies which were accountable to the Executive Committee. The office of Chairman of the E.C.C.I. was done away with and a collective body—the Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I.—was set up.

The Tactics of the E.C.C.I. in the Chinese Question

One of the most exacting fields of Comintern work was the Chinese question. The E.C.C.I. followed revolutionary developments in China with close attention and determined the tactical line of the Communists with due consideration of the changes in the situation, namely, the advance of the national-revolutionary armies of the Kuomintang in the north, the upsurge in the workers' and peasants' movement, the growing influence of the Chinese Communist Party among the masses, and the growth of anti-communist tendencies on the part of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang leadership. The Comintern's tactics in regard to the Chinese revolution were based on the principle of rallying all the anti-imperialist forces.

In view of the upswing in the liberation movement in China the Comintern urged its sections to render practical assistance to the national liberation forces in that country.

Immediately after the events of May 30, 1925 in China (the anti-imperialist action of the Shanghai workers and students, which sparked off the national revolution in China) the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. discussed the Chinese question and on June 17 wired the communist parties in the capitalist countries as follows:

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional v dokumentakh*, p. 664.

"[In] view [of] developments [in] China and increasing attacks of imperialists, chiefly British and Japanese, taking form of open armed intervention, the Presidium of Comintern and Profintern among a number of other steps for assisting the fighting people of China have resolved to propose to Second International and Amsterdam joint action aimed at exposing the imperialists and preventing further attacks upon China. Presidium urges you take all necessary steps to draw labour masses' public opinion to the struggle of Chinese people for their independence by organising protest meetings and money collections jointly with socialists and non-party workers and proposing joint action to Social-Democrats and Amsterdam people. Slogans: 1. Imperialists out of China; 2. Repeal humiliating treaties; 3. Cancel exterritorial rights; 4. Meet demands of striking workers; 5. Immediate prosecution of persons responsible for shooting of workers and students in Shanghai, Hankow, Tsingtao and other places."*

These demonstrations in support of the Chinese people helped to rally the anti-imperialist forces of the oppressing and oppressed countries, created the foundation for unity of action by the workers' parties in the West on concrete key issues and was a striking manifestation of united front tactics. The action of the E.C.C.I. Presidium showed how timely was the Comintern's response to important events in international life, how skilful it was in discovering a breach in the enemy's camp and how vigorously it mustered strength to take advantage of the opportunities that opened up before the revolutionary movement. The decision of the E.C.C.I. Presidium helped to draw hundreds of thousands of people into the movement for rendering aid to the Chinese people; the remote Chinese revolution "drew nearer" to the countries of capitalism and became a matter of vital concern to the proletariat of these countries. The "Hands-Off-China" campaign launched in the U.S.S.R. spread throughout the world. Protest against intervention by the imperialist powers in the internal affairs of China was voiced at public meetings in France, Germany, the U.S.A., Britain, Austria, Japan, Czechoslovakia, Korea, Italy, Egypt, Turkey and other countries.

The Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. (February-March 1926) noted that "a tremendous general-national movement under the slogans of national independence and a people's government"** was building up in China. It described the working class

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/40/90.

** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 6, No. 40, p. 648.

of China as "the skirmisher and chief fighter of the movement"* The Plenum's decision showed that the Communists supported the Kuomintang insofar as it fought "against the imperialists and the whole militarist-feudal order for the independence of the country and for a single revolutionary-democratic government".** The Executive sharply criticised both the Right liquidators in the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party, who ignored the independent class aims of the Chinese proletariat, and the Leftists, who "try to skip over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement straight to the tasks of proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power".*** The E.C.C.I. pointed out the exceptionally important role which the peasant millions of China were called upon to play in shaping the Chinese revolution.

The Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. described the revolution in China as an anti-imperialist, bourgeois-democratic revolution that was to liberate the Chinese people from the foreign yoke, unite the country, establish a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry and deal with the problems of nationalising the land and confiscating the property belonging to foreign capital. The E.C.C.I. considered that the Chinese revolution was passing through a general national phase, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China was merely in the initial stage of its development and its motive forces were the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty and middle bourgeoisie and part of the big bourgeoisie, who formed a broad-based anti-imperialist bloc.****

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* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number,* Vol. 6, No. 40, p. 648.

** Ibid.

*** Ibid., p. 649.

**** Important amendments, which made the original variant of the Theses of the Seventh Plenum on the Chinese question far more realistic, were introduced by Stalin. Rightly considering the ban on usury under Chinese conditions prevailing at the time to be impracticable, he proposed including instead in the Theses the demand that "usury be energetically combated". In lieu of the demand that the Communists should not seize the leadership of the Left wing of the Kuomintang mechanically, Stalin proposed the wording: "Communist influence over the Left wing should not be effected mechanically." He also proposed that in the section dealing with the aims of the Chinese revolution the words "nationalisation of big enterprises, mines and banks" should be followed by the phrase: "bearing the character of imperialist concessions." (C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/165/278/1-2.) The amendments reflecting Stalin's point of view on the progressive possibilities of national-bourgeois circles were taken into account by the Plenum.

After the Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Chin-wei counter-revolutionary coups,

In framing its tactical line on questions relating to the Chinese revolution the Comintern discovered a correct approach to a number of important theoretical and practical problems which loomed large before the communist movement. The Comintern at that time did not regard the Kuomintang as an ordinary bourgeois party or generally as a political party of the usual type, but saw in it a political bloc, a broad-based organisation within which a struggle was going on between the different class and political forces. The Comintern made a considerable contribution to the development of Marxist thought by emphasising the general national character of the Chinese revolution of 1925-1927 at its initial stage. Reference to the greater and in a sense autonomous and often decisive role of the military factor in this revolution was another new word. So also was the profound and accurate description of Chinese militarism given by the Committee on the Chinese Question at the Seventh Enlarged Plenum. The idea was put forward at that time of setting up strongpoints in North-Western China, where, as the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party pointed out, "there is less danger of intervention, where we shall have contact with the U.S.S.R. and be able to receive assistance from it".*

Evaluating the general prospects of the Chinese revolution, the Seventh Plenum pointed out that "the outcome of the Chinese revolution will not necessarily be the creation of political and social conditions conducive to the capitalist development of the country".** The state created as a result of the victory of the revolution would not be a purely bourgeois-democratic state. It will "represent democratic dictatorship of the proletariat, peasantry and other exploited classes".***

The Seventh Plenum met at a time when the national-revolutionary armies were winning victory after victory over the troops of the militarists—the mainstay of imperialist influence in China. The Plenum found that imperialist intervention in China was increasing, that "the national revolution in China develops amidst peculiar conditions which radically distinguish it from the clas-

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however, Stalin's utterances betrayed growing doubt as to the progressive possibilities of the national bourgeoisie in China, India, Indochina, Indonesia and a number of other oppressed countries, later reflected in his stand on a number of issues connected with the national liberation movement.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/166/159/39.

** *International Press Correspondence,* Vol. 7, No. 11, February 3, 1927, p. 231.

*** Ibid.

sical bourgeois revolutions of Europe in the last century as well as from the 1905 revolution in Russia".*

The Plenum pointed to the swift process of regrouping of the social forces involved in the national-revolutionary movement in China and to the inevitability of most of the big capitalist bourgeoisie passing over to the side of the counter-revolution: it described the agrarian question as "the central point of the present situation"; it outlined a concrete programme of demands aimed at drawing "the bulk of the working class into the movement and strengthening its position in the national revolution"** and at winning the peasantry over to the revolution; it listed the most important general democratic tasks of the Chinese revolution and laid special stress on the importance of both a systematic and resolute struggle by the Communists against the Right leaders of the Kuomintang, who were out to turn the Kuomintang into a party of the bourgeoisie and landowners, and co-operation with the Left wing of the Kuomintang.

After the events of March 20, 1926 (the attempted counter-revolutionary coup in Kwangchow) which revealed the Commander-in-Chief of the national-revolutionary armies in his true anti-communist colours, the E.C.C.I. assumed that sooner or later Chiang Kai-shek would strike at the revolutionary forces of China.*** The Seventh Plenum pointed out that as the Chinese revolution developed in breadth and depth the big bourgeoisie would come to the conclusion that the anti-imperialist struggle was a threat to its interests and it would steer clear of the revolution and try to crush it. The task of the Communists was to win time needed for building up the revolution, strengthening the Communist Party and preparing for the coming attacks of the counter-revolution.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 11, February 3, 1927. p. 230.

** Ibid., pp. 231, 233.

*** The leadership of the Kuomintang, at the time it was acting in league with the Communist Party, stressed the fact that "the Kuomintang should maintain closest contact with the general staff of the world revolution", that "it stands in need of the guidance of the Comintern" and that "the Kuomintang's greatest desire was to enter into still closer relations with the Comintern". The Executive of the Kuomintang proposed that this organisation should join the Comintern (the Comintern rejected this proposal). In other words, the Kuomintang leadership was trying hard to "paint itself in communist colours". It can be stated most definitely that the Comintern never had the slightest doubts about the Kuomintang being a national-revolutionary and not communist organisation. The opposition's criticisms on this score were absolutely without foundation (C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/165/66/31-33; 514/1/236/2-3, 141-144).

But the odds at that time were clearly in favour of the Kuomintang. There were many reasons for this. The broad masses still believed in the Kuomintang, which only yesterday was a revolutionary organisation. Many adherents of the Communist Party would not have followed its lead if it had not come out under the banner of the Kuomintang's revolutionary principles. Many of the army's commanders were under the influence of the Kuomintang leadership. The Communist Party of China was not strong enough to deal effectively with the counter-revolutionary coup and the supporters of military dictatorship. No little role in this respect was played in the spring and summer of 1927 by the activities of the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Cheng Tu-siu, who, as far back as 1921-1924 had tried to oppose the Comintern's line: he now displayed strong Right-opportunist tendencies, which contributed to a relaxation of vigilance in regard to the Right wing of the Kuomintang leadership. Moreover, the Chinese Communist Party had to deal with such an experienced and cruel enemy as the Chiang Kai-shek clique, which at that time still retained the support of the masses.*

Examining the new situation that had arisen in China after Chiang Kai-shek had effected his counter-revolutionary coup in Shanghai, the Eighth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. (May 1927) found that the Left Kuomintang Government in Wuhan, which represented the motive forces of the revolution at its new stage—the peasants, workers, artisans and part of the bourgeoisie—was capable of playing a revolutionary role provided it shaped a firm course "towards the masses". This was to determine the tactical course which the Communist Party of China had to take. The Party, by participating in the work of the Left Kuomintang Government, was to organise powerful mass pressure which would impel this government along a revolutionary path. It was assumed that Wuhan would become the centre of attraction to the revolutionary forces and that the members of the Wuhan Government would be in a position to repulse the usurper Chiang Kai-shek, who had established a military dictatorship in Shanghai. But this was not to be. In July 1927 the Wuhan Government headed by

* Even after the Chiang Kai-shek coup in April 1927 the Comintern had every grounds for still maintaining the view that the policy of rallying all the anti-imperialist forces of China was the only correct line and that the Chiang Kai-shek coup was made possible mainly because the counter-revolution had a preponderance of strength. It was pointed out at that time that the mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party were largely due to its youthfulness and inexperience (C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/166/186/8-9).

Wang Chin-wei, which only recently had accused Chiang Kai-shek of treason, broke with the Communists, persecuted them and split the anti-imperialist front in China.

The conversion of the Kuomintang, hitherto a national-revolutionary party, into a body controlled by a bourgeois-militarist, anti-popular caste, was now completed. The transformation, accompanied by a savage reign of terror against the working people, chiefly the Communists, was one of the factors which led the Comintern to the conclusion that the national bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries did not count as a force of active opposition to imperialism.

The overestimation of the Chinese Communist Party's strength, which took place in the Comintern in the spring and summer of 1927, can be understood if we take into consideration that by March 1927 the Party, which in 1921 had 30 members, became a mass organisation and an influential political force. It had in its ranks about 58,000 Communists, of whom 53.8 per cent were workers, 18.7 per cent peasants, 19.1 per cent intellectuals, and 3.1 per cent army men.* The trade unions with their considerable membership and the numerous peasant associations were under the Party's influence. The Party was the most active force of the revolutionary struggle in the country.

But whereas the opposition considered this sufficient grounds for impelling the Communist Party to attempt a seizure of power, the Comintern rejected this adventurist prescription, and believed that the Communist Party of China should rouse the broad masses to an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution, but conduct the struggle for power within the framework of the united front. In other words, the Comintern and the opposition held diametrically opposite views on the problems of the Chinese revolution.

The line of the E.C.C.I. in the Chinese question, which boiled down to a policy of rallying all the anti-imperialist forces of China with the Communist Party playing a vanguard role, came in for systematic and vehement attacks on the part of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition. The problem of the Chinese revolution served the opposition as a pretext for attacks on the general line of the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). Later the opposition used the defeat of the Chinese revolution for the same purpose.

The views of the opposition on the Chinese question amounted to the following. The Comintern's view that it was necessary to support those national movements in the oppressed countries which

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/166/159/42.

bore a revolutionary character was misinterpreted as a guideline for breaking with those anti-imperialist forces which were not communist. By the alignment of its forces and their character the Chinese revolution was regarded as similar in principle to the revolution of 1905 in Russia. The evolvement of the revolution into a socialist revolution was proclaimed an immediate prospect. Sun Yat-senism was regarded not as a step forward, not as preparation of the broad masses for a higher form of ideology—this was the point of view of the Comintern—but as an ideology that was basically reactionary. The idea of forming a government representing the interests of a bloc of several classes was declared to be "nonsense", "negation of Marxism". The Kuomintang was described merely as an ordinary bourgeois party which had never taken a revolutionary stand and merely adopted the guise of a revolutionary party. The Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition demanded the immediate establishment of Soviets in China, first and foremost Soviets of workers' deputies as organs of power, ignoring the transitional stages of the revolution's development. In support of their view the opposition hypocritically quoted the Second Congress decisions, which raised the question of setting up mass political organisation—Soviets of Working People, Soviets of the Exploited. In other words, the opposition, ignoring the stage of bourgeois-democratic revolution, demanded an immediate struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in China. The agrarian programme of the Kuomintang, the fight for which could help rally the masses behind the Communist Party against the Kuomintang leadership who sabotaged that programme, was cast aside by the opposition, who tried to impose on the Comintern a policy aimed at speeding up the agrarian revolution on an all-China scale.

After the Chiang Kai-shek counter-revolutionary coup in April 1927 the opposition argued that the Right Kuomintang leaders would be ousted in the near future and that "a dictatorship of the proletariat, peasantry and the urban poor" would be established in China. In this connection the slogan "Soviets wherever possible, first of all in the workers' districts"* was advanced once more together with the unrealistic demand for the ejection from the Wuhan Left-Kuomintang Government of everyone who was opposed to the slogan of the Soviets.

The attempt to put this programme into effect would have led not only to the defeat of the Chinese Communist Party in the early stages of the revolution, but to a sharp contraction in the scale

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/166/187/157.

and scope of the revolution, which had been achieved by the long-standing vanguard participation of the Communists in the united national front. The Chinese revolution would not have passed through its mass phase.

While the Comintern was working to draw wider masses into the revolutionary struggle under general democratic slogans in order to bring home to them in the course of this struggle the correctness of the Communist Party's policy, Trotsky poked fun at the view which attached tremendous significance to the masses gaining their own political experience. "The conservative national-bourgeois government of the Kuomintang, Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship... in a word, every institution set up by the propertied and ruling classes, which is an obstacle to the revolutionary mass movement, becomes, according to this theory, a great historic stage to which our policy must be adjusted until such time as the 'masses themselves' will overthrow that obstacle"* was how Trotsky presented the point of view of the Comintern. History had the laugh on Trotsky: it took long years of struggle and compromise to overthrow the dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek, and attempts to achieve this aim without "the masses themselves" led merely to defeats.

The Comintern emphatically rejected the tactical line which the opposition was trying to impose upon it. Considerable credit for the defeat of the opposition on problems of the Chinese revolution goes to Stalin, who took an active part in the discussion of the Chinese question on the Executive of the Comintern, in the drafting of the corresponding documents and the mapping out of the basic lines of Comintern policy on China.

The situation that arose in China after the defeat of the revolutionary forces in 1927 was examined by the E.C.C.I. at its Ninth Plenum (February 9-25, 1928). The Comintern found that "the first wave of the broad revolutionary movement of workers and peasants" ended in crushing defeats; that "at the present time there is no mighty upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement on a national scale"; that the economic, class and national aims of the bourgeois-democratic revolution had not been achieved; that it would be wrong to regard the Chinese revolution as having already evolved into a socialist revolution or that it was a "permanent revolution". "The tendency of skipping over the bourgeois-democratic phase of the revolution coupled with the simultaneous appraisal of the revolution as a 'permanent' revolution, is a mis-

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/166/196/151.

take similar to that made by Trotsky in 1905. That mistake is particularly harmful, as such a formulation of the question is excluded also by the profound national peculiarity of the Chinese revolution as a semi-colonial revolution."*

The Plenum also took note of the fact that the revolutionary movement in China was developing very unevenly. "The present moment, by the way, is characteristic of the fact that whereas in some provinces the peasant movement develops further, in some industrial centres the labour movement is bled white and subjected to unexampled white terror and is experiencing a certain degree of depression."** Thus, already early in 1928, the Comintern traced that very important and peculiar tendency in the Chinese revolution which was largely to determine its direction in the years to come.

The chief task of the Chinese Communists at that period, as the Comintern saw it, was to work towards drawing the millioned masses of the workers and peasants into the struggle, to educate them politically, organise them around the Party and its slogans, and direct their daily struggle. The E.C.C.I. urged the need for the Communist Party to work in the Kuomintang trade unions; it considered that the chief task of the Communist Party in the "sovietised peasant districts" was to carry out the agrarian revolution and organise units of the Red Army in order eventually to join them together into a single united all-China Red Army; it oriented the Communist Party of China towards preparations for general co-ordinated actions in town and country.

The E.C.C.I. described the Canton insurrection as "a heroic attempt by the proletariat to organise a Soviet government in China". It also pointed out that the uprising revealed serious shortcomings, namely: insufficient preparatory work among the workers, peasants and soldiers, a wrong approach to the workers in the Kuomintang trade unions, and the Party national headquarter's lack of information concerning the events in Canton. "Despite all these blunders, the Canton insurrection must be considered an example of greatest heroism of the Chinese workers, who have now the right to claim their historical role as leaders of the great Chinese revolution."*** The Comintern warned the Chinese Communists of the danger of putschism, at "playing with insurrection".

* *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 8, No. 16, March 15, 1928, p. 321.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., p. 322.

Slogans recommended to the Communist Party called for confiscation of the landed estates, introduction of an eight-hour day, the national unification of China and liberation from the yoke of imperialism, overthrow of the existing government, establishment of a dictatorship of the workers and peasants, and the organisation of Soviets. The change in the Comintern's political line in the Chinese question expressed in support of the slogan calling for the organisation of Soviets as organs of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, took place under the new situation that was created as a result of the betrayal of the Kuomintang leadership, the defeat of the revolution of 1925-1927 and the absence at that time of conditions suitable for the formation of a broad anti-imperialist national front.

The Comintern and the Communist Party of Indonesia

The correctness of the Comintern's tactical line in the national-colonial question was strikingly exemplified in its policy towards the liberation and communist movements in Indonesia.

Immediately after the close of the Fifth Plenum the E.C.C.I. forwarded to the Indonesian Communists the resolution adopted by the Plenum with a covering letter of explanation. The E.C.C.I. emphasised that "the Sarekat Islam, by composition and ideology, is a petty-bourgeois organisation and as such must have a programme of national liberation and not a quasicommunist programme".*

The E.C.C.I. went on record against the decisions of the December (1924) Conference of the Communist Party of Indonesia calling for the dissolution of the Sarekat Rakjat organisation, which united large masses of the peasantry. "The experience of the international communist movement has shown that there is not a single country in the world where the proletariat can count on success in the struggle unless it obtains the active support of the majority of the peasantry," wrote the E.C.C.I. "This makes it perfectly clear that if you abandon the leadership of the fight of the peasantry of Indonesia against the Dutch imperialists you will postpone the revolution for many years."**

* C.P.A., I.M.L., Collection of unsorted documents.
** Ibid.

Despite its formal agreement with the resolution of the E.C.C.I., the leadership of the Indonesian Communist Party, in which Left-sectarian tendencies at that time were uppermost, did not follow the advice of the Comintern and pursued its former policy.

The E.C.C.I. sent another letter to the Indonesian Communist Party in which it subjected the Party's policy to serious criticism on account of its sectarian mistakes, its failure to appreciate the role of the peasantry, and its unwillingness to combine the struggle for the workers' everyday interests with the political struggle.

The leadership of the I.C.P. regarded the Comintern's advice as "needless instructions". It failed to take into account the grave consequences which it incurred in pursuing a policy aimed at liquidating the national-revolutionary organisation of Sarekat Rakjat. The despair created by the harsh measures of repression taken by the Dutch colonialists in 1926 was regarded by the Party leadership as genuine readiness for action on the part of the masses, inducing it to adopt an ultrarevolutionary stand, which eventually led to serious consequences for the Party.

In the summer of 1926 a delegation arrived at the Comintern from the Central Committee of the Indonesian Communist Party. It informed the E.C.C.I. that a meeting of C.C. members representing the Party's biggest branches, members of the Sarekat Rakjat organisation and a number of trade unions was held at Solo (Central Java) at the end of 1925. The meeting came to the conclusion that "the Party felt objectively strong enough to meet the reaction with powerful resistance and an uprising".* The delegation told the Executive that there were eight thousand members of the Communist Party and 101,000 members of the Sarekat Rakjat in Indonesia and that the I.C.P. controlled nine trade union centres with a membership of 23,000 wage and salaried workers.

On July 22 the I.C.P. delegation was received by the E.C.C.I. The spokesmen of the Executive were greatly concerned as to whether the revolutionary situation which the delegates had reported really existed in Indonesia and whether there was a political programme of the forthcoming uprising. On the latter question the delegation itself was not clear. "The whole population will follow our lead and after that we shall draft a political programme. Of course, as soon as the time comes for it and if we are ready we shall take the power into our hands," said the delegates. The delegation was confident that the uprising would succeed.**

* Ibid.
** Ibid.

In August the representatives of the C.C. of the I.C.P. met Stalin, who was a member of the Executive of the Comintern. The delegation reported that the situation within the country favoured a mass revolutionary uprising. Stalin expressed doubt as to whether the uprising was properly prepared and at the same time stressed that attempts to skip the national-democratic phase of the revolution held out little chances of success. When the delegation in September 1926 read the draft resolution of the E.C.C.I. on the Indonesian question, the main points of which coincided with Stalin's views, it evoked in them a sharply negative attitude.

The resolution on the Indonesian question adopted by the E.C.C.I. stated that one of the most important tasks of the Indonesian Communist Party was to rally all the national-revolutionary elements in the country and build up a united national front with the I.C.P. preserving complete organisational and political independence. The central point in the recommended programme of action was the demand for the country's independence.

When in November 1926 the uprising against the Dutch colonialists became a fact, the Comintern sponsored the campaign for a movement of solidarity with the heroic insurgents on the part of the labour masses. It denounced the hangmen of the Indonesian people before the whole world and pointed to the vanguard role which the Communist Party of Indonesia played in the country's struggle against colonial oppression. Later on the Comintern did a great deal towards organising assistance to the Indonesian Communists in rebuilding their Party, which had been broken up as a result of the defeat of the uprising. It also came out many times in support of the non-proletarian anti-imperialist forces in Indonesia, who, with the expanding influence of the revolutionary-democratic wing, tended more and more towards the establishment of a united front with the Communists.

The Establishment of an Anti-Imperialist League

The rising tide of the national liberation movement, which was beginning to make itself felt at that period, spurred the anti-imperialist forces to greater activity.

Already in February 1926 the representatives of a number of anti-imperialist organisations at a Conference in Berlin had formed a League Against Colonial Oppression. The Conference

decided also to convene a representative International Congress of Oppressed Peoples. The steering committee set up by the Conference decided to have the congress held in Brussels and proposed the following questions for inclusion in the agenda: the colonial policy of imperialism and its influence on the colonial and semi-colonial countries; the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples and its support by the labour movement and progressive organisations of the imperialist countries; joint action by the national liberation and labour movements in the colonial and imperialist countries; the establishment of a permanent international organisation against colonial oppression and imperialism for the purpose of uniting the national liberation and labour movements of all countries.

The World Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism opened in Brussels on February 10, 1927. It was attended by 152 delegates representing 137 progressive organisations from 37 countries. They were representatives of the oppressed peoples, the working class and intellectuals of the capitalist countries.

One of the most important documents adopted by the Congress was the resolution moved jointly by the British, Indian and Chinese delegations.

The resolution formulated the duties of the working class of the imperialist countries towards the national liberation movement, namely: to fight side by side with the oppressed peoples for their complete liberation; to vote against loans designed for the suppression of the colonial peoples and the preservation of the colonial system; to expose the policy of imperialism and "achieve liberation in accordance with the doctrine of the class struggle".* The demand was put forward for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign armed forces from China. In the resolution on India the Congress strongly supported the movement for her complete liberation from foreign oppression and expressed the belief that the working class and the peoples of other countries would take the necessary action to prevent the sending of troops to India. The Congress condemned the actions of the colonialists in Syria.

On the report of Willi Münzenberg, General Secretary of International Workers' Relief, it was resolved to set up an international organisation called The League Against Imperialism and Colonial Oppression and For National Independence. All organisations,

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* *Das Flammenglichen vom Palais Egmont. Offizielles Protokoll des Kongresses gegen Koloniale Unterdrückung und Imperialismus*, Brüssel, 10-15 Februar 1927, Berlin, 1927, S. 52.

parties, trade unions and private individuals fighting against capitalist and imperialist rule for the self-determination of all nations, for the national freedom of all peoples, for equal rights for all races and all persons, and accepting the decisions of the Brussels Congress were eligible as members of this League.

The Congress issued a manifesto "To All Oppressed Peoples and Classes", saying: "The representatives of the oppressed peoples and the working class from all parts of the world assembled at the Congress have entered into a fraternal alliance in the interests of securing their elementary rights and development.... Oppressed peoples and oppressed classes, unite!"* *Pravda* wrote in connection with the Brussels Congress: "No outcries can smother the released slogan: 'Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!' "

The Comintern gave the League every assistance in its work, regarding it as a united front organisation of different anti-imperialist forces.

This was the first broad-based anti-imperialist united front organisation of the international working class, the progressive intellectuals of the capitalist countries and representatives of the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It was joined by a large number of political, trade union, cultural and social organisations of all continents.

G. Dimitrov wrote in July 1929: "The World Anti-Imperialist League was set up as an organisation working against imperialism, mainly in the large colonies and semi-colonies.... It embraces the Balkans too ... extending the common front of the peoples from the Balkan Peninsula to China and India, Latin America, Syria, Morocco, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran, and others in an anti-imperialist world front."**

The Activities of the Comintern Under Conditions of the Growing Danger of an Anti-Soviet War

The tasks of the Communist International in the struggle against war and the threat of war and the problems of the Chinese revolution were the high points of the Eighth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

* *Das Flammenglichen vom Palais Egmont...*, op. cit., S. 243, 250.
** G. Dimitrov, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya*, Moscow, 1957, Vol. 1, p. 310.

In the spring of 1927 the ruling circles of the imperialist states staged a series of provocations against the Soviet Union. Britain at that time played the most active role in the international anti-Soviet campaign. On April 6, 1927 several hundred gendarmes and soldiers of the militarist authorities in Peking raided the Soviet Embassy and searched the Embassy staff. This provocation was organised by the British Intelligence Service. With the aid of forged documents alleged to have been discovered during the raid, the British Government decided to accuse the U.S.S.R. of intervention in the internal affairs of China and provoked an armed conflict between the Soviet Union and the northern Chinese militarists. Simultaneously the Soviet Consulate in Shanghai was blockaded. A few days later Chiang Kai-shek effected a military coup, dealing a heavy blow to the revolutionary forces of China.

As soon as the E.C.C.I. learned of the provocation in Peking, the Political Secretariat sent a telegram to the communist parties reading as follows: "The raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking, arrests, assaults, British siege of Consulate [in] Shanghai have been sanctioned by the diplomatic corps. There is not the slightest doubt that the plot has been engineered by Britain, who is provoking a war against the U.S.S.R. Chinese ports are being occupied by the imperialists. The situation is highly strained. War against the Chinese revolution is a reality and war threatens against the U.S.S.R. It is the duty of all communist parties to rouse the broadest masses, make use of all auxiliary organisations and the youth. It is absolutely essential within the shortest possible time to organise mass anti-British demonstrations, if possible in front of British embassies and consulates. Wherever possible questions to be raised in parliaments and clarity demanded in governments' attitude."* In the face of the war menace the Comintern set going the Communists of all the world. They sponsored the working people's mass anti-war demonstrations and actions.

The reactionaries, however, did not cease their provocations. On May 12 the British police raided the premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation and the Anglo-Russian Co-operative Society (ARCOS Ltd.) in London. The raiders spent four days in vain search of incriminating evidence. Shortly afterwards the British Government broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. Ten days later the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw, P. L. Voikov, was assassinated. The crime was committed by whiteguards, but the

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/3/18/2.

threads led to London. The international situation became more strained than ever.

The working class had to meet the imminent threat of another imperialist war. "Now more than ever before is it necessary for the masses of the workers of all countries to exercise vigilance," stated the resolution of the Eighth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. "Communists of all countries must close up their ranks and mobilise all their forces in the face of the war which has already begun in China and the war which is being prepared against the Soviet Union."*

The imperialists' policy of fomenting war, the Eighth Plenum pointed out, involved fascist, terrorist methods of suppressing the working class and the "internationalisation" of these methods. "In order to be able to conduct war, capitalism must have 'peace' in the rear. The nature of modern warfare demands in addition to masses of men at the front an enormous industrial army to feed the gigantic war machine. These men must become mere cogs in its machine, they must be deprived of all will to fight. . . ."**

At a time when world imperialism was preparing a crusade against the Soviet Union, the attitude of the Right Social-Democrats, who condemned the "extremes" of imperialist policy in words, but took no effective measures against it, roused strong feeling among the revolutionary workers. The Plenum's decision stated that Social-Democracy and the Socialist Labour International had taken upon themselves the ideological preparation of war by declaring at their Marseilles Congress that "world Bolshevism" was the greatest menace to peace.*** The Comintern called upon its sections to rid themselves of any underestimation of the war danger.

The bourgeois press, demagogically appealing to the national feelings of the working people, screamed that in its fight against the danger of war that threatened the Soviet Union the Comintern was acting "in the interests of the U.S.S.R." The politically alert workers, however, understood that in defending the gains of the revolution in the Soviet Union they were defending the bulwark of world revolution, the mainstay of the international communist movement, the most vitally important anti-imperialist force, and were thereby serving the true national interests of their peoples .

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 40, July 14, 1927, p. 889.
** Ibid., p. 890.
*** Ibid., p. 892.

The Eighth Plenum was obliged once more to revert to the question of the continued factional activities of the Trotskyites. Trotsky took the floor repeatedly at the Plenum to level slanderous charges against the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). He demanded the abandonment of the united front tactics. The opposition leader made the recurrent "discovery" that capitalist stabilisation had collapsed. This contention was shown at the Plenum to be groundless and disorientating to the communist parties and the working class. The attacks against the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.) by Trotsky and his followers provided ammunition to bourgeois propaganda and were widely used in the anti-Soviet smear campaign. Trotsky's speeches at the Plenum pursued exclusively factional aims. In the decision of the Plenum the speeches of Trotsky and his adherents were qualified as "a desperate struggle of individual political deserters against the front of the Communists of the world".*

The Plenum categorically forbade Trotsky continuing his factional activity and authorised the E.C.C.I. to expell him from the Executive in the event of the Plenum's demand not being fulfilled. Trotsky, who declared at the Plenum that he would fight "to the last" against the line of the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.), did not lay down his arms and continued his factional activity. On September 27, in pursuance of the decision of the Eighth Plenum, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. expelled Trotsky from the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The Trotskyite opposition were thrown out of the Comintern. Condemned by the international communist movement, it found growing support among its enemies, who saw in this opposition an ally in their fight against the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). The Menshevik *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik* wrote in June 1927: "The importance of the oppositions' attacks on the Stalinist majority is not in the oppositions' programme, but *in its criticism*, in the disintegration of Bolshevism, in the fact that it shakes the foundations of the 'monolithic' edifice of the dictatorship, undermines the ideological and organisational foundations of the Comintern."**

During that period the U.S.S.R. had achieved signal successes in the field of its foreign policy. The warmongers failed to knock together a united bloc of capitalist states against the Soviet Union. A decisive factor in averting war was the unswerving prosecution by the Bolshevik Party and its Central Committee of a

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 7, No. 35, June 16, 1927, p. 736.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 17/2/317/14.

Leninist peace policy. The Joint Plenum of the C.C. and the C.C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.) in July-August 1927 demonstrated in its decisions the need for preserving peace and stressed that "peace with every passing year, every passing month, strengthens the position of the proletarian state".*

The plans of renewed intervention against the U.S.S.R. failed, too, because the imperialist governments failed to take into account the prestige which the U.S.S.R. had gained in the eyes of the world's workers. The international proletariat, the national-revolutionary forces in the oppressed countries saw in the Soviet Union their mainstay and their hope.

Sympathy towards the Soviet Union was most strikingly demonstrated on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. Hundreds of thousands of oppressed and exploited people throughout the world celebrated the anniversary of the world's first state of the workers and peasants as they would their own holiday. The efforts of bourgeois propaganda, which spewed out a torrent of calumny against the Soviet Union, was countered by the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Soviet Government's "open doors policy" for the delegations of the working people from the capitalist countries and representatives of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. Dozens of delegations visited the U.S.S.R., and as a result of their acquaintance with the life of the Soviet people came unanimously to the conclusion that the working people of Russia, oppressed and disinherited in the recent past, had become masters of a great country. They saw with their own eyes the vast picture of socialism in the making and were impressed by the labour enthusiasm of the workers—a thing that was possible only under the new socialist system of relations. Of special significance was the fact that the bulk of the delegations that visited the Soviet Union consisted of Social-Democratic workers, most of whom had gone to the U.S.S.R. in defiance of their leaders, who banned the visits.

A Congress of Friends of the Soviet Union was held in Moscow in November 1927, which was attended by 947 delegates from 43 countries. The delegates represented the workers, peasants and intellectuals of different countries, including those of the East. Many of the delegates (about 22 per cent) were Social-Democratic workers. The resolution of the Congress stated that "socialism has already shown its vitality in actual practice, in the greatest

* *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, Part II, p. 363.

experiment in one-sixth of the globe".* The Congress issued an "Appeal to the Working People of All the World Against Imperialist War in Defence of the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese Revolution". The delegates declared in this Appeal that war against the U.S.S.R. would be regarded as the greatest crime against humanity.

The growth of international solidarity among the workers in their struggle against the attacks of capital found striking expression in the movement in defence of Sacco and Vanzetti, which spread throughout the world. These two Italian workers were sentenced to death by an American court in 1921 on a trumped-up charge of murder. This was an act of class vengeance on the part of the American judiciary for the men's participation in the strike movement and was designed to serve as a signal for a new campaign against the "Reds" and as a warning to all progressives in the U.S.A. The affair dragged on for several years, during which Sacco and Vanzetti were under sentence of death. The protest movement continued all these years and became particularly widespread in the summer of 1927 when it finally became clear that the sentence would not be revised. A wave of mass protests organised by the Sacco and Vanzetti Defence Committees set up in the U.S.A., Canada, Britain, Germany, France, Sweden, China and the countries of Latin America, swept the world.

In Britain, for example, as many as 158 demonstrations and protest meetings were held in August 1927 alone. A 50,000-strong demonstration of workers took place in New York on August 10. The international movement of protest drew into a united front people of diverse political views, trends and convictions: progressive intellectuals, Social-Democrats, Communists, Catholics. In the van of the struggle stood the International Red Aid organisation, which showed people that the treatment of Sacco and Vanzetti was a challenge to the forces of progress in all countries.

Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. In this act of vengeance capitalist "democracy" showed its true face to the world. "The fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti turned into a gigantic demonstration of the working people. Anger against the American executioners reached such a pitch that it spread to the widest circles of the population and in a number of countries assumed a nation-wide character," wrote the journal *The Communist International* in September 1927.

* *Pravda*, November 13, 1927.

Problems of United-Front Tactics in 1927-1928

During 1926-1927 signs of a sharpening of the class struggle became evident in a number of capitalist countries. Vienna in June 1927 became the scene of a powerful spontaneous demonstration of the workers which the police crushed by force of arms. The Social-Democratic leadership lost control of the demonstration and the Communist Party was too weak to assume the lead of it. The events in Austria nevertheless showed a growth of militant feeling among the advanced workers. The leaders of Social-Democracy and the Amsterdam Trade Union International continued systematically and stubbornly to oppose the policy of the Comintern aimed at building up a united front against the attacks of capital, against the danger of war, against the predatory colonial policy of the imperialists. They wrecked mass actions by the working class as soon as these threatened the "class peace" to the defence of which the Social-Democratic leadership was committed. The reformist leaders shut their eyes to the threat of fascism, which was growing in many countries. The leadership of the Amsterdam Trade Union International rejected the proposal of the Profintern to put an end to the split in the international trade union movement. They feared that this would lead to a growth of communist influence among the mass of the workers. The leaders of the Left-wing Social-Democrats together with its Right-wing leaders carried on a campaign of slander against the Communist International and the Soviet Union.

At the same time the accelerated rate of progress of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., the growing militancy and improved organisation of the labour movement in the capitalist countries and the growing political alertness of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, the heightening of inter-imperialist antagonisms created among some Communists a climate of opinion which tended to regard the temporary stabilisation of capitalism as having outlived itself; they believed that its end would come at any moment, that this would signify the complete collapse of the whole capitalist system and that the conditions for the rapid speeding up of the revolutionary process were already ripe. In these circumstances many revolutionaries considered that in the fight against imperialism the main blow should be dealt at Social-Democracy in the capitalist countries and the national bourgeoisie in the colonies and semi-colonies. This tendency found expression

in definite modifications of the Comintern's policy towards Social-Democracy.

In October 1927 the Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. discussed the question of election tactics by the Communist Parties of Britain and France. The Secretariat on October 1 sent a telegram to the Congress of the Communist Party of Britain recommending them to step up "the fight against the bourgeois leadership of the Labour Party, against parliamentary cretinism in every shape and form and to prepare to fight the forthcoming elections as an independent party with a platform and candidates of its own even in those cases where the C.P. will be opposed by the so-called official candidates of the Labour Party. . . ."* The reason the Secretariat gave for this proposal was that the victory of the Labour Party at the elections would not affect the condition of the working class to any appreciable extent. A similar telegram was sent to the French Communist Party. This was followed by an E.C.C.I. letter to the central committees of the communist parties saying that the Communist Parties of Britain and France should strive during the elections to draw a clear dividing line between the Communist Party on the one hand, and the bourgeois parties and the Social-Democrats on the other.**

Thus, a new tactic was gradually evolved in the Comintern, which subsequently became known officially as the "class-versus-class" tactic.

The new tactic emerging from the sharpened class struggle was aimed at counteracting the bloc between Social-Democracy and the bourgeois parties, and stepping up the fight against the Social-Democrats' policy of compromise by the creation of a united front of the working class. The "class-versus-class" tactic was designed, as the Communists believed, to strengthen the class-consciousness of the proletariat, make it still more independent of the bourgeoisie and more fighting-fit. Herein lay the sound core of the new tactic, which enabled a number of communist parties to step up their fight against Right opportunism, break with the remnants of reformist illusions and strengthen their ideological and political positions.

At the same time, the tactic of "class-versus-class" was based on the assumption that the reformist organisations as a whole had already gone over completely to the side of the bourgeois class. No proper distinction was drawn between the Right-wing leaders

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/3/46/11.
** Ibid., 495/3/49/127-128.

and the rank-and-file Social-Democrats. The sectarianism displayed during the practical application of the "class-versus-class" tactic led, not to united action between Communists and socialists, but to more strained relations with the members of the Social-Democratic organisations. The S.-D. parties were regarded as "bourgeois labour parties" or "third parties of the bourgeoisie". Neither, in fact, did this tactic help to establish co-operation with the non-proletarian sections of the working people, with all the intermediate groups of the population, who objectively are the allies of the revolutionary working class in the struggle against the rule of monopoly capital. It made it impossible for Communists to vote for candidates of the Social-Democratic and radical parties or form electioneering blocs with them, made it difficult for Communists to work among the masses for a united front of the working class against the attacks of capitalism, the growing threat of fascism and war, and made it easier for the reformist leaders to maneuver in their efforts to isolate the communist parties from the masses.

In many countries it prevented social forces potentially capable of joining the anti-imperialist movement from being drawn into an alliance with the working class.

During the period following 1927 the tactics of the united workers' front, as Maurice Thorez wrote later, were called in question within the French Communist Party and practically abandoned. "During this period sectarian mistakes were made not only within the Party as a whole but in its leadership, which treated the masses with neglect and revealed its ineptitude to work with them. The immediate demands of the working class were consigned to oblivion. The sectarians declared that 'the time for beefsteak fighting had passed'; the socialist workers were put on the same level with their leaders.'"*

The Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. held between 9 and 25 February 1928, in its resolutions on the British and French questions, confirmed the tactical line of "class-versus-class".

The questions of the trade union movement were dealt within the same vein.

Early in 1928 the Comintern received a proposal from S. Lozovsky concerning some fundamental questions of tactics in the trade union movement. He stated that "work within the reformist unions, given the existence in the country of a revolutionary centre, should have as its logical aim the affiliation to the revolutionary centre of the organisations that have been won over".* The theses that work in the reformist trade unions had sense if it led to separate groups being split away from them, objectively prevented the Communists from gaining influence in the trade union movement.

* M. Thorez, *Le quarantième anniversaire du Parti communiste français*, Paris, 1960, p. 15.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 508/1/56/39.

THE SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Pre-Congress Situation

During the period of capitalism's temporary stabilisation the communist movement, despite all difficulties and the blows of reaction, continued steadily to develop. The communist parties extended their political and ideological influence on the masses of the working class. The ideas of communism gained wide ground in the countries of Latin America and in many Asian and African countries. After the Fifth Congress of the Comintern the communist parties of the capitalist countries stepped up the work of bolshevising their ranks.

In some parties there was an increase in the membership. The general tendency among the communist parties of the capitalist countries, however, was a decline in the membership. The principal reasons for this were a temporary growth in the influence of reformism in the labour movement, the fall away of unstable elements and the shortcomings in the parties' mass work. Work in the trade unions, among the peasantry, the youth and women, was a weak spot in the activities of most communist parties.

The considerable influence which Social-Democracy still exercised on the broad sections of the working class was responsible for the Right-opportunist tendencies which found their way into certain sections of the Communist International. Right deviations found expression in overestimation of capitalist stabilisation, in opposition to the reorganisation of the parties on the basis of local cells. During the period between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses of the Comintern various Right-opportunist groups were expelled from the ranks of the Comintern and its sections.

The Comintern also carried on a determined struggle with "ultra-Left" deviations within its ranks, displayed in a repudiation of capitalist stabilisation, in the refusal of Communists to work in the reformist trade unions, and abandonment of the tactics of the united front.

The Comintern attached special significance to the fight against Trotskyism, since the Trotskyite groups continued their bitter struggle against the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.). In the fight against Trotskyism, wrote William Foster "not only was the fate of the Revolution in Russia at stake, but also that of the world Communist movement".* In the fight against Trotskyism, Right opportunism and "ultra-Left" deviations in the communist movement the Communist International upheld the purity of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and the ideological and organisational unity of its ranks.

The Sixth Congress on the International Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow from July 17 to September 1, 1928. It was attended by 532 delegates from 57 parties and 9 organisations, among the latter the Young Communist International, the Profintern, International Red Aid, and International Workers' Relief. According to the information of the Credentials Committee there were 1,799,000 Communists in the world, of whom 1,211,000 were members or candidate-members of the C.P.S.U.(B.).** Communist and workers' parties from all parts of the world were represented at the Congress.

The Sixth Congress discussed the following basic questions: report of the E.C.C.I.; the Programme of the Communist International; means of combating the danger of the imperialist wars; the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies; the economic situation in the U.S.S.R. and the situation in the C.P.S.U.(B.). The questions on the agenda fully reflected the urgent problems facing the international communist movement.

During the debate on the report of the Executive's activities about one hundred delegates took the floor. Some of the propositions contained in the report and the theses on the international situation and the tasks of the Communist International drafted by Bukharin were subjected to detailed criticism. Some of the delegates pointed out that the draft theses overrated the durability of capitalist stabilisation. Strong exception was taken to the thesis that the collapse of capitalism would come about only as a result of a military conflict between the capitalist countries following the further aggravation of external antagonisms. The Congress confirmed the Leninist proposition to the effect that the downfall

* William Z. Foster, *History of the Three Internationals*. N. Y., 1955, p. 349.

** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 81, November 21, 1928, p. 1531.

of capitalism would come about as a result of the aggravation of all the contradictions of the capitalist system, internal as well as external, as a result of the revolutionary struggle of the working people.

The report of the Comintern Executive was discussed in a constructive spirit.

Preparations for war against the U.S.S.R. by the counter-revolutionary bloc of the imperialists were found by the Congress to be the dominant tendency in the policy of the world bourgeoisie. The main international tasks of the communist movement at that moment were defined by the Congress to be: the fight against the danger of imperialist war, defence of the U.S.S.R., the fight against intervention in China and its carving up, and defence of the Chinese revolution and the colonial insurrections.

The Congress called upon all parties to step up their work in the trade unions to the utmost and endeavour to achieve unity of the trade union movement on a national and international scale. It drew special attention to the need for improving the work among the peasantry, the youth and the women workers.

The Sixth Congress endorsed the new policy that was being put into practice aimed at stepping up the struggle not only against the bourgeois parties, but against Social-Democracy as well.

Some delegates disagreed with the simplified definition of Social-Democracy and its virtual identification with fascism. The Swiss delegate Bodemann, for example, declared: "If we now take a sharper position towards the Social-Democracy... our previous work, inadequate as it was, on the field of the united front, will be still further weakened."* Togliatti said that Social-Democracy in certain cases used frankly fascist methods, but, he emphasised, "in this domain one must beware of excessive generalisations, because there are serious differences. Fascism, as a mass movement, is a movement of the petty and middle bourgeoisie dominated by the big bourgeoisie and the agrarians; moreover, it has no basis in a traditional organisation of the working class. On the other hand, Social-Democracy is a movement with a labour and petty-bourgeois basis: it derives its force mainly from an organisation which is recognised by enormous sections of the workers as the traditional organisation of their class."**

The Congress demanded of the communist parties that they focus their activities on the united front from below. The Communists

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 44, August 3, 1928, p. 775.
** Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 53, August 23, 1928, p. 941.

were in duty bound to make a distinction between the Social-Democratic workers and the Social-Democratic leadership.

The Congress pointed to the necessity of stepping up the fight against opportunist deviations in the ranks of the Comintern. It came to the conclusion that "on the basis of the partial stabilisation of capitalism and directly owing to the influence of Social-Democracy, the principal line of deviation from the correct political position observed within the communist parties is to be found at the present time towards the Right".* Right deviations, the Congress pointed out, were particularly dangerous in view of the existence of comparatively strong Social-Democratic parties, and the fight against them should be made a priority task. Another important task of the communist parties was to combat "Left" deviations, expressed in negation of the tactics of the united front, in failure to grasp the significance of trade union work, in the policy of the revolutionary phrase, in putschist tendencies (in China). Special significance in the fight against opportunism was attached to the need to improve the parties' theoretical activities.

The Congress directed the E.C.C.I. to take all steps to safeguard the unity of the Comintern and its sections. It emphasised that the mistakes and shortcomings in the activities of the communist parties could be overcome only on condition that a higher standard of political life was achieved within the communist parties by promoting inner-party democracy.

Adoption of the Comintern's Programme

A highlight of the Sixth Congress was the discussion and adoption of the Programme of the Communist International. The question of the programme was first discussed at the Second Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in June 1922. The Fifth Congress of the Comintern adopted the draft programme as a basis for discussion by the sections, pending its final adoption at the next congress. The Programme Committee of the Executive made a new draft at the beginning of 1928, which was widely discussed in the sections of the Comintern. An active role in preparing this draft programme was played by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.). All sec-

* Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 88, November 23, 1928, p. 1577.

tions of the Comintern took an active part in drafting the programme. A committee was set up at the Sixth Congress for drawing up the final wording of the programme, comprising representatives from forty different sections.

About six hundred proposals, addenda and amendments were submitted in the course of the discussion in the Programme Committee and at the meetings of the Congress.* There were no differences of principle. The discussion centred around a number of important issues, such as: the inevitability and necessity of the New Economic Policy and the period of War Communism; definition of fascism and its social roots; the meaning of the term "finance capital" and other questions.

Some of the delegates proposed the inclusion in the Programme of a statement to the effect that War Communism was a general rule for all countries. They contended that the transition period from capitalism to socialism would always be a period of War Communism, that War Communism represented a direct road to socialism. This point of view, based largely on a failure to understand the objective laws governing the transitional period, found no support among the delegates.

A number of delegates objected to the use of the term "fascism" to describe any reactionary policy. Fascism, they said, could not be regarded as the sole form of capitalist reaction. Different forms of the dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie existed in different countries, which were distinct from the Italian brand of fascism. Sémard, representing the French Communist Party, came out against the tendency "to neglect the correct analysis of the actual political situation and to be satisfied with mechanical classification: social-fascism, fascist Left bloc, fascist government, etc."** The Programme of the Comintern drew a distinction between patent fascism and fascist tendencies resulting from the insecure position of the bourgeoisie.

The Congress stated that "the Programme of the Communist International, being the supreme critical generalisation of the whole body of historical experience of the international revolutionary proletarian movement, becomes the programme of struggle for the world proletarian dictatorship, the programme of struggle for world communism".*** In its theoretical and practical work, stated

* Y. Yaroslavsky, *Ob itogakh VI kongressa Kominterna* (On the Results of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern), 1928, p. 7.

** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 66, September 25, 1928, p. 1197.

*** Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1750.

the preamble to the Programme, the Communist International "stands wholly and unreservedly upon the ground of revolutionary Marxism, and its further development, Leninism".*

The Programme of the Communist International evaluated the strength of imperialism and the strength of the revolution, gave a profound analysis of the general crisis of capitalism and drew the conclusion that the downfall of capitalism and the victory of the world socialist revolution were inevitable.

The Communist International concretised the ways of struggle for the ultimate aim of the world revolutionary movement—communism. The Programme stated that "communist society, the basis for which has been prepared by the whole course of historical development, is mankind's only way out, for it alone can abolish the contradictions of the capitalist system which threatens to degrade and destroy the human race".**

High points in the Programme were questions dealing with the transitional period from capitalism to socialism.

The Programme stated that world revolution could not be conceived as a single event occurring simultaneously all over the world; at first socialism may be victorious in a few, or even in one single capitalist country. This proposition, based on Lenin's teaching concerning the uneven economic and political development of the different countries in the epoch of imperialism, was of primary significance for the policy of the world communist movement.

Trotsky sent his draft of a programme to the Congress in which he opposed the conception that socialism could be victorious in a single given country. He called the draft programme prepared by the E.C.C.I. "a revisionist document" and proposed that a statement be included in the Programme saying that "the victory of the proletarian revolution in a single given country is impossible without the support of a world revolution". Trotsky's attempts to insinuate his anti-Leninist views into the Programme were defeated.

Considering the different levels of socio-economic development in the different capitalist countries, and the concrete specific conditions prevailing in them, the Congress stated: "These circumstances make it historically inevitable that the proletariat will come to power by a variety of ways and degrees of rapidity; that a number of countries must pass through certain transition stages leading

* Ibid.

** Ibid., p. 1755.

to the dictatorship of the proletariat and must adopt various forms of socialist construction."*

All countries in the Programme were divided into three main types, according to the conditions and ways of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, namely:

(1) Countries of highly developed capitalism for whom the basic political requirement was direct transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat;

(2) Countries with a medium development of capitalism and uncompleted bourgeois-democratic reforms. For some of these countries the Programme provided for the possibility of more or less rapid evolution from bourgeois-democratic revolution to socialist revolution; for others—different types of proletarian revolutions having a large number of bourgeois-democratic tasks to fulfil;

(3) Colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries where transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat was conceivable only as the outcome of a whole period of transformation of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution, while in the majority of cases successful socialist construction will be possible only if direct support is obtained from the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established.

Of important significance was the Programme's statement to the effect that in a number of backward colonial countries development towards socialism was possible without their having to pass through the stage of capitalism, provided that they received direct assistance and support from the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship was established.

Considerable attention was devoted in the Programme to the questions of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R., the significance of the U.S.S.R., as a land of the proletarian dictatorship, for the development of the revolutionary movement in all countries. "The internal consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R., the success achieved in the work of socialist construction, the growth of the influence and authority of the U.S.S.R. among the masses of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples of the colonies, signify therefore the continuation, intensification and expansion of the international socialist revolution,"** stated the Programme.

The simultaneous coexistence of two economic systems—the

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1761.

** Ibid., p. 1762.

socialist system in the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist system in other countries, said the Programme, imposed on the proletarian state the task of warding off the blows showered upon it by the capitalist world and also compelled it to resort to economic maneuvering and to utilising economic contacts with capitalist countries. "The principal and fundamental line to be followed in this connection must be the line of establishing the widest possible contact with foreign countries—within the limits determined by their usefulness to the U.S.S.R., i.e., primarily for strengthening industry in the U.S.S.R."*

The Programme formulated the international duties of the C.P.S.U.(B.) as "a section of the Communist International and the leader of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R.",** namely: support to the labour movement in capitalist countries, to colonial movements against imperialism and to the struggle against national oppression in every form; and also the duties of the international proletariat towards the U.S.S.R., namely: to promote progress in socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and defend it against the attacks of the capitalist powers by every means within its power.

The Programme set before the communist parties the task of gaining influence over the majority of the working class, for which the Communists were to take an active part in mass organisations, first and foremost in the trade unions. The communist parties were to step up their work among the peasantry, the lower ranks of the intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie, and carry on a revolutionary struggle in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries.

In determining its line of tactics each communist party was to take into account the concrete internal and external situation, the alignment of class forces, the degree of stability and strength of the bourgeoisie, the degree of preparedness of the proletariat, and the attitude of the various intermediate strata.

The Comintern called upon the communist parties to step up the struggle against the danger of imperialist wars and advanced the basic slogans: the conversion of imperialist war into civil war; defeat of "one's own" imperialist government; defence of the U.S.S.R. and the national liberation revolutions by every possible means.

The Programme attached great importance to the strengthening of unity in the international communist movement and to observing international class discipline. "This international communist discipline must find expression in the subordination of the partial

* Ibid., p. 1763.

** Ibid.

and local interests of the movement to its general and lasting interests and in the strict fulfilment by all members of the decisions passed by the leading bodies of the Communist International."*

The Programme of the Comintern formulated the basic aims of the communist movement and mapped out the ways by which they were to be achieved. However, it also contained some unjustified formulations and evaluations. While stating that Social-Democracy, in a definite political situation, might challenge the bourgeois government in the capacity of an opposition party, the Programme at the same time did not draw a sufficiently clear line between Social-Democracy and fascism. Left-wing Social-Democracy was described as "the most dangerous faction in the Social-Democratic parties".** Such an appraisal of Social-Democracy, the assertion that the main blow should be aimed first of all at its Left wing, created considerable difficulties in applying the tactics of the united front and securing co-operation between the Communists and the Social-Democratic workers, and furthered the spread in the years to come of sectarian views in the communist movement.

By and large, the Programme of the Communist International was a document of great historic significance. It was a scientific programme of the world communist movement based on the teaching of Marxism-Leninism. The Programme of the Comintern embodied the principles of proletarian internationalism. It was the fruit of the collective creative efforts of the parties of the Communist International.

Together with the Programme the Sixth Congress of the Comintern adopted the new Rules of the Communist International. The Rules were first adopted at the Second Congress and afterwards amended and revised at the Fifth Congress.

The Rules adopted at the Sixth Congress stated that "The Communist International—the International Workers' Association—is a union of Communist Parties in various countries; it is a World Communist Party".*** In each country there could be only one communist party, which was a section of the Communist International and a member of that body. According to the Rules the basic unit of the communist party organisation was the nucleus or cell in the place of employment (factory, workshop, mine, etc.). The Communist International and its sections, stated the Rules, were built up on the basis of democratic centralism.

* *International Press Correspondence,* Vol. 8, No. 92, December 31, 1928, p. 1768.
** Ibid., p. 1754.
*** Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 84, November 28, 1928, p. 1600.

The Congress on the Fight Against the Danger of Imperialist Wars

The Sixth Congress formulated the theoretical and political position of the Communist International on the question of war, on the different types of war, and set before the sections the practical tasks of combating the menace of war.

This fight against the menace of war was greatly complicated by the fact that the leaders of Social-Democracy went out of their way to prevent joint action with the Communists against the preparations for another imperialist war. The position of the Right leaders of European Social-Democracy, who, under the guise of defence of the national interests, supported the war plans and programmes of the bourgeois governments, was clearly manifested at the Congress of the Socialist Labour International which was being held at Brussels at the same time as the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. This Congress, too, had on its agenda the question of the war menace. But the Social-Democratic parties, though recognising that the danger of an imperialist war existed, placed all their hopes on the League of Nations and renounced independent action against the war adventurists. The Brussels Congress rejected the motion of the British Independent Labour Party supporting the proposals of the Soviet Government for total disarmament, demanding a vote of rejection of war loans and calling for the convocation of an anti-war world congress with the participation of the Comintern and the Socialist Labour International.*

The Brussels Congress merely adopted a resolution containing general phrases about the need for "limiting" armaments, "democratising the army", dealing with international conflicts by means of "compulsory arbitration" and so on.

The menace of imperialist war was discussed and decisions on this question passed in quite a different spirit by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

The report at the Congress on the measures for fighting the danger of imperialist wars was made by T. Bell, the representative of the British Communists. His report contained concrete information about war preparations by the capitalist countries and pointed out that the danger of war against the U.S.S.R. had grown.

The various aspects of anti-war work by the communist parties

* Ibid., No. 51, August 17, 1928, pp. 900-01.

were dealt with in the debate. G. Dimitrov said that "while there is no doubt that certain wars between capitalist states are possible and even highly probable ... nevertheless, the danger of war against the Soviet Union, against the Fatherland of the international proletariat... is the greatest danger of all".*

He urged the need for all the sections of the Comintern to pursue a single political line in the question of war and study the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses during the world war and the experience of the Bolshevik Party's work in the old army and navy.

Other delegates spoke about the need for popularising Lenin's teachings on war, about the significance of the party as an organising force in the fight against war, about the publication of popular anti-war literature, about stepping up anti-war work among the women and youth, and other questions. The struggle against the danger of war, it was pointed out, should not be of an abstract nature, but should be closely identified with the daily economic struggle of the working class, with the defence of its rights and gains.

The theses on the means of struggle against the danger of imperialist wars adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern set forth the position and tactics of the proletariat in this question. "The cause of war as an historical phenomenon," stated the theses, "is not the 'evil nature' of mankind, not the 'bad' policies of governments, but the division of society into classes, into exploiters and exploited. Capitalism is the cause of the wars in modern history."**

The theses stated that, in fighting for socialism and for the abolition of wars, the revolutionary proletariat by no means renounced the idea of just wars. The proletariat had to carefully analyse the historical and political class meaning of each given war and the role of the ruling classes in the war.

During the present period, the Congress pointed out, the following types of wars were conceivable: wars between the imperialist states; wars of imperialist counter-revolution against the proletarian revolution or against countries in which socialism is being built; national-revolutionary wars, especially of colonial countries against imperialism. "The war of an oppressed nation against imperialism, however, is not only just, but revolutionary; it is, in present times, a part of the proletarian world revolution."*** The

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 64, September 19, 1928, p. 1144.
** Ibid., Vol. 8, No. 84, November 28, 1928, p. 1585.
*** Ibid.

proletariat supports national-revolutionary wars and organises the defence of the proletarian revolution and the countries of the proletarian dictatorship.

The Congress called upon Communists, in the event of an imperialist war breaking out, to be guided by the programme which the Bolshevik Party carried out during the First World War. The main objective of this programme was the conversion of the imperialist war into a civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

The Congress underlined the importance of the Soviet Government's proposals for total disarmament. The Leninist peace policy of the Soviet state, the Congress pointed out, by no means implied that Soviet power had become "reconciled with capitalism". This policy "is merely another—and under present conditions—a more advantageous form of fighting capitalism; a form which the U.S.S.R. has consistently employed since the October revolution."*

In view of the growing danger of war and the threat of a direct attack of the imperialist powers on the Soviet Union, special importance attaches to the declaration of the Congress to the effect that defence of the Soviet Union should be the keynote of the anti-war struggle.

The Sixth Congress reminded all Communists of Lenin's words about the fight against war being by no means an easy matter. It called upon all sections to give the struggle against war a more international character and to co-ordinate revolutionary action on an international scale.

The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries

An important item in the agenda of the Sixth Congress was the question of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. By this time the peoples of many of the oppressed countries had had a long schooling in anti-imperialist struggle.

During the period of capitalism's temporary and partial stabilisation the formative process in the communist movement in the

* Ibid., p. 1590.

East continued as a direct result of the growing political maturity and organisation of the labour movement. The Inaugural Congress of the Legal Communist Party of India was held, in December 1925; that of the Communist Party of Korea in April 1925; the same year saw the formation of the first Marxist organisations in Indochina. The report on the colonial question was made at the Congress by O. Kuusinen.

The Sixth Congress declared "that the 'Theses on the National and Colonial Questions' drawn up by Lenin and adopted at the Second Congress still have full validity, and should serve as a guiding line for the further work of the communist parties".*

The building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the growing strength of the communist movement in the capitalist countries had a revolutionising influence on the colonial world.

The Congress attached exceptional importance to support of the colonial people's struggle for liberation from the yoke of imperialism by the proletariat of the Soviet Union and the labour movement in the capitalist countries. The theses adopted by the Congress stressed that "the alliance with the U.S.S.R. and with the revolutionary proletariat of the imperialist countries creates for the toiling masses of the people of China, India and all other colonial and semi-colonial countries, the possibility of an independent, free, economic and cultural development, avoiding the stage of the domination of the capitalist system or even the development of capitalist relations in general".**

During the debate following Kuusinen's report a dispute arose on the question of imperialism's role in the colonies. Some of the delegates claimed that imperialist colonial policy promoted industrialisation in the colonies, that India, for example, was undergoing a British-controlled process of industrialisation. This point of view objectively implied defence of the Social-Democratic theory of "decolonisation", according to which imperialism plays a progressive role in the colonies by forcing the pace of capitalist development and converting the colonies into capitalist countries. The theory of decolonisation was designed to justify imperialist policy in the colonies and weaken the peoples' struggle against imperialist oppression.

The Congress pointed out the error of some of the delegates' views on the role of imperialism in the colonies and revealed the reactionary essence of the decolonisation theory. It emphasised

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, November 28, p. 1659.
** Ibid., p. 1661.

that imperialism retards the industrialisation of the colonies and prevents the full development of their productive forces. The basic tendency of imperialist policy towards the colonies was to preserve and heighten their dependence. "All the chatter of the imperialists and their lackeys about the policy of decolonisation being carried through by the imperialist powers, about promotion of the 'free development of the colonies' reveals itself as nothing but an imperialist lie. It is of the utmost importance that Communists both in the imperialist and in the colonial countries should completely expose this lie,"* stated the theses.

Considering the prospects of the revolutionary movement in China, India and other oppressed countries, the Congress stated that the revolutionary movement in these countries was in its bourgeois-democratic stage. The bourgeois-democratic revolution in the colonies was inseparably bound up with the liberation struggle against imperialist enslavement.

The question of the role of the bourgeoisie in the national liberation movement was one of the highlights in the discussion of the Congress theses. The national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries, said the theses, did not adopt a uniform attitude to imperialism. A part of this bourgeoisie directly serves the interests of imperialism and upholds an anti-national pro-imperialist point of view. "The remaining portions of the native bourgeoisie, especially the portion reflecting the interests of native industry, support the national movement and represent a special vacillating compromising tendency which may be designated as national reformism (or, in the terminology of the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International, a 'bourgeois-democratic' tendency)."** The Congress pointed out that underestimation of the importance of bourgeois national reformism, which, unlike the feudalist-imperialist camp, has an influence on the petty-bourgeois masses, the peasantry and some of the working class, could lead to the isolation of the Communists from the working masses and so on.

The resolutions of the Congress stated that "the demonstrations of the bourgeois opposition against the ruling imperialist-feudal bloc, even if they do not have any deep foundation, can exert a certain accelerating influence on the process of the political awakening of the wide masses of toilers; the concrete open conflicts of the national-reformist bourgeoisie with imperialism, although of

* Ibid., December 12, 1928, p. 1664.
** Ibid., p. 1665.

little significance in themselves, may, under certain conditions, indirectly serve as the cause of the unleashing of even greater revolutionary mass actions."*

At the same time the theses of the Sixth Congress on the colonial question contained some erroneous and contradictory propositions on the questions of the strategy and tactics of the national liberation struggle, and the role of the national bourgeoisie. Although in the decisions of the Congress a distinction was drawn between bourgeois national-reformism and the feudal-imperialist camp, the general appraisal of the role of the national bourgeoisie bore a sectarian character. It was claimed, for instance, that "the national bourgeoisie has not the significance of a force in the struggle against imperialism".** It stated that "it is necessary to reject the formation of any kind of bloc between the Communist Party and the national-reformist opposition".***

Subsequently, at the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U., Kuusinen said that this appraisal by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern of the role of the national bourgeoisie in the colonial and semi-colonial countries "bore a definite shade of sectarianism".****

Describing the aims Communists in the countries of the East must strive to achieve in their work among the masses, the Congress drew the attention of the Communist Party of China to the necessity of rectifying the Leftist mistakes within the Party (putschism, war adventurism, individual terror, etc.). "The Party must conquer every tendency of replacing methods of convincing and educating the masses by methods of compulsion and commandment, which in the present conditions of cruel class terror serve to enhance the danger of an isolation of the Party from the toiling masses."*****

Unity of all the communist groups and the formation of an independent centralised party was recognised by the Congress to be a major task of the Indian Communists.

The Congress required the communist parties of the imperialist countries to establish close, regular and constant contacts with the revolutionary movement in the colonies in order to give this movement active support and practical assistance.

The colonial question was also discussed at the Brussels Congress of the Socialist Labour International in August 1928 at which a

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, December 12, 1928, p. 1667.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., p. 1668.
**** O. Kuusinen, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya*, Moscow, 1966, p. 509.
***** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 88, p. 1672.

"programme" on this question was adopted. The Congress came out against the demands of the colonial peoples for complete independence. The right to formal independence was recognised only for countries such as China, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, which had already achieved considerable success in the national liberation struggle. For a country like India the Socialist Labour International recognised only the right to local self-government and denied her the right to complete political independence. The resolution of the Congress stated that for the colonial peoples who were still in a primitive stage of development the immediate abolition of foreign rule would mean, not a step forward towards national culture, but a return to barbarism.*

The representatives of the colonial countries who attended the Congress walked out when they saw that the Right leaders of Social-Democracy were supporting the colonial policy of the bourgeoisie. The stand on the colonial question taken by the Brussels Congress clearly demonstrated the Right leaders' disregard for the interests of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and was an expression of their support for the colonial policy of the imperialist states.

The Successes of the U.S.S.R. and the Situation Within the C.P.S.U.(B.)

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern examined the question of the situation in the U.S.S.R. and within the C.P.S.U.(B.). This question was an important one, since the C.P.S.U.(B.) was the only section of the Comintern which was directing the construction of socialism in a vast country, and the experience of the proletarian dictatorship in the U.S.S.R. was of very great importance for the daily struggle of the communist parties.

E. Varga's report on the economic situation in the U.S.S.R. spoke about the economic progress achieved in the Soviet Union and the growth of socialist elements in Soviet society. It stressed the role of planning in Soviet economy, revealed the difficulties facing socialist construction and the prospects of its development.

In his report on the situation within the C.P.S.U.(B.) Manuilsky stated that the Trotskyist opposition had not only been an event of

* *Cf. Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1928, No. 29-30, p. 115.

a national order. The fight against it was conducted on an international scale and was an integral part of the Bolshevisation of all the communist parties.

The delegations of the fraternal parties fully approved the political and organisational line of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and its Central Committee. They pointed out that the correct policy of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) had led, under the most difficult conditions of imperialist encirclement, to considerable progress in socialist construction, to a rise in the material and cultural level of the worker and peasant masses; that it had strengthened the alliance between the working class and the peasantry and enhanced the international prestige of the U.S.S.R.

The Congress found that the successes achieved in socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. strengthened the position of the international working class and made for a more rapid revolutionising of the masses.

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern approved the decisions of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the resolution of the Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stating that adherence to the Trotskyist opposition and propaganda of its views were incompatible with membership of the Bolshevik Party. It rejected Trotsky's application for reinstatement in the Party, and declared: "In its views on questions of the programme, policy and organisation the Trotskyist group has sunk to the position of Menshevism and objectively has become an organ of struggle against the Soviet Power. Therefore, their expulsion from the C.P.S.U.(B.) was proper and inevitable."*

The Congress rejected the request of Maslow and Fischer to be reinstated in the Communist Party of Germany and at the same time approved the statement issued by the C.C. of the C.P.G. to the effect that "the way back into the C.P. of Germany shall be kept open for all workers expelled from the Party on account of their adherence to the Trotskyist groups, providing that they break with Maslow, Ruth Fischer and the other renegades of communism and will unreservedly submit to all the decisions of the Communist International".**

The growth of the Comintern's influence found expression in the rise of new communist parties and their affiliation to the International. The Sixth Congress admitted as new sections the Communist Parties of Korea, Cuba, New Zealand and Paraguay, the Irish Workers' League, the Socialist Party of Ecuador and the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Colombia.

The Congress hailed the formation and affiliation to the Comintern of the seven new sections as further proof of the confidence in the Communist International on the part of the worker and peasant masses and the oppressed peoples.

* * *

Developments after the Sixth Congress confirmed the correctness of the given general appraisal of the world economic and political situation.

The stabilisation of capitalism, despite the prophecies of the Right leaders of Social-Democracy, became more shaky than ever.

The first signs of a resurgence in the revolutionary workers' movement appeared at the end of 1928 and beginning of 1929. Proof of this was provided by such actions of the working class as the general strike in Lodz, the miners' strike in the Ruhr, and the strikes of the coal miners and textile workers in France.

The Programme of the Comintern formed a basis for the strengthening of the communist parties ideologically and politically, and for determining their strategy and tactics. At this period a number of communist parties in Latin America came to the conclusion that the revolution in their countries would assume an anti-imperialist, agrarian, democratic character. Questions concerning the nature of the revolution were discussed at the First Conference of the Communist Parties of the Latin American Countries, which was held in Buenos Aires during June 1-12, 1929.

The Conference was attended by 38 delegates from the Communist Parties of Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The delegation from the Communist Party of Chile was prevented from attending the Conference by police repressions within the country.

The Conference devoted special attention to strengthening the unity of the working class, which had set up in 1928 the first Latin American trade union headquarters—the Latin American Confederation of Trade Unions. Stress was laid on the decisive importance of the alliance between the workers and peasants in shaping the destinies of the revolution. The Conference of communist parties of Latin America rejected the attempts of the Trotskyites to impose upon them the theses regarding the immediate socialist character of the revolution in Latin America.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8, No. 83, p. 1579.
** *VI kongress Kominterna*. Verbatim report, Issue 6, p. 178.

A keen discussion flared up at the Conference on the questions of tactics. Some of the delegates, purporting to express their personal opinions, proposed that no time should be lost waiting for the proletarian revolution, and that centres of insurrection should be created in every district. They claimed that conditions for a revolution in Latin America were already ripe and proposed that an armed uprising be launched immediately.

The point of view of these delegates was described by the Conference as a manifestation of subjectivism, which, in practice, led to the liquidation of the proletarian parties and to their submergence in the welter of petty-bourgeois elements. The Conference helped the young Latin American communist parties to launch a struggle against petty-bourgeois waverings, to make closer contact with the major detachments of the working class and take the lead in its militant actions.

The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. held in July 1929 recorded the continued growth of the Comintern's influence and the organisational and ideological consolidation of its sections.

The Plenum's decisions stated that the fight against the Right opportunist deviation remained the central task of the Comintern and the communist parties in the field of inner-party policy. The most characteristic features of the Right deviation within the ranks of the communist parties were overestimation of capitalist stabilisation, underestimation of the war menace and repudiation of the need for iron discipline. The Right opportunist group of Lovestone in the Communist Party of the U.S.A. countered the Comintern line with its own platform propounding the exclusiveness of American capitalism and giving a Social-Democratic interpretation of discipline. This group prevented revolutionary work being developed by the Communists among the masses. The Jilek-Bolen opportunist group in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia sank to Social-Democratism. The Right opportunist elements in the Communist Party of Italy (the Tasca group), the C.P. of Germany (Brandler, Thalheimer), the C.P. of Sweden (the Kilbom group) and in several other parties tried to sow petty-bourgeois pessimism in the ranks of the working class.

The Plenum endorsed the decisions by a number of communist parties expelling opportunist elements from their ranks and pointed out that the holding of Right-opportunist views was incompatible with membership of the communist party.

The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. endorsed the decisions of the Joint Plenum of the C.C. and the C.C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.) of April 23, 1929 to remove Bukharin from his work in the

Comintern. The decision of the E.C.C.I. Plenum stated: "Already before the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Comrade Bukharin showed signs of disagreement with the general political line of the C.P.S.U.(B.). In the course of the struggle carried on by Bukharin and those who share his views against the policy of the Party, this disagreement assumed the form of a separate opportunist platform, in substance a Right deviation platform."*

While calling upon the communist parties to focus their attention on the fight against the Right opportunist deviation, the Comintern Executive underestimated the need for a simultaneous fight against the "Left" sectarian deviations within the ranks of the communist parties. In a number of cases there was a tendency to regard the striving towards united action with the reformist organisations as a trend towards Right deviation. The decisions of the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. contained propositions and formulations tending to enhance these sectarian trends. The Plenum's basic document "Theses on the International Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Communist International" stated that "in countries where there are strong Social-Democratic parties, fascism assumes the particular form of social-fascism. . .".** The communist parties were set "the task of decisively intensifying the struggle against Social-Democracy and especially against its "Left" wing as the most dangerous enemy of communism in the labour movement and the main obstacle to the growth of militant activities of the masses of the workers."*** This evaluation was a direct reaction to the anti-labour policy of compromise of Right Social-Democracy. Equating Social-Democracy, however, with fascism and advancing the slogan of dealing the main blow against its Left elements, who could become the allies of the Communists in the fight against reaction and fascism, was a mistake which hindered fulfilment of the task set by the Plenum, namely, that of winning the majority of the working class.

In accordance with the decision of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern for holding an International Day of Struggle Against the Danger of Imperialist War, the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. confirmed the decision of the Conference of the Thirteen Communist Parties, which was held in Brussels in May 1929, to fix August 1st as that day. The Plenum's decision emphasised that the international action of the working class on August 1 against

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 9, No. 45, August 30, 1929, p. 964.

** *Theses of the Tenth Plenum E.C.C.I.*, Lnd., Dorrit Press, p. 8.

*** Ibid., pp. 15-16 .

imperialist war and reaction was to have the significance of an event that went beyond the limits of an ordinary anti-war demonstration of the working class. It was to be closely linked with the entire economic and political struggle of the working class and was to become a powerful instrument in uniting the revolutionary actions of the proletariat against capitalism on a world scale.

The August 1 manifestation of the working class against imperialist war and in defence of the U.S.S.R. assumed in many countries the nature of a militant review of the proletariat's revolutionary forces.

* * *

During 1924-1929 the activities of the Communist International took place under more difficult conditions. The absence of Lenin, the leader of the world communist movement, told on certain aspects of Comintern activities. Various problems of the international labour and communist movement during this period were not dealt with in a consistent Marxist-Leninist manner. At the same time the communist movement took a step forward as regards the ideological and organisational consolidation of its ranks. The Comintern and its sections waged a ceaseless struggle against Right opportunism and "ultra-Left" deviations. An important service rendered by the Comintern and the C.P.S.U.(B.) was the ideological and political defeat of Trotskyism, which was out to revise the general line of the communist movement. Important programmatic documents were framed by collective efforts.

Chapter Four

THE COMINTERN DURING THE YEARS OF ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE CAPITALIST WORLD AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIALISM IN THE U.S.S.R.

(1929-1933)

THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE COMINTERN DURING THE DEEPENING ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE CAPITALIST WORLD

The World Economic Crisis and the Mounting Revolutionary Struggle of the Workers

The inevitability of a new acute world economic crisis had been predicted by the Communist International during the years of capitalist stabilisation. This judgement was based on a profound Marxist-Leninist analysis of the antagonisms of capitalist development. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern pointed out that the comparatively rapid economic growth in the capitalist countries would lead to a reproduction of capitalist antagonisms on a still larger scale, that the period of precarious capitalist stabilisation was coming to an end and the grim shadow of crisis was looming ahead.

As pointed out in the reports and speeches at the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., although the economic situation in the leading capitalist countries showed an upward tendency, "positive symptoms of a new crisis were already in evidence".* It was not very long before these prognostications of the Comintern were fully confirmed by events.

In the autumn of 1929 the U.S.A. was seized with a stock-market panic of unprecedented magnitude. The financial and banking crash, which spread to other countries, was the first symptom of the world economic crisis.

The crisis of 1929-1933 was not only the longest, but the most profound and destructive of all the economic crises capitalism had ever known. Taking place as it did under the general crisis of capitalism, it gripped all the countries of the capitalist world and dealt shattering blows at the economy, the political foundations and ideology of the bourgeoisie. The general crisis of capitalism was still further aggravated.

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* *X plenum Ispolkoma Kominterna* (Tenth Plenum of the Comintern Executive), Issue 1. The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International, Moscow, 1929, p. 210.

The crisis affected all aspects of the capitalist economy: industry, agriculture, the banking and financial system, trade, and international business relations. Capitalist production, which had risen to a high level, came up against a shrinking market and began rapidly to drop. During a single year, from the end of 1929 to the end of 1930 industrial output in the leading capitalist countries fell 10-17 per cent. Capitalist economy reached its lowest level in 1932, when industrial output was 46 per cent below pre-crisis level in the U.S.A., 47 per cent in Germany, 16.5 per cent in Britain, 31 per cent in France and 33 per cent in Italy; in Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Holland it dropped nearly 37 per cent.* In all, industrial output in the capitalist world during 1930-1933 shrank by 38 per cent.** Vast production capacities were standing idle. Dead mines, blown-out blast furnaces, deserted factory buildings, works turned into machine cemeteries bore testimony to the fact that capitalism was destroying its own productive forces. In an attempt to reduce stocks of unsold products and check the continued fall in prices and profits, the monopolies destroyed vast stocks of commodities and scrapped new machines.

The crisis in industry merged with the agrarian crisis and worsened it. The decline in the prices of raw materials and food led to a reduction in agricultural production. Its volume during 1929-1933 dropped by over one-third. The financial and banking system was totally disorganised. Thousands of banks crashed. Currency depreciated in 56 countries. Foreign trade dropped to a third of its value.

The crisis intensified the struggle for markets among the imperialist countries. All previous agreements covering the division of the world into zones of influence were virtually upset and ignored. The Versailles-Washington system of treaties began to fall to pieces. The crisis dealt a shattering blow to the bourgeois theories of "perpetual prosperity" and the Right opportunist theory of "organised capitalism", which was supposed to have been cured of its basic ills. These bourgeois and Right opportunist illusions, founded on anti-scientific conceptions, were utterly destroyed. The crisis also exploded the Right opportunist claim that capitalist stabilisation had come to stay.

Most impressive, against the background of this destructive effect which the crisis was having throughout the capitalist world,

* Cf. *Mirovoye khozyaistvo v 1936 godu* (World Economy in 1936) *Yearbook*, Moscow, 1937, pp. 180, 184, 188, 192, 200, 214, 222.

** E. Varga, *Kapitalizm i sotsializm za 20 let* (Twenty Years of Capitalism and Socialism), Moscow, 1938, p. 87.

was the high rate of development of the Soviet Union's economy. It was during these years that the Soviet people, under the leadership of the Communist Party, successfully tackled the grandiose tasks of the First Five-Year Plan and astonished the world by their achievements. Events revealed with striking power the different paths of development of the two socio-economic systems—those of socialism and capitalism. While industrial output of capitalism was on the downgrade, in the Soviet Union it had doubled during 1929-1932. During the period of the First Five-Year Plan, which was completed in 1932 ahead of schedule, the Soviet Union had made tremendous progress along the road of industrialisation: 1,500 new large enterprises were built, among them such giant projects as the Kharkov Tractor Plant, the Kuznetsk Iron and Steel Complex, the Dnieper Hydroelectric Power Station and the Berezniki Chemical Plant.

Co-operation in agriculture made rapid progress: collective farms took the place of the small inefficient peasant farms; the last exploiting class in the country—the kulaks—was being eliminated.

An important social gain of Soviet society was the complete liquidation of unemployment. The cultural revolution was making headway.

The great significance of the Soviet people's successes lay in the fact that this was the first attempt in the history of mankind to build the foundations of socialism. The Soviet people proved to the world by their deeds that they were not only capable of destroying the old exploiting system, but were able successfully to build up a new society embodying the noble ideals of communism. The development of the Soviet Union clearly demonstrated the tremendous advantages which socialism has over capitalism, the superiority of the planned socialist economy over capitalist economy with its anarchy of production. The communist parties of the capitalist countries assessed the achievements of the U.S.S.R. as the victory of the whole international labour movement, as a factor enhancing the influence of the ideas of socialism throughout the world. Of tremendous importance was the fact that socialism equipped with modern techniques, was becoming a great material force standing up to imperialism. The development of the U.S.S.R. formed a striking contrast to the state of affairs in the capitalist world.

The masses in the capitalist countries were badly hit by the world economic crisis. The bourgeoisie tried to shift the whole burden of the crisis onto their shoulders. Most hard hit by the

crisis was the proletariat, who suffered doubly from the steady decline in wages and the appalling growth of unemployment. In most capitalist countries the wage-fund of workers and other employees dropped 30 to 50 per cent. Unemployment assumed unheard-of dimensions. Over thirty-five million people were thrown into the street and became totally workless. Of these 16 million were accounted for by the U.S.A., 5.5 million by Germany, 3 million by Britain, over 2.8 million by Japan, 2.3 million by France, 900,000 by Czechoslovakia and 800,000 by Hungary. A still larger number of workers found themselves in the position of partially unemployed. The bourgeois governments on the basis of "retrenchment plans" systematically cut unemployment pay and all other forms of social benefits. In many countries there was no system of state unemployment insurance at all. Millions of people trudged the roads of the United States, Germany, Britain and other countries in search of jobs and a living.

The crisis ruined millions of farmers. Nearly a million insolvent farms in the U.S.A. were put up for sale during 1929-1933. The number of farms that came under the hammer in most of the capitalist countries more than trebled. As a rule they were small farms. The army of unemployed in the towns was reinforced by the impoverished country dwellers.

Hit by the crisis, hundreds of thousands of artisans, small employers, tradesmen and civil servants lost their means of subsistence.

Want among the people was most acute in the colonies and semi-colonies. The staple produce of these countries—agricultural raw materials and food—had dropped considerably in value in the world market. At the same time imperialist plunder of the colonies was intensified. The land of millions of peasants in the colonies was taken possession of by money-lenders and landowners, and tens of millions of people were on the verge of death by starvation. All this deepened the hatred of the imperialist colonialists among the masses.

The extreme deterioration in the material and legal position of the workers and the middle classes in the capitalist countries intensified the class struggle to an acute degree. The revolutionary forces came into active play. The strike movement grew. Nearly 19,000 strikes involving 8,500,000 employees occurred during 1929-1932 in 15 of the world's largest countries.*

* William Foster, *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, New York, 1956, p. 313.

The working class stepped up its fight against pay cuts, dismissals, cuts in social security payments and against the governments' emergency measures aimed at the democratic gains of the working people. In the U.S.A., Germany, France, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia many strikes, already during the early years of the crisis, led to sharp clashes with the authorities and the police. In October 1930, 130,000 Berlin metal workers went on strike. Big strikes of the miners in the Ruhr and in the Polish coalfields of Dombrowa and Cracow occurred in the beginning of 1931.

In Hungary a hundred-thousand-strong demonstration of workers took place on September 1, 1930, which the Communists and the Left Social-Democrats turned into a militant revolutionary action. The police shot down the workers. A year later the country was again shaken by big political demonstrations of the workers. The government used troops and artillery as well as the police against the workers.

In mid-1931 a strike of the miners for better living conditions broke out in the U.S.A. The workers were forced to fight the police, who used firearms and tear gas. The strike movement in most capitalist countries was mounting.

With the rise in unemployment, the movement among the unemployed, who demanded social insurance, the adoption of a programme of public works to save their families from starvation, steadily gained momentum. Hunger marches took place in the U.S.A., Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Britain, France, Austria, Canada and other countries, and committees of unemployed sprang up everywhere.

The Communist International gave considerable attention at the time to developing the movement of the unemployed with the aim of creating a united front of the employed and unemployed and preventing the bourgeoisie from sowing discord among them. In January 1930 the Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. in its directives to the sections pointed out that it was necessary for this purpose to get representatives of the employed included in the unemployed councils. "It is necessary to link the fight of the unemployed for their demands with the economic and political struggle of the working class. It is necessary, in addition to general slogans of struggle against the bourgeoisie, to advance popular, concrete slogans applicable to the conditions in your country."*

An International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/242/14.

sponsored by the communist parties and the Comintern was held on March 6, 1930 and February 25, 1931, which was marked by mass demonstrations, public meetings and meetings of the unemployed. The actions of the working class revealed the growing hatred of the bourgeois establishment, which condemned millions of working people to poverty and sufferings.

The class struggle gained breadth also in the countryside. The farmers demanded that a stop be put to the compulsory sale of their farms, that taxes be reduced and debts cancelled. In a number of countries mass peasant uprisings were gathering head.

Unrest and disaffection spread to the urban middle classes as the crisis deepened. Many members of these strata joined the fight side by side with the workers. But a considerable part of the middle strata, seized with despair and pessimism, still fell for the demagogy of the reactionary parties or wavered. The bourgeoisie feared that this numerous "disturbing element" would side with the working class.

The capitalist world was living through a period of an acute class struggle. The activity of the revolutionary forces was revealed in such important events as the overthrow in 1931 of the monarchy and development of a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Spain, and an upswing of the labour movement in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and several other countries.

With the deepening of the economic crisis in the colonial and dependent countries, the increased pressure upon them by the imperialists, the increased exploitation of the workers and the ruin en masse of the farmers and artisans, there was growing disaffection among all the oppressed peoples and a widening scope of the anti-imperialist struggle. A wave of workers' strikes, mass demonstrations, urban insurrections and peasant uprisings swept the colonial countries. There was a sharpening of the contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and imperialism which impelled the former to take a more active part in the national liberation movement. In many countries a real chance was offered for rallying the heterogeneous class forces into a united national front against imperialism.

India had embarked on a campaign of civil disobedience to the colonial authorities. Mass participation of the workers, peasants and city poor gave this campaign a militant character. In 1930 an anti-imperialist revolt broke out in Chittagong and Peshawar; the workers of the big industrial centre of Sholapur rose to the struggle: they drove the representatives of the British authorities and the local police out of the city, set up organs of revolutionary

self-governement and fought sanguinary battles with the troops which lasted several days; the popular uprising against the colonialists spread to the North-West Frontier Province. The liberation struggle of the Indian people was met with mass repressions by the colonialists. Over sixty thousand patriots were arrested in 1930, including the leaders of the national-reformist party—the Indian National Congress—with Gandhi at their head. The majority of the N.C. leadership, frightened by the magnitude and character of the mass movement and interested in securing certain concessions from the British authorities, made a deal with the colonialists. The more consistent champions of India's independence—the Communists—came out strongly against the reformists' deal with the colonial authorities.

In China during this period the anti-feudal struggle of the peasantry in a number of provinces was spreading, and revolutionary bases were formed in big districts. There, under the leadership of the Communists, Soviets were set up acting as organs of worker-and-peasant rule. On the territory of these bases the armed forces of the revolution—the Red Army of China—were formed out of the guerrilla detachments. This army in 1931 numbered a hundred thousand strong and successfully repulsed the campaigns of the Kuomintang troops against the Soviet areas of China.

The anti-imperialist movement became more active in Indochina too. In 1930 the Vietnam garrison at Fort Ienbai (North Vietnam) and several other local military units rose against the French colonialists. The latter succeeded in quelling these sporadic outbreaks. Presently, the peasants in a number of districts in Central Vietnam, under the leadership of the Communists, took the power into their hands, set up Soviets and confiscated the landed estates. The rule of the people here lasted three months. The colonialists employed the most brutal means of suppression against the peasant insurgents, including the bombing of the rebel villages. The authorities succeeded in arresting the leadership of the Communist Party of Indochina.

In the period 1930-1931 Burma was shaken by an anti-feudal and anti-imperialist peasant war. During this period the demonstration of the working people of Egypt against the British colonialists twice developed into armed uprisings. The peasants of the Philippines rose in arms to free their country from American imperialism. In 1933 unrest occurred among the Indonesian sailors in the ships of the Dutch Navy.

The anti-imperialist struggle flared up in a number of countries

of Latin America. In Chile in 1931 the sailors mutinied, hoisted the red flag and set up revolutionary committees. The government shelled the ships. The following year the insurgent workers attempted to proclaim Soviet power in Chile. New centres of struggle kept springing up in the colonies and dependent countries and more and more millioned masses of the oppressed rose against imperialism.

Thus, after a period of relative stabilisation of capitalism, the world became the scene of a mounting revolutionary labour and national liberation movement. The deepening of the economic crisis and intensification of the class struggle eroded the stability of the capitalist regimes and roused in the bourgeoisie fear for the fate of those regimes. Whereas during the first year of the crisis bourgeois economists and politicians had expressed hopes for a quick return to economic prosperity, the deepening crisis made them speak about the menace to the existing order and propose all kinds of programmes to cope with the crisis. In substance they all boiled down to finding a way to save and bolster up the capitalist exploiting system. The leading bourgeois economists, including the English economist J. M. Keynes, came to the conclusion that the mechanism of the capitalist market and free competition could no longer serve as the sole regulator of capitalist economy, could not save it from the fearful blows of the crisis. Keynes proposed an economic policy that would improve the mechanism of capitalist reproduction based on the laws of a free market and on state interference in the economy, that is, on state-monopoly regulation.

The measures of state-monopoly regulation to which the ruling circles in many capitalist countries began to resort more and more were conditioned not only by economic causes, but by the competition which had begun between socialist and capitalist economies, by the sharpening of socio-political contradictions within the capitalist countries and inter-imperialist antagonisms. With the help of state-monopoly reorganisation capitalism strove to bolster up its weakening underpinnings. In most countries this reorganisation followed the line of intensified economic and political enslavement of the working people and the establishment of more and more reactionary set-ups.

Bourgeois reaction and the leaders of the landowning and military cliques, confronted with a situation when the methods of maneuvering and bourgeois democracy could no longer stem the tide of the class struggle, displayed a growing tendency towards the use of brute force and political adventurism. They were prepared

to commit any atrocities and crimes in order to establish an undisguised terrorist dictatorship and smash the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants. Imperialist reaction in many countries counted on fascism as the only means of preventing a build-up of the forces of revolution by ruthlessly crushing every form of labour protest. The monopolies saw in fascism a power that was capable of using a strong arm to make the working people bear the brunt of the crisis and ensure high profits for capital. The fascist variant of state-monopoly capitalism with its totalitarian regimes appealed strongly to the reactionary circles of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The imperialist circles pinned their hopes on fascism also as a striking force against the Soviet Union, whose successes made the example of socialism particularly attractive to the workers of all the world. The tendency to regard fascism as a safety valve found expression in the gradual fascistisation of the bourgeois regimes in many countries and the rapid growth of fascist parties.

Lenin had pointed out that imperialism was characterised by a change over from democracy to political reaction both in foreign and internal policies. Imperialism tended towards a violation of democracy, towards reaction.* The growth of fascist tendencies during the years of the world economic crisis and the sharpening of the class struggle clearly demonstrated the growing reactionary nature of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which was revealing itself more and more as an anti-popular, anti-humanist force.

Complete failure to point to the masses a way out of the calamities caused by the crisis was displayed by the Right-wing Social-Democracy, which was committed to a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. During the years of the crisis it went out of its way to save capitalism from collapse, from revolution; it actively opposed the revolutionary movement. The leaders of Social-Democracy urged the workers to see the crisis through, to consent to make sacrifices and to lose a number of gains in order to avoid a civil war. At the Leipzig Congress of German Social-Democracy in 1931 one of its leaders, Fritz Tarnow, bluntly declared: "We are standing at the sickbed of capitalism not only as diagnosticians... We are destined to act as physicians who seriously wish to heal while retaining the feeling that we are the legatees."** "It goes without saying," wrote Ernst Heilmann, leader of the Social-

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* Cf. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 43.

** Sozialdemokratischer Parteitag in Leipzig, 1931, Protokoll, Berlin, 1931, S. 45.

Democratic parliamentary group, "that the whole of Social-Democracy is working to prevent the collapse of capitalism."*

The Social-Democratic leaders dealt the main blows at the revolutionary workers, at the Communists, whom they accused of kindling chaos, although it was capitalism, which the Social-Democrats defended, that had produced economic chaos, poverty and famine. The Right Social-Democrats tried to frighten the masses by alleging that a revolution would take infinitely more heavy toll than the deepest of crises. Revolution, they said, would lead to civil war, to suffering for the masses and to the destruction of the productive forces. By these and similar arguments the Right Social-Democrats tried to restrain the reformist workers from active manifestations. Social-Democracy shied at the very idea of struggle for proletarian power, of a revolution and civil war.**

Right-wing Social-Democracy restricted itself to certain minor limited demands in the interests of the workers. A special declaration adopted by the Joint Commission of the Socialist Labour International and the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions at its meeting in Zurich in January 1931 stated that Social-Democracy supported "not a contraction of state measures at a time of economic crises, but the greatest possible appropriations for productive public works".... Social-Democracy thus went on record for state-monopoly regulation with the aim of mitigating the crisis. It put forward the slogan of fighting against wage cuts and also proposed launching a campaign for a five-day working week "in order thereby to make work available for the unemployed".*** The Right socialist leaders expressed the fear that further wage cuts and the growth of unemployment would merely aggravate the crisis and constitute a still greater threat to the existing set-up.

The highlight of the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Labour International (July-August 1931) was the problem of combating the attacks of capital and saving Germany from economic collapse. This, in the opinion of the reformist leaders, would save the country from fascism.

The leaders of Social-Democracy restrained the workers from going on strike and even advanced a slogan to the effect that a

* *Das Freie Wort*, 1931, N. 29.

** Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd. II, Hannover, 1963, S. 384.

*** *Vorwärts*, January 27, 1931.

strike struggle at a time of crisis was criminal, as it tended to cut production still more. They supported the reactionary anti-labour measures of the bourgeois governments, declaring that they were necessary as "the lesser evil", i.e., as a means of averting fascism or "radicalism from the Left". Actually, the policy of collaboration with the moderate circles of the big bourgeoisie led from one concession to reaction to another, to renunciation of a determined fight against the onset of fascism. Right Social-Democracy considered the parliamentary-bourgeois regimes as the only ground upon which it was possible to prosecute a reformist policy, despite the fact that during the years of the crisis these regimes became more and more reactionary, and in a number of countries contributed to fascistisation.

While leaving the onset of fascism unchallenged, the Right Social-Democrats engaged in an active anti-Soviet and anti-communist campaign. The truth about the living example of the U.S.S.R. where socialism was in the making the leaders of Social-Democracy tried to drown in a torrent of lies and calumny. They peddled the thesis that the Soviet Union was building "not socialism, but state capitalism" and that the Five-Year Plan was merely an attempt to do by forcible means what had already been done in other capitalist countries.

Vicious attacks on the U.S.S.R. and the communist movement were made by K. Kautsky. In his book *Bolshevism in a Blind Alley* he claimed, in defiance of the realities of the class struggle throughout the world, that a whiteguard counter-revolution was less dangerous than Bolshevism. Kautsky spoke himself into the statement that one of the principal causes of the crisis in the world was the rule of Bolshevism in Russia, the severance of its market from industrial Europe. He called bluntly for "Bolshevism to be cleared out of the way... this would mean opening the way to well-being not only for Russia, but for the whole of Europe."* On the ground of anti-communism the renegade Kautsky identified himself with the downright champions of an anti-Soviet imperialist war.

The policy of conniving with reaction and anti-communist smear campaigns pursued by the Right leaders of Social-Democracy deepened the split in the working class and weakened it in the face of aggressive reaction.

* K. Kautsky, *Der Bolschewismus in der Sackgasse*, Berlin, 1930, S. 104, 140.

Problems of the Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern During the World Economic Crisis. The Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The only organised political force that came out resolutely and irreconcilably against imperialist reaction during the crisis was the communist movement. The Communist International, which had predicted the world economic crisis, orientated the communist parties to the fact that with the development of the economic crisis there would be a sharp aggravation of the basic internal and external contradictions of imperialism precipitating a new upswing in the revolutionary movement both in the capitalist countries and in the colonies. Already in February 1930 the enlarged meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. pointed out that the world economic crisis was becoming more and more destructive and was deepening the social contradictions. This, in turn, led to intensification of the class struggle, to increased use of terrorist methods for suppressing the masses and to fascism, on the one hand, and "to a rising revolutionary tide, a widening of the front of the revolutionary struggle and inclusion in the general revolutionary front of the peasant reserves of the colonies and those of a number of capitalist countries"*, on the other.

The Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. held during March-April 1931, analysing the situation in the world, emphasised the growing contrast between the two systems—that of forward-moving socialism and capitalism in the grip of a destructive crisis. The Plenum pointed out that owing to the crisis there was a further aggravation of social conflicts, that the bourgeoisie was trying to shift all the effects of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people and was organising an offensive "not only ... against the working class, but also against other broad strata of toilers in town and country".** To extricate itself from the crisis and consolidate its power the bourgeoisie intensified political reaction and took to the path of fascism. "The bourgeoisie is organising terrorist fascist groups, is breaking up labour and all other revolutionary organi-

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 10, No. 18, March 18, 1930, p. 231.
** *Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Theses. Resolutions. Decisions.* Moscow, 1931, p. 4.

sations, is depriving the workers and the toiling peasants of the right of assembly and free press, is suppressing strikes by means of compulsory arbitration and violence, shooting down unemployed demonstrations and striking workers, and is ruthlessly suppressing the revolutionary peasant movements."*

The Plenum pointed out that owing to the deepening of the crisis and the aggravation of inter-imperialist contradictions there was a growing urge towards war on the part of the capitalist powers, a striving to resolve these contradictions in a war against the Soviet Union. Following the report on the danger of military intervention against the U.S.S.R. made by Marcel Cachin, representative of the Communist Party of France, a country whose rulers took an active part in all kinds of anti-Soviet imperialist machinations in the world arena, the Plenum stressed the imperative necessity of stepping up anti-militarist work by the communist parties, unremittingly exposing the imperialist plans and intrigues against the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese revolution and disclosing to the popular masses the concrete steps towards a war build-up made in the armies, in the war industries, in the parliamentary committees, etc.

The Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stated that the principal task of the communist parties "is to win the majority of the working class as an essential condition for victory over the bourgeoisie and for preparing the working class for the decisive battles for the dictatorship of the proletariat."** To win the masses the communist parties, as Manuilsky, the representative of the C.P.S.U., stated in his report, should not underestimate the importance of the fight for the daily demands of the working people and should overcome their incapacity "to mobilise the masses on the basis of their everyday needs".*** Julian Lenski, representative of the Communist Party of Poland, said in his co-report: "Systematic organisation of the struggle for immediate demands created by hunger, poverty and unemployment should become the chief means of winning the decisive majority of the proletariat."**** The keynote of the co-reports by E. Thälmann, representing the Communist Party of Germany, and Klement Gottwald, representing the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as well as of the speech by I. Pyatnitsky, representing the C.P.S.U.(B.), was that the com-

* Ibid., p. 5.
** Ibid., p. 18.
*** D. Z. Manuilsky, *The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism*, 2nd ed., Moscow, 1931.
**** Ibid.

munist parties should put up a real fight in defence of the everyday interests of the working class and the broad non-proletarian masses of town and country, without overlooking a single question that concerns them. The speakers declared against the sectarian fear of economic successes in the strike struggle and showed that it was the achievement of certain material gains in the course of the strikes that made it possible to develop the fight on a broader basis.*

The Plenum stated in its decisions that the communist parties should win the masses by conducting the fight along the following main lines:

(1) against the capitalist offensive, against wage cuts and mass dismissals, for higher wages, for social insurance at the expense of the employers and for immediate relief for the unemployed;

(2) against the bourgeois dictatorship in all its forms, against the terror of the employers and police, for the liberty of revolutionary workers' organisations, for the disbanding and disarming of the fascist organisations, for the creation of mass self-defence against the fascists, for the organisation of mass political strikes against the political reaction of the bourgeois dictatorship;

(3) against the preparations for imperialist war and anti-Soviet military intervention, against intervention in the Soviet areas of China.**

An important feature of the Plenum's proceedings was the criticism of certain erroneous views on fascism, notably the thesis that fascism was merely a sign of the disintegration, the weakening of capitalism. Winding up the debate, Manuilsky criticised the simplified view according to which fascism was regarded as an inevitable historical stage in the disintegration of capitalism and was rapidly leading to the collapse of capitalism. "Hence," said Manuilsky, "the conclusion would follow that the advent of fascism was almost desirable: the worse the better. The growth of fascism, they would say, prepares the victory of communism."***

The Comintern rejected such views. R. Grieco (Garlandi) representing the Italian Communist Party demonstrated in his speech that fascism could not be regarded as an inevitable historical stage and that fascism created difficulties for the struggle of the working class.**** Manuilsky said that fascism was not only a sign of the

* D. Z. Manuilsky, *The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism*, 2nd. ed., Moscow, 1931.

** *Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

*** *The Communist International*, Vol. VIII, No. 11-12, June 15, 1931, p. 343.

**** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 11, No. 36, July 6, 1931, p. 661.

disintegration and crisis of capitalism, it was also "one of the forms of the attack of capitalism containing elements for the overcoming of the crisis. . . . Fascism is both an attack and a defence on the part of capitalism."* Establishment of a fascist dictatorship would mean temporary defeat of the proletariat. The communist parties, therefore, were confronted with the task of fighting with all their strength not only against existing fascist dictatorships, but against all offensive actions by fascism, against fascistisation, against all the measures of reactionary governments who clear the way for fascism.

The Plenum drew the attention of Communists to the particular menace of the Hitler movement in Germany.

The decisions of the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. expressed the militant, revolutionary spirit of the communist parties, their striving to lead the masses boldly into battle against capitalism. These decisions, however, also expressed a definite overestimation of the speed with which the revolutionary crisis was coming to a head, and an underestimation of the strength of the class enemy.

Many Communists had for a long time overestimated the destructive nature of the economic crisis, which they considered as "the last crisis, which the bourgeoisie could not survive and which was bound to end in the victory of the proletarian revolution".** This stand often did service in lieu of a sober analysis which, on the basis of the development of class contradictions in the given country, assessed the extent to which the revolutionary situation had ripened. The objective and subjective preconditions for a socialist revolution were often exaggerated in the communist press.

Socio-economic conditions, however, and the whole class struggle during the years of the crisis developed by complex and contradictory ways.

The Communists saw that a rapid polarisation of class forces was taking place, that the bourgeoisie was going to longer lengths along the road of fascistisation, while the parties who laid claim to the role of defenders of bourgeois-democratic freedoms proved incapable of resisting the onset of reaction and fascism. The Communists saw also that resentment was growing among a large section of the workers against a reactionary bourgeois set-up, which condemned the working people to poverty, destitution and injustice; that the slogan of doing away with capitalism and setting up a dictatorship of the proletariat was becoming more and more

* *The Communist International*, Vol. VIII, No. 11-12, June 15, 1931, p. 342.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/423/13.

popular among the advanced section of the working class. Even some bourgeois ideologues at that period believed that the capitalist system was doomed.

Taking into account only the feeling among the advanced workers and not that of the masses at large, the Comintern and the communist parties believed on insufficient grounds that the working people were losing interest in upholding bourgeois-democratic freedoms and would soon take up a stand in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The instances when thousands of workers were swayed by the heroic impulse of the Communists to come out against the bourgeoisie were interpreted as meaning that the ranks of adherents of the socialist revolution were being rapidly reinforced. The Communists were led to believe by these exaggerated appraisals that the crisis and fascistisation in the capitalist countries on the one hand, and the successes of socialism in the Soviet Union on the other, were impelling the working class towards a determined struggle against all forms of capitalist dictatorship, including bourgeois democracy. The Eleventh Plenum linked the struggle of the revolutionary workers for their economic demands and rights against the attacks of reaction and fascism with the task of preparing directly for the socialist revolution.

Recognition of the need for a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat distinguished every Communist and true revolutionary from the reformists and conciliators. However, the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which held true as the ultimate aim of the workers' struggle, did not meet the very complex and contradictory situation which had arisen during those years in the capitalist world. First of all, this slogan had not yet by any means gained the support of the majority of the working class and other working people.

Lenin, as we know, repeatedly stressed the very important role which the organisation and intelligent preparedness of the working class played in any revolutionary action. He rejected what he considered the absolutely ridiculous view that revolutionary classes possessed sufficient strength to effect a revolution at any moment when only the objective preconditions for such a revolution were ripe. "No, human society is not constituted so rationally or so 'conveniently' for progressive elements. A revolution may be ripe, and yet the forces of its revolutionary creators may prove insufficient to carry it out. . . ."* The communist parties during the world economic crisis had an exaggerated idea of the depth of

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 868.

the revolutionary temper among the masses and the rate at which revolutionary preparedness for the struggle for a socialist revolution was ripening among the bulk of the working people.

Serious changes calling for a searching analysis were taking place in the objective situation during the years of the crisis. The crisis had the effect of whipping up and deepening the contradictions between imperialism (and its vanguard—fascism) and all democratic sections of the population, leave alone the working class. Reaction and fascism, by attacking the democratic freedoms and rights of the masses, engendered in these masses a growing urge to fight for their freedoms and rights. The onset of fascism, which was becoming the main political strike force of monopoly capital, substantially altered the entire situation, made it in many ways different from that of the period 1918-1923.

The deepening contradictions of imperialism posed anew before the working people general democratic aims of a pronounced anti-fascist, anti-monopolistic content. The more reactionary imperialism grew, the greater significance did democratic demands acquire for the working people. Such was the basic underlying tendency of the objective changes in the conditions of the class struggle. This tendency became noticeable in the countries where fascism was on the march: it ripened gradually and less noticeably in all the other imperialist countries. Events thus brought Communists to realise the need for rousing the working class and its allies to the fight, first and foremost, for anti-fascist, general democratic demands. Under the circumstances, the revolutionary struggle in the countries of imperialism, in its first stage or at its first steps, was bound, for objective and subjective reasons, to bear a general democratic, anti-fascist character before evolving into a socialist pattern. There was thus a growing need for effecting a serious change in the policy of the Communist International, for working out a new strategic line that made allowance for an unavoidable general democratic, anti-imperialist phase of the struggle in the capitalist countries.

The communist movement was slow in appreciating the peculiar changes in the situation and the consequent need for concentrating on dealing first with the general democratic, anti-fascist tasks.

In advancing the task of preparing the working class for the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat as an immediate aim and drawing an analogy with the period of 1918-1923, when Right Social-Democracy took a stand against proletarian revolution and succeeded in keeping the majority of the working class from passing over to the side of the communist parties, the Comintern and

its sections believed that there was more ground under the new conditions for regarding Social-Democracy as the social mainstay of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the Right leaders of Social-Democracy during the world economic crisis showed that this force did everything in its power to counteract the development of the workers' revolutionary struggle. It was for this very reason that discontent began to grow among the rank and file against the line which the leaders pursued, and Left tendencies, Left groups arose, which demanded a more active struggle against fascism. These tendencies were not fully taken cognisance of at the time by the Communists.

The decisions of the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stated that the entire development of Social-Democracy "is an uninterrupted process of evolution towards fascism".* This line was an obstacle in the way of rallying all the anti-fascist forces.

The communist parties' sharp-set attack against Social-Democracy during the world economic crisis and their evaluation of Social-Democracy as social-fascism were largely a reaction on the part of the Communists to the treacherous policy of the Right reformist leaders. The stand adopted by some of the leaders of Right Social-Democracy, who actually abetted fascistisation and did not stop at using violence against the revolutionary workers, gave definite grounds for accusing them of social-fascism.

Feeling ran very high among the revolutionary workers following the shooting down of the May Day demonstration in Berlin in 1929 by order of the Social-Democratic President of the City Police Zoergiebel. Such actions were qualified by the Communists as social-fascism. It would be wrong, however, to apply this appellation to Social-Democracy and the reformist trade unions as a whole, uniting as they do in their ranks millions of workers. The social-fascism formula prevented the Communists from taking timely notice of the fact that with the onset of fascism the Social-Democrats, with the exception of their Right leaders and Right-wing groups, were capable of taking part in the anti-fascist struggle. The social-fascism formula also gave the enemies of the Communists grounds for accusing the communist parties of applying this term to the millions of the rank and file of the S.-D. parties. The view of the Eleventh Plenum that the reformist organisations were going fascist from top to bottom prevented the communist parties from seeking real ways to draw the reformist workers and the communist workers closer together. This view, on the contrary,

* *Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.* . . , op. cit., p. 13.

led to the "class-versus-class" tactics being directed in practice against the local functionaries of the reformist organisations as well as against the Right-opportunist leaders. This sharp-set tactic of "class versus class", as it happened, instead of winning the bulk of the reformist leaders, strained relations between them and the Communists still more than before.

A number of communist parties at this period put forward the slogans of a "Red United Front", "A United Front of Communism Against the United Front of Fascism", etc. This in effect, implied that the united front could unite only workers who consciously supported the Communists, leaving the workers who followed the lead of the reformists beyond the pale of the united front.

The Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. supported the decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Profintern (August 1930) concerning the need for turning the revolutionary trade union oppositions in most of the capitalist countries into independent revolutionary trade unions who were to take the lead of the workers' economic fight and rouse the workers to active revolutionary struggle. These recommendations, as subsequent practice showed, narrowed the scope of the Communists' work among the masses and kept the revolutionary minority apart from the mass of the workers.

The Plenum came to the conclusion that it was necessary to put an end to the practice of drawing a line "between fascism and bourgeois democracy, and between the parliamentary form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and its open fascist form".* This conclusion, at a time when fascism was out to smash all bourgeois-democratic institutions and do away with even the curtailed rights of the working people, prevented the communist parties from realistically evaluating the contradictions between bourgeois democracy and fascism, from seizing the opportunity to rally the broad masses who came out in defence of democratic freedoms against fascism and imperialist reaction.

The identification of bourgeois-democratic methods of rule with those of fascism led to a certain underestimation of fascism, to various bourgeois parliamentary regimes being defined as fascist regimes. This obscured the real dimensions of the danger which the actual fascist forces represented. This line seriously prevented the communist movement from taking advantage of the immense opportunities which offered themselves during the world economic crisis for drawing the broad masses of the working people into the struggle against reaction and fascism.

* Ibid., p. 9.

THE COMINTERN'S CHALLENGE TO FASCISM

The Sharpening of Class Conflicts. The Communist Parties' Struggle Against Fascism and Reaction

The year 1932 saw a further sharpening of the class struggle. The strike of the Polish miners, which broke out at the beginning of the year, developed into a violent clash between the workers and the armed police. In March 1932 a one-day general strike was declared in the country, in which the Communists took an active part. The strikers compelled the government to abandon the idea of doing away with a number of social gains won by the working class. The strike movement produced a new form of struggle—the sit-in strike, in which the workers seize the enterprise. This example of militant action was followed by the workers of other countries.

The strike movement built up to a high pitch in Czechoslovakia. The strike of the miners in the country's principal coalfields in the spring of 1932 was accompanied by clashes between the workers and the police and gendarmery. In Northern Bohemia the Communist Party succeeded in drawing all the workers in the coal district into the strike in a united front. Its significance, therefore, went far beyond the confines of the country.

The strike movement and the struggle of the unemployed became more active in the U.S.A., France, Britain, Belgium, Rumania, Canada, Yugoslavia and many other countries. In the summer of 1932 the war veterans in the U.S.A. organised a march on Washington demanding pension claims. They were met by troops under the command of General MacArthur who took savage reprisals against them. Many of the veterans were wounded and their encampment with all their belongings was burnt.

The fight of the Rumanian railwaymen took the form of an acute conflict. In February 1933 the striking workers occupied the railway depots at Griviţa (a district of Bucharest) and in the course of many hours fought a regular battle with the troops sent against them. The events at Griviţa stirred up the great masses of the workers throughout the country and contributed to the unity of the anti-fascists.

The struggle in Germany reached a high degree of intensity. Between September 5 and December 1932 alone about 1,100 strikes took place there, most of them ending in victory or partial success for the workers.* A sharp polarisation of political forces was taking place in the country, with the Communist Party gaining influence, on the one hand, and fascism rapidly gaining strength on the other.

The wave of the peasant movement was mounting high in a number of countries, its members demanding not only a reduction or cancellation of debts, but a reallotment of the land. A big armed uprising of the peasants took place in the summer of 1932 in Poland—in the Lissa region of Western Ukraine and Volhynia. Mass conflicts shook the Japanese countryside. A wave of farmers' strikes swept through the U.S.A. The overall picture of the sharpened class struggle in the countryside was one of profound discontent and resistance to the authorities in some countries, big demonstrations in others, and mass armed uprisings in still others.

The mounting revolutionary struggle met with a hardening and furious resistance on the part of the exploiting classes, who tried to crush the action of the working people, establish totalitarian regimes and strangle at birth every display of discontent on the part of the masses. This found expression in the gradual fascistisation of imperialist reaction. Fascism rapidly gained ground and became the chief party of the reactionary imperialist bourgeoisie in many countries, a rallying place for all who nourished a malevolent hatred of socialism, peace, democracy and progress. It reflected the evolution of the monopoly bourgeoisie towards still greater reaction.

The onset of imperialist reaction and fascism assumed most threatening dimensions in Germany early in the thirties. The National-Socialist Party there was getting more and more active support from the principal groups of finance capital, which was distinguished by its extreme aggressiveness. The imperialist reaction in Germany saw in fascism an opportunity, by means of terror, "by iron and fire", of crushing the proletariat, destroying what Hitler described as the "cancerous disease of democracy", establishing "a strictly authoritarian state administration", starting preparation for war in order to destroy other nations or turn them into slaves, conquer Lebensraum, Germanise the annexed territories

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* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 4, Berlin, 1966, S. 365-66.

and then establish the world supremacy of the German race.* Hitlerite fascism concentrated within itself the most reactionary, manhating features of monopoly capital and was the embodiment of aggressive anti-communism.

International imperialism supported the German fascists, the nazis, gave them financial assistance, and helped them in their bid for power because they saw in them a strike force aimed against the communist movement and the Soviet Union.

At the elections to the Reichstag in Germany in July 1932 the nazis polled 13,800,000 votes, making them the biggest political force in the country. True, the Communists and Social-Democrats polled 5.4 and 8 million votes respectively, but they went to the elections separately. The nazis made the most of this split within the ranks of the working class, and the attacks of their terrorist gangs on the revolutionary workers grew more and more brazen.

The fascist movement made headway noticeably in France, Austria, Spain, Greece and the Baltic states.

The Communist International and the communist parties drew attention to the increasing fascist menace, made fascism the target of their attacks and brought home to the masses the harm of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic views on fascism, which tended to obscure its class essence. The Communist Party of Germany, in its "Programme of Social and National Liberation of the German People", adopted in the summer of 1930, had pointed out that fascism, as a party of extreme reaction, was a grave danger and that its aims had nothing in common with the real national interests of the German people, but expressed the aspirations of the extreme reactionary and aggressive imperialist circles. At the beginning of 1932 the Plenum of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Germany pointed out the danger of the workers being crushed by growing fascism unless they quickly rallied their forces. The policy of the united front of the workers, therefore, was defined as the sole means for arresting fascism, as the principal link in the Party's policy.**

The Communist Party of Germany fought a gallant fight against the emergency laws of the Brüning-Papen Government, which struck at the living standards of the working people. They linked this struggle with more and more active anti-fascist demonstrations. In the summer of 1932 the C.P.G. launched an Anti-Fascist Action mass campaign, which played an important part in arrest-

* *Der Nationalsozialismus. Dokumente 1933-1945*, Frankfurt am Main, 1957, S. 180-81.

** *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 4, S. 326.

ing the growth of fascist influence among the masses. The C.P.G. issued a statement announcing its readiness to fight shoulder to shoulder with any organisation that was really willing to fight fascism and further wage cuts.* In a talk with twenty veteran functionaries of the Social-Democratic Party on July 8, 1943, Thälmann said: "How can we Communists, in all sincerity, help but strive towards a united anti-fascist proletarian front in such circumstances, and in the face of such a grave menace when Germany is being turned into a land of bonfires and gallows."** The C.P.G. organised powerful anti-fascist demonstrations and meetings. On its initiative self-defence detachments (Schutzbund) were set up in a number of towns and villages, which comprised non-party men and some Social-Democrats as well as Communists. During the six months that preceded the coming to power of the nazis the C.P.G. made about a dozen offers to the Social-Democratic Party of Germany to organise a general strike against fascism, but each time received a refusal.***

The French Communist Party impressed upon the masses that the reactionary bourgeois parties were already conducting a policy of fascistisation within the country. The Communists went to the election campaign of 1932 under slogans directed against war, poverty and fascism. Under these slogans the Communists took an active part in the strike movement. The F.C.P. attached tremendous importance to the policy of the united workers' front as a means of uniting the proletariat against reaction, fascism and war. It joined the campaign for the convocation in Amsterdam in 1932 of a congress against fascism and war. It succeeded in getting 141 branches of the Socialist Party and a considerable number of progressive intellectuals to take part in this campaign.****

The fight against fascism was stepped up by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which had accumulated in strike battles important united front experience. Beginning from the middle of 1932 the C.P.C. warned the masses of the fascist menace both from without, on the part of Germany, and from within, on the part of the internal reactionary circles who were out to fascistise the state. The C.P.C. started an anti-fascist campaign whose aim, as Gottwald wrote, was to come out in a united front and "prevent armed fascist gangs from dashing about the streets of

* *Die Rote Fahne*, April 27, 1932.

** Willi Bredel, *Ernst Thälmann*, Berlin, 1953, S. 135.

*** *XVII Syezd V.K.P.(b.)* (Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1934, p. 345.

**** Cf. *La Correspondance Internationale*, 1933, N. 15, p. 212.

Czechoslovak cities shooting at the workers. The working class of Czechoslovakia is able to put a stop to the wanton murder of workers and peasants. The working class of Czechoslovakia can prevent the Czechoslovak Papens, Schleichers and Hitlers from coming to power."*

In Poland, where the development of class contradictions was at its acutest, the Communist Party tried to link the strike movement of the workers, the mass demonstrations and the actions of the peasants with the job of preparing the working people for a general political strike against the fascist regime.**

The fight against fascism was considerably stepped up by the Communist Parties of Spain, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece, Britain and many other countries.

The Communist International and its sections ran an extensive ideological propaganda campaign in the course of which they exposed the various petty-bourgeois, Right-socialist and Trotskyite views on fascism and strove to give a more probing analysis of the main aspects of the fascist movement, revealing its weaknesses and the causes of its growth. At that time the definition of fascism, as given by the Social-Democrats and all kinds of petty-bourgeois ideologues, was still widespread among the masses. Many prominent theoreticians of Social-Democracy described fascism as a movement and dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie, thus misleading the masses as to its real character.

The Social-Democratic leaders either denied or played down fascism's ties with big monopoly capital, with out-and-out reaction, declaring that fascism exercised its despotic rule over both the proletariat and the big bourgeoisie. The petty-bourgeois theoreticians and Trotskyites often described fascism as a supra-class power, a sort of Bonapartism, which arises when neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat are in a position to directly exercise their rule. Such views prevented the masses from being mobilised for the struggle against fascism. No little damage was caused also by the view, spread by the Social-Democratic and liberal-bourgeois press, that in most "democratic" countries fascism was impossible for objective reasons, especially because these countries did not have such a large number of lumpen-proletariat as would form the mass basis of the fascist movement. The Social-Democratic leaders in Western Europe had a good deal to say about the "democratic zone", which was supposed to be immune to fascism.

* Klement Gottwald, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya* (Selected Works), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, pp. 287-88.

** Cf. J. Lenski, "Obostreniye klassovoi borby v Polshe" (Intensification of the Class Struggle in Poland), *Pravda*, January 27, 1938.

The press of the Comintern and its sections constantly exposed fascism and showed it up to be the terrorist dictatorship of big capital. The Communists stressed that fascism, as a political trend, entered the arena of the class struggle in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism, during periods of intensification of class contradictions and instability of the bourgeois regimes. It is connected with the decline and collapse of capitalism, and in this sense it is a definite sign of weakness on the part of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, however, it reflects the frenzied desire of the reactionary bourgeoisie to cope with this weakness at all costs, by the most brutal means and bloody violence, and establish undisguised terrorist regimes, which tolerate no demonstrations whatever against the existing order. These conclusions, stressed at the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I., were used by the communist parties to combat the tendency among the masses and some of the Communists to underestimate the fascist menace.

The Comintern rivetted the attention of the working people to the fact that fascism appeared upon the world scene as the antipode of socialism, as a force that was most hostile to socialism, to the Soviet Union, and counted on destroying the first socialist state. The onset of fascism had a direct bearing on the growing threat of an anti-Soviet, imperialist war.

The Comintern and the communist parties drew attention to the fact that fascism, by its nationalist and social demagogy, attracted to its ranks the ruined petty-bourgeois and declassed sections of the population, creating for itself a mass basis. During the years of crisis hundreds of thousands of members of the middle classes were ruined and found themselves at the bottom of the social ladder.

Lenin once wrote: "The small producers' discontent very often engenders (and inevitably must engender in them or among a considerable section of them) an urge *to defend their existence as small proprietors*, i.e., to defend the foundations of the present-day order, and even to turn it back."* This, precisely, was characteristic of the bulk of the small proprietors during the years of the crisis. Ruined and desperate, the small proprietor revealed a tendency towards adventurism and terrorism. He became susceptible to the anti-communist, anti-democratic appeals of the fascists, to their skilful chauvinist propaganda, to their slogans promising the little man recovery of his self-respect and the country "national great-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 49.

ness". Nationalist propaganda proved to be the fascists' trump card, especially in those countries which had suffered defeat in the war and the populations of which were compelled to bear the burden of post-war treaties. This circumstance was used for debauching the minds of the masses with chauvinist dope and drawing their attention away from the real causes of their plight. Analysing this dangerous development, the Comintern and its sections aimed at stepping up their anti-fascist work among the middle strata of the population. The communist parties started a fight against the view held by some Communists that these strata were the "natural reserves" of fascism.

Expansion of the Communist Movement. The Fight Against Left-Sectarian Groups Within the Communist Parties

The Communists conducted their struggle against the onset of fascism and imperialist reaction under difficult conditions. Savage repressive measures were taken against the Communists by the bourgeois machinery of state. The communist parties were made the targets for terrorist acts by fascist gangs and all kinds of reactionary militarised organisations. Those who suffered most from this were the parties who had not yet properly mastered the art of skilfully combining legal and illegal work. No small losses were sustained by the parties' middle personnel and leadership, as it was against the experienced revolutionaries that the enemy struck his first blow.

Despite terror and persecution, however, despite the virulent communist-baiting, the communist movement during the years of the world economic crisis gained strength. The steadfast and consistent defence of the interests of the working people by the Comintern and its sections, their heroism and indomitable will in the fight against fascism and imperialism won the Communists growing sympathy among the advanced workers, the peasants and the Left-wing intellectuals. The finest members of these strata reinforced the ranks of the communist parties. The Communist Party of Germany, which held the centre of the international front of struggle against fascism, grew rapidly. By the beginning of 1933 it numbered over 300,000 members. The membership of the parties

increased also in China, Czechoslovakia, Finland and a number of other countries.

A number of new sections of the Comintern came into being. The communist groups of Indochina, which was a French colony, founded in 1930 the Communist Party of Indochina. At the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in 1931 it was admitted to membership of the Comintern as an independent section. A prominent role in forming the Communist Party of Indochina was played by Ho Chi Minh. In 1930, on the memorable day of November 7, the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands was founded. It worked at first legally, but already in 1931 the American colonialists outlawed the Party.

In 1930-1931 communist parties began to take shape also in Malaya and Cyprus. At the same time, on the Latin American continent, the various communist groups were formed into the Communist Parties of Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia and Costa Rica.

In Europe communist parties were formed in Iceland (1930) and Ireland (1933).

In India between 1925 and 1933 the communist movement was virtually deprived of a central leadership, all the members of the Central Committee of the Indian Communist Party being in prison. In 1933 an important step was taken in the direction of rallying the Indian Communists: a new Central Committee was elected, which took over the leadership of the Party on a national scale. The Communist Party of India joined the Comintern the same year.

The growth of the Comintern's ranks and the formation of new sections were evidence of the further consolidation of the communist movement.

In rallying the masses against the onset of capital and fascism, the Comintern and the communist parties were faced with the necessity, while combating Right opportunism within its ranks, of dealing a blow at the Leftist-sectarian elements, who hindered the framing of a correct policy and the conduct of really mass anti-fascist work.

In 1932 the Communist Party of Spain, with the help of the E.C.C.I., utterly defeated the Bullejos-Trilla sectarian-opportunist group who had been in control of the party leadership for some time. This group failed to understand that the revolution which had started in Spain in 1931 was of a bourgeois-democratic character and that the agrarian question was its central issue. Bullejos and Trilla believed that "the proletariat should fight only

for itself", and so they put forward the slogan: "Down with the bourgeois republic!", thereby creating great difficulties for the Communist Party's approach to the masses, who were fighting for bourgeois-democratic reforms.

The group took an erroneous stand also in the national question by demanding the immediate and obligatory secession of the national regions of Catalonia, the Basque Province and Galicia. This sectarian doctrinaire group neglected work among the masses and underestimated the role of the Party as an organiser of the masses.

The expulsion from the Party of this group, which reflected the thought-patterns of the petty radicalised bourgeoisie, played an important role in developing and strengthening the Party; "the narrow dogmatic line which hampered the development of the Party and to some extent isolated it from the masses was rectified."* The leadership of the Party was taken over by such revolutionaries as José Díaz, Dolores Ibárruri, Vicente Uribe and others. The Party came out onto the highroad of struggle against the reactionary landowners and fascism; it was for going through with the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Within the Communist Party of France the sharp struggle against the Leftist-sectarian Barbé-Célor group was coming to an end. This group overestimated the extent of the economic and political crisis in France and claimed that the Government of Tardieu was already exercising a fascist dictatorship. The group advanced pseudo-revolutionary slogans, indulged in revolutionary phrasemongering and at the same time torpedoed the tactics of the united front, rejected the struggle for limited demands, which it considered as "past history".

Barbé and Célor called all the members of the Socialist Party, the workers included, "social-fascists" and "bloodhounds of the bourgeoisie", which only helped the reformist leaders to pit the socialist workers against the Communists. This group's policy caused serious damage to the Party, whose membership dropped.**

The removal of the Barbé-Célor group from the leadership of the Party in 1930 and the election of Maurice Thorez to the post of General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, and the searching criticism of the consequences of this group's sectarian policy at the Seventh Congress of the F.C.P. in March 1932 enabled

* *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi partii Ispanii* (History of the Communist Party of Spain), Moscow, 1961, p. 78.

** The membership of the F.C.P. dropped from 55,000 in 1926 to 39,000 in 1930. Maurice Thorez, *Oeuvres*, Livre 2, T. 1, Paris, 1950, p. 45.

the Party to turn its attention to the problems of struggle for a united workers' front against the onset of capital and fascism, and to sharply improve its work among the masses.

The Comintern and the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany were obliged to wage a sharp struggle against the Neumann-Remmele sectarian-opportunist group. This group held that the economic crisis was bound to lead to revolution, therefore they attached little importance to the fight for limited demands, for the daily needs of the working people. Underestimation of the threat of fascism and the view that the nazis' bid for power would merely speed up the revolution in Germany, were characteristic of this group's members. At the same time Neumann, Remmele and their supporters unrealistically defined the opportunities of the revolutionary workers and the C.P.G. Neumann asserted in 1931 that the Communist Party had already "succeeded in halting" the advance of fascism, that it would receive a majority at the elections, that the winter of 1931-1932 would be "the most revolutionary winter", and so on.

The fight against fascism was reduced by this group to mere clashes with the fascist gangs, and this threatened a slipping down into methods of individual terror. The Left sectarians called the Social-Democratic workers "social fascists" and "little Zoergiebel", thus denying the possibility of their being drawn into the active revolutionary struggle. In lieu of the slogan of a united workers' front this group proposed the slogan of a "red workers' front", which narrowed beforehand the limits of unity policy. The harmful Left-sectarian views of this group were particularly strong within the leadership of the German Young Communist League.

The Neumann-Remmele group had the support of some Leftist-minded members of the Comintern personnel, notably V. Knorin, who sometimes gave the German Communists recommendations in a sectarian spirit.

Distinguished leaders of the C.P.G.—Thälmann, Pieck, Ulbricht and others—repeatedly came out against the views of the Leftists at party forums and in the party press. The February Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.G. in 1932 criticised many of the propositions advocated by the sectarians. In April and May 1932 the Political Commission of the E.C.C.I., in the presence of Neumann and Remmele and representatives of the C.P.G., examined the activities of this group, which it condemned as being factional and sectarian.*

* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 4, S. 373.

This was important assistance to the party leadership and contributed to the speedy defeat of the Neumann-Remmele group.

The blow struck at the Left-sectarian groups in a number of communist parties was of great importance in stepping up the Communists' work among the masses, clearing the way as it did for a more flexible policy in rallying the anti-fascist workers. This blow was of important significance for the ideological and organisational consolidation of the Comintern's sections.

Great assistance was rendered by the Comintern Executive during the years of the world economic crisis to the Communist Party of Rumania. A sharp factional struggle started in this Party in 1929-1930, which led to a split within the Party and weakened its influence among the masses. In August 1930 the Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. passed a special decision "On Unprincipled Factional Struggle and Restoration of Unity in the Communist Party of Rumania". The E.C.C.I. condemned the factional strife, bureaucratic methods of leadership, and petty-bourgeois adventurism characteristic of both opposing groups and outlined remedies for restoring the unity of the Party and normalising it (setting up a new temporary leadership, holding a Party discussion, making preparations for a congress).*

A most important aspect of the communist parties' ideological and organisational consolidation was the formation of a militant Marxist-Leninist core in the leadership of the Comintern's sections. The Party cadres became steeled leaders of the communist movement in the course of a sharp struggle with the opportunists of the Right and "Left", in the course of class battles against the attacks of the bourgeoisie and fascism. They constituted in the central committees of the parties that stable majority which ensured the prosecution of a correct line.

The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The questions of rallying the masses against the attacks of capital, fascism, imperialism and war were the high points of the Twelfth Plenum of the Comintern Executive, which was held during August-September 1932. In view of the mounting revolutionary crisis in a number of capitalist countries the Plenum set before the communist parties the task: "without losing a moment,

* Cf. *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1930, No. 23, pp. 54-59.

to intensify and accelerate our Bolshevist mass work to win over the majority of the working class, to heighten the revolutionary activity of the working class."*

In his report at the Plenum Kuusinen called upon the communist parties to be guided in their mass work by those questions and events of the day which agitate the workers most of all at the given moment, to base their policy of a united workers' front only on "the immediate practical aims of the present class struggles of the proletariat, the actual action slogans of communist policy..., not the principles of the communist programme which are, as yet, incomprehensible to the non-party and reformist workers, but which ought to be popularised among them during the course of the actual partial struggles."** The speaker sharply criticised the view that the task of winning over the Social-Democratic workers was almost impossible ("there's no talking to them at all"), that fighting for partial demands was not so important. It was this, said Kuusinen, that allowed the Right leaders of Social-Democracy to represent their policy as the only real and practically useful defence of the workers' interests. The report emphasised the need for Communists maintaining regular contacts with the masses of non-party, Social-Democratic and syndicalist workers and winning their confidence. Kuusinen declared that "the united front from below", the communist parties' appeals to the workers "do not preclude the possibility that in special exceptional cases a communist proposal of unity may be sent to a lower trade union organisation as such, or even to a local social-democratic organisation"***; that in proposing a united front it would be wrong to demand of the reformist workers at the very outset that they break with their leaders.

Analysing the lessons of the economic strikes and the fight of the unemployed, Thälmann, too, drew the attention of the communist parties to questions of the struggle for limited demands and to the work of the Communists in the trade unions. He condemned the pseudo-revolutionary renunciation of partial battles and the Left sectarianism in trade union policy expressed in attempts here and there to advance the slogan of "smashing the reformist trade unions". He said it was wrong to regard the reformist trade unions as "a school of capitalism", an "utterly reactionary mass"; the rank and file of these unions, he said, wished to fight against the attacks

* *Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Theses and Resolutions.* "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Sections of the C.I.", Modern Books, Ltd., London, p. 15.

** Ibid., p. 85.

*** Ibid., pp. 83, 86.

of capital and therefore the Communists ought not to quit the reformist unions, but fight at every inch of foothold in them; they ought not to boycott the various local bodies of the reformist trade unions—strike committees, unemployment commissions, etc.—but should take the most active part in their work, should try to win the confidence of the workers.

The same questions were dealt with in his co-report by Gottwald, who stressed the importance of advancing urgent everyday demands and such forms of struggle as would be close and intelligible to the masses. It was not enough, he said, to proclaim communist party leadership of the workers' organisations, but to work painstakingly, day in day out, for a united front of the workers and for the leadership of it.

"I have read Lenin very carefully," said Gottwald, "read what he said about the Soviets in 1917. Nowhere did I find Lenin proposing the slogan of 'Set up Soviets under the leadership of the Bolsheviks'. All that was said then was: 'Set up Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' deputies. . . .' The present bodies of the united front—the committees of action, strike committees, etc.—are something very small compared with the Soviets, and yet we often persist in saying that they should be created only under our leadership. Real leadership cannot be imposed from above, nor can it be achieved by declaration. It must be secured on the basis of proletarian democracy, secured by persistent, patient and devoted defence of the class interests of the proletariat.'"* Gottwald stressed the important role which the principles of proletarian democracy play in mass work and said that the communist parties should not appoint such bodies as strike committees, committees of the unemployed etc., from above, but should have them elected by all the workers on the basis of the principles of proletarian democracy. This was the only way the Communists could get in close touch with the labour masses, show them in practice what they stand for and establish personal friendly relations with the social-democratic workers.

All these conclusions arrived at at the Plenum of the E.C.C.I. signified a definite widening of the field for the application of the united front policy and readjustment of some previous propositions, such as the thesis of fascistisation of the lower rungs of the reformist parties and trade unions, the impossibility of approaching even the local organisations of a Social-Democratic Party with offers of unity of action, and so on. The decisions of the

* K. Gottwald, *Izbranniye proizvedeniya*, Vol. 1, pp. 302-03.

Twelfth Plenum orientated the communist parties towards a sharp improvement of their work among the masses with a view to winning them over to their side. "The main link which the communist parties must seize upon in solving this problem," said the resolution of the Plenum, "is the struggle for the everyday economic and political interests of the broad masses, against the increasing poverty, against oppression, violence and terror."* The economic struggle of the proletariat for limited demands, which more and more often was combined with various forms of political activity, was regarded by the Plenum as the fundamental link for leading the masses to the forthcoming big revolutionary battles.**

Characterising the processes that were taking place in capitalist society, the Plenum noted the growth of state interference in the economy and the growing control over the state by private monopolies. The Plenum noted with full justification that political reaction and fascistisation were continuing to gain ground in most of the capitalist countries, where "the big bourgeoisie are organising fascist units for civil war, are making a system of political banditism, white terror, the torture of political prisoners, provocation, forging documents, the shooting down of strikers and demonstrators, the dissolution and suppression of the organisations of the workers".*** The Plenum referred to the violent outbreak of nationalism and chauvinism in Germany and other countries, to the wave of chauvinist sentiments which the fascists were making use of for their own ends.

The speakers at the Plenum rightly condemned the Right-wing socialist policy of "the lesser evil", which took the form of complicity with bourgeois reaction.

Analysing the international situation that had arisen following the attack of Japanese imperialism upon China and its seizure of Manchuria, and bearing in mind the deepening contradictions among the imperialists, the Plenum noted the tendency in the camp of imperialism to resolve these contradictions at the expense of the Soviet Union and by a redivision of spheres of influence in the Far East. The Plenum's resolution stated that the question on the order of the day was "the armed struggle for the partition of China and intervention against the U.S.S.R.".**** Many other facts

* *Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Theses and Resolutions.* "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Sections of C.I.", Modern Books, Ltd., London, p. 18.
** Ibid., p. 28.
*** Ibid., p. 9.
**** Ibid., p. 7.

besides the appearance of a hotbed of war in the Far East and the strengthening of militarist Japan's positions in Northern China along the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. pointed to the growing threat of war, namely: the imperialist plans of France and Britain for setting up an anti-Soviet pan-European bloc, the attempts of French imperialism to spur its East European allies to greater anti-Soviet activity, the violent campaign in the capitalist countries against alleged "Soviet dumping" on the world market, the appeals of Pope Pius XI for a crusade against the Soviet Union, the refusal of the Geneva Conference to accept the Soviet proposals on disarmament, and so on.

Analysing these alarming international events, the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. noted that the tendencies towards unleashing war were accelerated by fascism, and the communist parties had to organise a really active fight against the war build-up by the imperialists.

The International Anti-War Congress in Amsterdam (August 1932) held concurrently with the Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and in the organisation of which the Communists played a prominent part, called upon the peoples to avert another imperialist war and prevent an attack of the imperialists upon the U.S.S.R. This Congress, which was attended by a considerable number of non-party workers, Social-Democrats and progressive intellectuals, helped to bring these forces together in the fight against fascism and war.

The principal tasks of the Comintern's sections were defined by the Twelfth Plenum as follows: to wage a concrete struggle (1) against the capitalist offensive; (2) against fascism and reaction; (3) against the impending imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union.*

While defining many concrete tasks for rallying the masses to the struggle against fascism, reaction and war, the Twelfth Plenum left in force and in some cases reaffirmed a number of one-sided guidelines of the previous Plenum. It overrated the speed with which the revolutionary wave was rising at a time when the imperialist bourgeoisie and fascism were mustering their forces at a faster rate than the revolutionary proletariat.

It was stated at the Plenum that it was wrong to regard the growth of fascism in Germany as a fundamental process peculiar to that country alone, that the fundamental process in Germany was the breakdown of the German economy, the sharpening of contradictions, and the growth of the forces of communism, accompanied by the growth of fascism as a concentration of the forces of the bourgeoisie for the struggle against the revolution. The Communist Party of Germany was recommended to contrapose to the slogan of fascist dictatorship the slogan of a Soviet socialist Germany. The Plenum reaffirmed the need for directing the main blow against Social-Democracy as being the social pillar of the bourgeoisie. These guidelines at a time when fascism was making a bid for power in a number of countries did not meet the demands for uniting all forces against fascism.

* *Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*..., p. 18.

The Nazis Come to Power in Germany. Important Steps by the Comintern to Unite Anti-Fascists

The events which took place shortly after the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. showed what a menace fascism had become. Most alarming of all was the turn of events in Germany. At a moment when the nazi movement began somewhat to abate and the influence of the Communist Party continued to grow, the reactionary circles of finance capital decided to call the fascists to power. Already on January 27, 1932 Hitler addressed the "council of the gods"—300 representatives of monopoly capital, the military and Junkers—who endorsed his programme.

On January 30, 1933 the monopolists put Hitler into power. During those days the Communists of Germany made tremendous efforts to rouse the workers to a general strike against fascism. The Right leaders of German Social-Democracy, however, appealed for "calm and sanity". They blindly believed in the omnipotence of constitutional methods of struggle, in the power of elections at a time when the fascists had long been resorting to terrorist methods. Even after Hitler came to power the leadership of the German Social-Democratic Party, having the backing of substantial masses, torpedoed the attempts of the Communist Party to organise a general strike. The Social-Democratic *Vorwärts* wrote that "tactical prudence called for deferment of the strike".* The leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party held forth about "the constitutional character" of Hitler's government and urged that it be

* *Vorwärts*, January 31, 1933.

challenged with ballot-papers at a time when the fascists had launched a terrorist crusade against the advanced workers. The deep split in the working class as a result of the Right socialist policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie was one of the chief reasons why the German workers, at that crucial hour in history, failed to repulse their most deadly enemy.

With the coming to power of the nazis Germany opened one of the darkest pages of its history. It became the centre of world reaction, a land of gallows and concentration camps, of bloody reprisals against revolutionaries and democrats, of brutal persecution of all free thought. The coming to power of the nazis meant also crazy hate-cult plans for enslaving or exterminating other nations, and the winning of world supremacy for the "German race" became the basic line of Germany's foreign policy. There arose in Europe a major hotbed of war. In this totalitarian nazi state, this most brutal form of state-monopoly organisation, were strikingly revealed all the most regressive features of modern capitalism—the complete subordination of the economy to the interests of finance capital, ruthless suppression of all opposition, however slight, and the gearing of the state and economic apparatus to the plans of an accelerated war build-up.

The nazi victory whipped up the world's most reactionary forces and led to a new fascist drive in other countries.

Not in all countries, however, did the bourgeoisie choose fascistisation and fascism as their main road. In the U.S.A. the more far-sighted circles of the bourgeoisie sought to secure state-monopoly regulation in order to ease social tensions within the country. This was reflected in the New Deal of the Roosevelt Government, which provided for an expansion of public works to liquidate unemployment and for certain concessions to the workers. Many capitalists recognised the need for New Deal remedies in the belief that it were better to lose one's hat than one's head. The most reactionary part of the financial oligarchy, however, was for resolving social contradictions within the country by the methods of fascism. A course similar to that of the New Deal was attempted by the ruling circles of Sweden, Denmark and several other countries. By and large, however, the capitalist world witnessed a sharp rise in fascist activity.

At first, after the nazi victory in Germany, the Comintern and the communist parties expressed the hope that the nazis would be merely "king for a day", that fascism would lead to the disintegration of capitalism, while the revolutionary movement in Germany would rapidly gain momentum and sweep away the fascist

dictatorship.* These hopes, however, were not justified. The fascists dealt a heavy blow to the Communist Party of Germany, especially to the middle range of its functionaries. The fire in the Reichstag instigated by the nazis was followed by a terrorist crusade against all revolutionary workers. The nazis succeeded on March 3, 1933 in seizing the leader of the C.P.G. Ernst Thälmann, and a few days later Georgi Dimitrov, the prominent Bulgarian revolutionary and head of the West European Bureau of the E.C.C.I., who was in Germany, organising preparations for the European Anti-Fascist Workers' Congress.

The orgy of hatred and blood-lust loosed by the fascist gangs in Germany, the suppression of all the political and economic organisations of the German working class, the split in the working class and the policy of the Right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, which helped towards the victory of the nazis, shook the international labour movement to its very foundations. The events in Germany were an alarm signal, which put a new impulse behind the proletarian and general democratic movement against fascism on an international scale and awakened within the ranks of the proletariat and all working people an urge towards a united front against fascism and war. The achievement of unity of action among the working class became an increasingly urgent and vital need of the labour movement. In taking upon itself the task of smashing the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the democratic movement, fascism at the same time acted as a spur towards the unity and development of the forces that were destined to be its grave-diggers.

The Comintern and its sections began earnestly to seek real ways of rallying all anti-fascists and repulsing the fascist onset. On February 13, 1933 the Communist Parties of France, Germany and Poland issued a joint appeal to the socialist workers "to forge an invincible united front of proletarian struggle".**

The Communists' proposals for united action against fascism began to evoke a ready response among the Social-Democratic workers, who now had the tragedy of Germany before their eyes. The idea of an agreement between the Communists and Social-Democrats won more and more supporters. On February 6 a Conference of Seven Socialist Parties (attended by the Norwegian Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain, the Italian Socialist Party, the French Party of Proletarian Unity,

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* *The Communist International*, No. 9, May 15, 1933, p. 287.
** *L'Humanité*, February 13, 1933.

the Independent Socialist Party of Holland, the Independent Socialist Workers' Party of Poland and the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany) held in Paris submitted to the Communist International and the Socialist Labour International a proposal to immediately call a conference of the two Internationals to work out a joint plan of action against fascism.

The idea occurred among Social-Democratic workers in a number of countries in Europe that there was need for a "non-aggression pact" between the Second and Third Internationals. The Socialist Labour International could no longer ignore these strivings. On February 19, 1933 the Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour International issued an appeal to the workers of the world stating that the socialists agreed to conduct talks with the Comintern for the purpose of joint anti-fascist action. The appeal, however, contained no concrete programme of struggle. All it suggested was that the Communists and Social-Democrats cease their mutual attacks. The appeal contained also a certain dose of demagogy designed to doll up the policy of the reformist International. The communist parties pointed to the passive nature of the socialist leaders' proposals and showed up their demagogy. But this was not enough. Events demanded positive steps in bringing anti-fascist workers closer together. This step was taken by the Comintern.

The E.C.C.I. issued an appeal to the workers of all countries on March 5, 1933, proposing a concrete militant programme of anti-fascist struggle by both workers' parties as a platform for unity of action. The appeal stated: "The Executive Committee of the Communist International, in view of fascism, which is unchaining all the forces of world reaction against the working class of Germany, calls upon all communist parties to make yet another attempt to set up the united front of struggle with the Social-Democratic workers through the medium of the Social-Democratic parties. The E.C.C.I. makes this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class, on the basis of the class struggle, will be able to repel the offensive of capital and fascism and to accelerate extraordinarily the inevitable end of all capitalist exploitation."* Thus, the Comintern, which in 1932 had sought agreement on necessary occasions only with the local organisations of the reformists, was now offering an agreement at leadership level between the communist and Social-Democratic parties.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 13, No. 11, March 9, 1933, p. 261.

The E.C.C.I.'s chief proposals to the Social-Democratic parties were as follows: the Communists and Social-Democrats commence at once to organise and carry out defensive action against the attacks of fascism and reaction on the political, trade union, co-operative and other workers' organisations, on the workers' press, on the freedom of meetings, demonstrations and strikes; to organise defence against the armed attacks of the fascist bands, to set up self-defence groups, to organise a joint fight against wage reductions and cuts in unemployment benefit, etc.* The Comintern thus highlighted immediate anti-fascist demands common to both Communists and reformist workers. This created a basis for a still broader policy of the united workers' front. The Comintern advised the communist parties, in giving practical effect to these conditions, to avoid any sharp polemic against the Social-Democratic organisations during the joint struggle against the attacks of capital and fascism. This took into account the Social-Democrats' proposal that in the event of a united front being formed the polemic should cease.

This was an important step by the Comintern. It helped the communist parties to focus more attention on the urgent democratic, anti-fascist tasks. It also signified a certain change of attitude towards the Social-Democrats, who were beginning to oppose fascism, and a step forward from narrow-minded sectarian interpretations of the tactics of the united workers' front.

However, first the Secretariat, then the Executive of the Socialist Labour International answered with a refusal. The reason given was that the Comintern refused to hold talks at the level of the Internationals and "merely recommended negotiations in the different countries", and this, they alleged, was simply a maneuver.** The statement by the Right-wing socialist leaders that they wished first to reach an agreement with the whole Communist International to be followed afterwards by agreements between the Communists and socialists in the different countries, was simply an excuse by people who were opposed to an international agreement on unity of action. This is evidenced by the fact that later on the Right-wing socialist leaders rejected a united front with the Comintern on the grounds that unity of action had first to be achieved in the different countries before it was reached on an international scale.

All the socialist parties to whom the communist parties proposed the setting up of a united anti-fascist front rejected this proposal

* Ibid., p. 262.
** *Le Populaire*, March 8, 1933.

on various pretexts.* Nevertheless, the Communists continued to seek ways for rallying the anti-fascist-minded workers and their allies against fascism.

An exchange of opinions started in the Comintern and the communist parties as to the possibility of negotiations by the E.C.C.I. with the leadership of the Socialist Labour International. In a telegram to the E.C.C.I. dated April 7, 1933, K. Gottwald on behalf of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia wrote that the Comintern should propose such negotiations "to discuss the question of joint struggle. This will demolish the last argument of the leaders of the Socialist International that the question of unity cannot be discussed on a national scale and will strengthen action for a united front from below. This proposal will embarrass the opponents of the united front and increase the differences between them."** A similar view was submitted to the E.C.C.I. by the Central and Executive Committees of the French and British Communist Parties. The E.C.C.I., however, considered such a proposal inexpedient, as it believed that the attitude of the Social-Democratic leaders precluded any possibility of negotiations at Internationals level.

An important step in the direction of bringing the workers of the communist and Social-Democratic parties closer together was the holding of the European Anti-Fascist Workers' Congress. The Congress took place in June 1933 in the Pleyel Hall, Paris. It was sponsored by the Communists and represented over three million workers of Europe—Communists, some of the Social-Democratic workers, and progressive intellectuals. The Congress put forward a broad programme for fighting fascism and imperialist war and defending the democratic rights and economic demands of the workers. The keynote of the Congress was the idea of forming a broad-based militant united front of all anti-fascists, regardless of party allegiance, trade union membership or religious creed, who

* The Labourites called upon the workers to fight both the fascist and the "communist dictatorship". The Social-Democratic Party in Czechoslovakia stipulated that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia should recognise the platform of bourgeois democracy. The Austrian socialists declared that a united anti-fascist front could be achieved only on an international scale. Similar declarations were made by the French and other socialist parties. The Danish Social-Democrats stated in their reply that the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party should urge the Danish workers and their organisations "not to allow themselves to be used and to reject this new, thinly disguised attempt at a split". Cf. *Právo Lidu*, March 26, 1933; *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Wien, April 5, 1933; *Social-Demokraten*, March 26, 1933.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/248/32.

were prepared to collaborate in the effort to overthrow fascism and avert another imperialist carnage of the peoples.* Although some of the formulations in the Congress documents were still tinged with sectarianism, it was on the whole a programme that was acceptable to all anti-fascist workers. Togliatti wrote later that "following on the Pleyel Congress, a movement began, which while not connected with any particular party, has created in one country at least, namely in France, the basis on which the workers and lower officials of the Social-Democratic Parties and of the reformist trade unions began to draw closer to the communist parties and the leading communist party workers".**

The Anti-Fascist Central Committee set up by the Congress sponsored many anti-fascist campaigns. It launched a propaganda drive for the boycott of German ships in ports, for demonstrations of protest outside the German embassies and consulates, for the boycott of fascist films, and smuggled anti-fascist literature into Germany.

In August 1933 the Anti-Fascist Central Committee and the World Committee of Struggle for Peace set up at the Amsterdam Congress in 1932 united to form the Joint World Committee Against Imperialist War and Fascism. This movement, known as the Amsterdam-Pleyel Movement, played an important role in exposing the home and foreign policies of German fascism, in rallying the working people of Europe to fight the fascist menace, and in drawing the workers closer together with other anti-fascist forces.

The next strong impulse towards anti-fascist unity was provided by the international campaign in defence of the ardent revolutionary Georgi Dimitrov and other Communists at the Leipzig Trial (1933) and by the speeches of Dimitrov. In engineering this trial, the nazis counted on "proving" that the Communists were preparing a civil war in the country and had allegedly set fire to the Reichstag. The nazis counted on demonstrating to the ruling circles of other capitalist countries that they were dealing with communism in the best possible way. Dimitrov at the Leipzig Trial courageously exposed the atrocities and terrorist policy of fascism and convincingly proved that the fire was instigated by the nazis with a view to taking bloody reprisals against the Communist Party and establishing in the country a regime of terror and witch-hunt. Dimitrov showed to the world a splendid example of how a proletarian

* *The Communist International*, No. 13, July 1, 1933, pp. 445-47.

** Ibid., No. 16, August 20, 1935, p. 781.

revolutionary should behave. "I am defending myself as an accused Communist," he said. "I am defending my own communist revolutionary honour. I am defending my ideas, my communist convictions. I am defending the meaning and content of my life."*

The voice of a Communist calling upon the working class, upon all the working people, all democrats and anti-fascists to unite against the common enemy—fascism—rang out to the world from the fascist court. In his speeches at the trial Dimitrov expressed a number of important propositions concerning the policy of the Communists in the anti-fascist struggle. He spoke about the necessity of establishing a united front with the Social-Democratic and other workers if the fight against fascism was to succeed. Released from the clutches of his fascist jailers, Dimitrov said in one of his interviews that in his speeches in court "I defended not only the communist workers and the Communist Party, but also the Social-Democratic workers and, in some measure, the Social-Democratic Party.... I did this because it was politically correct."**

The idea running through all Dimitrov's speeches was that now, as never before, the Communists had to employ such methods of struggle as would tend in the greatest possible degree to unite all anti-fascists. In defending the interests of the Bulgarian nation against the nazi attacks, Dimitrov gave an example of how Communists, in the fight against fascism, should take into their hands the banner of defence of national demands.

The exposure of the crimes of the nazis at the Leipzig Trial gave an impetus to the anti-fascist forces throughout the world. The mass campaign in defence of Dimitrov and the other accused Communists turned into a genuine international action. A powerful wave of meetings and protest demonstrations against nazi terror swept through most of the capitalist countries. In December 1933, when the fascist court at Leipzig was preparing its verdict, there were days in Paris when as many as twenty protest demonstrations were held in the city's working-class districts.*** The movement spread not only among communist workers, but among Social-Democratic workers, members of the reformist and Christian trade unions and progressive intellectuals as well. For the first time a considerable number of intellectuals took an active part in the anti-

* Stella D. Blagoyeva, *Dimitrov. A Biography*, Martin Lawrence, Ltd., London, p. 98.

** *World Marxist Review*, December 1958, Vol. 1, No. 4, published in Prague, pp. 63-64.

*** *Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung*, 1933, No. 49, S. 1875.

fascist struggle. They did a great deal towards spreading the truth about the monstrous crimes of the nazis.

Dimitrov himself subsequently commented on the fact that it was during the movement in defence of the innocent Communists that the united front was first set up, though formally no pact was concluded. "Communists, Social-Democrats, anarchists and non-party toilers came out against German fascism. Millions and millions of working men and working women followed the struggle at Leipzig day in day out. Millions and millions of the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and intellectuals were on the side of the united anti-fascist front."*

Closer alignment between the Social-Democratic workers and the Communists was revealed more and more clearly in the strengthening of the Left trends in the reformist parties who demanded a shift towards a revolutionary struggle against fascism. The Paris Conference of the Socialist Labour International held in August 1933 reflected the new processes within the socialist parties. The Right socialist leaders, anxious to restore the shaken confidence of the masses in their parties, tried to prove that Social-Democracy was a determined fighter against fascism. At the same time the utterances of the Right leaders were full of slander against the communist parties and their policy of the united front. Joint action of any kind with the Communists was categorically rejected. F. Adler, addressing the Conference, said of the united workers' front: "We shall, as we have been doing till now, resist with all our might any united front maneuveres in whatever shape or form carried out by Moscow."** The E.C.C.I.'s proposal of March 5, 1933 for united action was rejected. It was a policy that perpetuated the split among the anti-fascist forces and objectively played into the hands of the fascists.

The Left trend at the Conference loudly declared itself however. These were the Zyromski group from the French Socialist Party, the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party, which were inclined towards unity of action with the Communist Party, the socialist youth organisations of Spain and Belgium, the Left wing of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party and others. Though keeping to a Social-Democratic platform, they demanded an agreement with the Communists for practical actions against fascism. The views expressed by the Left-wingers indicated a growing shift towards

* *The Communist International*, No. 15, 1935, p. 993.

** *Le Populaire*, August 22, 1933, p. 4.

anti-fascist unity with the Communists among the Social-Democratic rank and file.

Questions relating to the task of rallying the international proletariat to the struggle against fascism, imperialism and war were discussed at the Thirteenth Plenum of the Comintern Executive, held during November-December 1933.

The Plenum alerted the communist parties to the grave danger of fascism. Fascism was defined as an undisguised terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital.* This definition revealed the true class nature of fascism in the developed capitalist countries. At the same time the Plenum stressed that "Fascism tries to secure a mass basis for monopolist capital among the petty bourgeoisie, appealing to the peasantry, artisans, office employees and civil servants who have been thrown out of their normal course of life and particularly to the declassed elements in the big cities, also trying to penetrate into the working class."** The appraisals of the Plenum enabled the communist parties to work out a correct anti-fascist policy. The characterisation of the class nature of fascism, the Plenum's conclusion to the effect that monopoly capitalism was shaping a course towards the liquidation of parliamentary methods and bourgeois democracy in general, served as a basis for future deductions concerning the possibility of uniting all anti-fascist, democratic forces. The Plenum emphasised once more that the fascist dictatorship was not an inevitable stage of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in all countries and that the possibility of averting it depended upon the forces of the fighting proletariat.***

The idea was voiced at the Plenum that the fall of fascism would not necessarily be followed by the direct establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These utterances bore within them in embryo the idea that the fight against fascism would be a general democratic movement spearheaded precisely against the fascist dictatorship.

The questions of the anti-war struggle were largely dealt with at the Thirteenth Plenum in a new way. The Plenum stated clearly that the fascist government in Germany was the chief instigator of war in Europe and the spearhead of the anti-war campaign was to be directed against it. The Plenum set before the communist

* *Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. Theses and Decisions*, Modern Books, Ltd., London, p. 6.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., p. 7.

parties the task of "mobilising the broad masses against war even before war has begun, and thereby hasten the doom of capitalism".* It drew the important conclusion that the proletariat, by its struggle, could "hinder and put off the war". The communist parties had to combat the fatalistic view that it was impossible to prevent imperialist war and that a real revolution would begin only as a result of another imperialist war.**

The Plenum discussed questions relating to the struggle for a united workers' front against fascism and called upon the communist parties "persistently to fight for the realisation of a united militant front with the Social-Democratic workers, in spite of and against the will of the treacherous leaders of Social-Democracy."***

On a number of important points, however, the Plenum gave guidelines which did not meet the new conditions. It proceeded from the assumption, for instance, that "a new revolutionary upsurge" was beginning in Germany.**** The Plenum underestimated the extent of the fascist onset. It continued to orientate the communist parties of the developed capitalist countries towards a socialist uprising at a time when the bulk of the working people, the majority of anti-fascists, had not yet accepted this idea. Despite the changed conditions caused by the onset of fascism the Plenum reaffirmed the view which appraised Social-Democracy as the mainstay of the bourgeoisie, including that of the fascist countries. As before, the tactic of the united front from below was schematically contraposed to the tactic of unity from above. Nonetheless, many of the Plenum's guidelines on concrete aims of the struggle against fascism and war rendered important assistance to the communist parties in their activities.

* Ibid., p. 16.
** Ibid., p. 28.
*** Ibid., p. 20.
**** Ibid., p. 11.

TACTICS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The rising tide of the national liberation movement during the world economic crisis led to a rapid increase in the activity of the political forces engaged in this movement. The national bourgeois parties tried to head the movement in order to achieve their ends and prevent the masses, particularly the revolutionary workers, from taking political action on their own. The Right-wing political groups of the national bourgeoisie were inclined towards deals with the internal feudalist forces and often revealed a tendency towards surrendering to the colonialists. The petty-bourgeois parties and organisations usually adopted a national-revolutionary stand, acted in concert with the workers, put forward a radical political programme and were capable of supporting a resolute course directed towards an anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist revolution.

The communist parties were the most consistent force in the revolutionary-liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples. The Comintern and the communist parties of the colonies and semi-colonies did a great deal towards strengthening the revolutionary forces of the national liberation movement. The Communists everywhere marched in the front ranks of the revolutionary-liberation struggle, in which they displayed selfless devotion and heroism.

The Comintern paid special attention to the policy of the Chinese Communist Party, which was a large section of the Comintern holding an important position in the national liberation struggle.

The Comintern analysed the lessons of the revolution's defeat in 1925-1927, and helped the Communist Party of China to defeat the Right opportunist deviation headed by Cheng Tu-siu and to shape its political course. The E.C.C.I. orientated the Chinese Communist Party towards greater efforts in rallying the proletariat, peasantry and the urban poor with a view to developing the revolutionary struggle within the country. In its letters to the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party forwarded in December 1929 the E.C.C.I. stressed that the important thing now was "the struggle for influence over the masses", that the situation at hand should be used "for the further development of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants", and that the Party should give more attention to the trade union movement, should strengthen its positions within the working class, try to win the leadership of

"the anti-imperialist movement against all imperialist powers".* The leadership of the C.C.P., however, fell into the hands of the Li Li-san group who tried to impose an adventurist line on the Party. The plan of campaign mapped out by Li Li-san and his supporters proceeded from the assumption that the Chinese revolution would be "the chief pillar of the world revolution, that the outbreak of an uprising in China is bound to bring the main forces of imperialism into the struggle, including intervention by Japan against the U.S.S.R., and spark off a world revolution".** The decisions adopted by the Li Li-san leadership proposed, as a first step, the immediate seizure of power in several provinces and an armed uprising in the biggest cities. This line was largerly supported by Mao Tse-tung, who was then at the head of the C.C.P. Front Committee of the 1st Front. The Li Li-san leadership concealed these adventurist plans from the Comintern in an attempt to mislead the E.C.C.I., as to the extent of its influence among the masses as well as to the preparedness for armed uprisings on the part of the proletariat and the peasantry. In the course of several months Li Li-san and his followers ignored the recommendations of the Comintern urging the leadership of the C.C.P. to abandon its disastrous line.

Meanwhile marked nationalist tendencies emerged within the C.C.P. in the form of attempts to draw a line between the Party's platform and the Comintern under the pretext of "China's national exclusiveness", in an attempt to sow distrust within the Party towards the leadership of the Comintern, and to play off the local cadres against those functionaries who had received their training in the Lenin School of the E.C.C.I. or other Moscow schools.

The Comintern Executive, the Eastern Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. took vigorous steps to prevent the implementation of Li Li-san's putschist line, which threatened defeat in premature fights, and to rectify the C.C.P.'s political course. At a meeting of the E.C.C.I.'s Political Commission at the end of August 1930 a spokesman for the Eastern Secretariat defined the course that was necessary for the C.C.P. in the following words: "The establishment of a Soviet government in a Soviet district held most securely by the Red Army. The Soviet government frames and formulates its programme of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, declares it, and with a secure territorial basis beneath it, begins to put its programme into effect; and then, when this territorial basis will

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 9, 1930, p. 30.
** Cf. *Hungchih* (in Chinese), April 12, 1930.

have been properly built and the Red Army strengthened, the Party may and should set before itself the task of securing one or several large industrial centres and generally big cities, which in China, as a rule, are the targets of imperialism's attacks."*

The letter of the E.C.C.I. on Li Li-sanism forwarded to the C.C.P. in October 1930 sharply criticised the adventurist putschist errors of the C.C.P. leadership. The letter pointed out that the build-up of the agrarian revolution had not yet become widespread, that with the exception of the South "the peasantry were only getting into their stride", that the labour movement was still making slow progress, that "the proletariat was poorly organised", that "the alignment of forces in the large industrial centres was not conducive to an armed uprising", that in the Soviet districts themselves "Soviet power was not consolidated", that the leadership of the C.C.P. was guilty of "a monstrous overestimation of the armed forces of the revolution", and that the Red Army still had many weaknesses, including those of military equipment.** Under these conditions the Li Li-san line aimed at the immediate seizure of the cities (as the capture of Changsha and its loss showed) led to sanguinary defeats of the revolution.

As the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. subsequently pointed out, the Chinese "Left" misjudged the situation and "tried to interpret various symptoms of the inchoate revolutionary upsurge in China as the beginning of a revolutionary situation in China and throughout the world, drawing from this entirely erroneous, putschist conclusions".***

The E.C.C.I. put forward in its letter an idea, the profundity and significance of which the leadership of the C.C.P. did not appreciate until later, under different conditions. The E.C.C.I. suggested "building up the peasant movement in the non-Soviet territories, developing there guerrilla warfare, surrounding the cities, including the biggest ones, with a ring of peasant disturbances..."**** while at the same time rousing the working class in the cities to the struggle.

The decisions of the E.C.C.I. on Li Li-sanism, worked out in close contact with the C.C.P. delegation to the E.C.C.I., formed a sound basis for the struggle of the C.C.P.'s healthy forces to liquidate the ultra-revolutionary, petty-bourgeois, nationalist line of Li Li-san and his supporters. The foundations were laid for the strategy and tactics of the C.C.P. at the stage of revolutionary struggle under the slogan of the Soviets.

The First Congress of Soviets in China, that is, the organs of workers' and peasants' power in the areas of the revolutionary bases, was held in 1931. The Congress elected a provisional central Soviet Government and passed a law on the land. The lands of the big private owners in the Soviet areas were to be immediately alienated free of charge in favour of the poor and middle peasants. The law on the land helped to draw the masses of the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle.

The line at setting up Soviet areas and a Red Army was essential as a tactical stage in the course of which the C.C.P. was preparing the conditions for building up a new united front capable of dealing with the tasks of the national liberation movement. The C.C.P. strove to carry out a policy of complete sovietisation of China (the slogan: "Only Soviets Can Save China") and a seizure of power everywhere, which, under the prevailing conditions, was impracticable.

Following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria (September 1931) there arose among China's patriotic forces an urge towards unity with a view to defending the country against imperialist enslavement. In this connection the E.C.C.I. and the C.C.P. took a number of steps to build up the anti-imperialist struggle and widen the circle of the C.C.P.'s allies. In the way to a united anti-imperialist front, however, stood numerous obstacles, namely: the vacillations of the national bourgeoisie and the armed struggle of the Kuomintang against the Communist Party and the Soviet areas. The Leftist errors of the C.C.P. told too. The Party leadership failed to take account of the serious contradictions between the different groups in the Kuomintang and underestimated the anti-imperialist tendencies among the broad sections of the Chinese national bourgeoisie. In its Appeal Concerning the Events in Shanghai (January 31, 1932) the C.C. of the C.C.P. wrote that "all groups in the Kuomintang, all the Chinese bourgeoisie are the minions of Japanese imperialism". The leadership of the C.C.P. were under the misapprehension that the masses of the working people had already realised "that in order to overthrow imperialism it was necessary to overthrow the tool of imperialism—the Chinese Kuomintang". Actually, many sections of the people who had risen to the struggle against the Japanese interventionists still had confidence in the Kuomintang and were not yet ready to fight for the power of the Soviets

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* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/19/238/3; 495/19/242/57.

** *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution as Illustrated by China* (in Russian), pp. 284, 285, 286, 287.

*** *Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.* (in Russian), p. 71.

**** *The Strategy and Tactics of the Comintern in the National-Colonial Revolution as Illustrated by China* (in Russian), p. 289.

in China. The Comintern Executive's important advice concerning the inadmissibility, under Chinese conditions, of neglecting the tasks of developing the anti-imperialist movement, was not carried out.

At the same time, some of the guidelines which the Comintern gave to the Communist Party of China in the early thirties contained appraisals which overestimated the level of the revolutionary upswing, the extent of the crisis in the Kuomintang regime and the possibilities of the revolution's forces.

The sectarian elements within the C.C.P. demanded that its policy be based on the assumption of "a national crisis" in China and even on the existence of a revolutionary situation. This adversely affected the Party's activities. These mistakes and difficulties notwithstanding, the Soviet movement in China during those years continued to develop and accumulate rich experience. The Red Army, based on the consolidated Soviet areas, repulsed four campaigns against it by Chiang Kai-shek's troops during 1930-1933. The Soviet districts became important political factors in the life of the country. China's progressive forces saw in them a bulwark in the struggle against Japanese imperialist aggression.

The Comintern rendered great assistance to other communist parties in the oppressed countries, whom it helped to frame a political line, trained their cadres and supported their struggle both politically and materially.

The Communists of Korea, Indochina, the Philippines and a number of other oppressed countries showed themselves to be courageous fighters against imperialism who were undaunted by repressions and persecution. Wherever the people took up arms the Communists were to be found in the front fighting ranks. They organised strikes in the cities, and campaigns against the persecution of proletarian leaders, as was the case in India, where they roused the masses in defence of the thirty-three prisoners in the Meerut Trial.

The programme of action of the Communist Party of Indochina stated: "Imperialism has declared war to the death on every revolutionary movement, our own heroic Party, above all. It has set itself the aim of destroying it physically.... Thousands of revolutionaries are languishing in jails, thousands have been deported and shot. Hundreds of demonstrations have been shot down, dozens of villages have been burnt to the ground. Indochina is choking in blood."*

* *Programniye dokumenty kommunisticheskikh partii Vostoka* (Programme Documents of the Communist Parties of the East), Moscow, 1934, p. 117.

Despite persecution and repressions the Communists carried on their work among the masses. The Comintern drew the attention of the communist parties to the need for specially vigorous activity among the vast masses of the peasantry in the oppressed countries.

While carrying on a heroic struggle, the communist parties in the countries of the East put forward at that period radical programmes. Proceeding from exaggerated appraisals of the readiness of the masses for a deep-going democratic revolution, the communist parties proclaimed the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, the establishment of which was regarded as the beginning of the revolution's development into a socialist revolution. In their draft platform of action the Communists of India demanded "the establishment of a Soviet Government", "the creation of an Indian Federal Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Republic".* The platform rejected the possibility of the national bourgeoisie's participation in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The Communist Party of Indonesia at that period believed that "its slogan should be 'socialism right now', 'Soviet Indonesia', 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' and so forth".** Neither were the contradictions between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie taken into account in the documents of the First Congress of the Communist Party of the Philippines (1931). The communist parties in many colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries advanced the task of preparing and carrying out "a Soviet revolution". The "Soviet revolution" was understood, not as a purely socialist revolution, but one in which, during its first stage, bourgeois-democratic aims could predominate. These slogans, however, though resting in some cases on the recommendations of the E.C.C.I., were not yet ripe objectively as far as most of the oppressed countries were concerned.

The Left-sectarian mistakes of a number of communist parties in the countries of the East affected the destinies of the Anti-Imperialist League (1927-1935), the foundation of which was an outstanding achievement of the Communists and other progressive forces. Some of the League's decisions made collaboration with the national-reformist organisations difficult. Such organisations as the Indian National Congress, the All-India Congress of Trade

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 10, No. 58, December 18, 1930, p. 1219.

** D. N. Aidit, *Kratkaya istoriya Kommunisticheskoi partii Indonesii* (A Brief History of the Communist Party of Indonesia), Moscow, 1956, p. 19.

Unions, the National Party of Egypt, the National Party of Indonesia and others quitted the League.

A good deal in the attitudes of the communist parties in the countries of the East was ascribed to revolutionary impatience on the part of a definite section of the working people resulting from the untold sufferings and privations among the masses as well as from mistrust of the national bourgeoisie, who displayed vacillations and were often prone to making a deal with imperialism.

The experience of the struggle gained by the communist parties of the colonies and semi-colonies, despite all the difficulties they came up against, despite some of the mistakes they made, brought home to them the need for uniting all anti-imperialist forces and working out a strategy and tactic to fit the concrete historical and national conditions of each country, as required by the creative, ever-living teaching of Marxism-Leninism.

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During the stormy events of 1929-1933 the communist movement proved to be the only organised political force which, remaining true to the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism, fought against the attacks of imperialist reaction and fascism. At a time when Right-wing Social-Democracy continued its policy of splitting the working class and yielded more and more to the onset of fascism, to which it virtually surrendered, the communist parties worked to unite all the revolutionary forces. Overcoming difficulties and mistakes, the Comintern and the communist parties accumulated valuable experience and took a number of important steps which met the changed conditions and mapped out a course for bringing the different trends among the working class closer together in the struggle against fascism. Gradually, by way of stern lessons, the communist movement came to the conclusion that it was necessary to concretise the strategy of the struggle in the capitalist countries and the tasks of the communist parties of the oppressed countries in the new conditions. But the communist parties still had to face a number of battles in order to chart a new political course aimed at achieving the closest possible unity among all the revolutionary and democratic forces against fascism, imperialism and war.

Chapter Five

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL IN THE STRUGGLE FOR A UNITED WORKERS' AND POPULAR FRONT AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR

(1934-1939)

THE TURNING POINT IN THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE COMINTERN AND ITS SECTIONS

The Communist Parties' New Experience in the Struggle Against Fascism

The situation which had developed in the world by the middle of the thirties was governed by two very important factors: the epoch-making successes of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and the onset of fascism and imperialist reaction in the capitalist countries. The difference between socialism and capitalism was strikingly revealed in these two divergent lines of development.

The working class of the Soviet Union, which united the peasantry behind it, secured victory for socialism in the U.S.S.R. in the shortest space of time under the leadership of the Communist Party. For the first time in the history of man there arose a society which had done away with the exploitation of man by man. It was founded on public, socialist ownership of the means of production, and on this foundation the ideological and political unity of Soviet society was built up and developed.

A great historic achievement of socialist construction was the transformation of the U.S.S.R. into an advanced, powerful industrial-agrarian state. The working people of the Soviet Union fulfilled Lenin's behest to put Russia quickly on "the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification"* so as to be able to repulse a possible attack. The solution of this problem was of paramount importance in the light of the attack which fascism and imperialist reaction were mounting on a world-wide scale with the primary aim of destroying socialism.

The victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the successes of socialist construction appreciably altered the alignment of class forces in the world to the detriment of capitalism. The international proletariat now had in the person of the U.S.S.R. a vanguard detachment which was rapidly building up its industrial and military power, thereby enabling it better to defend and strengthen the gains of socialism in the world. The highroad to socialism had been laid.

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 501.

This gave the international labour movement a reliable compass, inspired the working people, stimulated their activity and strengthened their confidence in ultimate victory. The Soviet Union's role as a centre of attraction for all revolutionary and anti-fascist forces was heightened.

By the middle of the thirties fascism intensified its attacks in the capitalist countries. This strongly reflected the reaction of the imperialist bourgeoisie to the sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism, to the approach of a revolutionary situation in a number of countries and to the successes of socialism in the Soviet Union. The rapidly rising revolutionary movement among the working class during the years of the crisis came up against the furious attacks of imperialist reaction. Heartened by the victory of the nazis in Germany, the fascists intensified their activities in most of the capitalist countries. Some of the imperialist bourgeoisie stood for the fascistisation of the regime by way of its reorganisation, for restricting the prerogatives of parliament, curtailing and gradually doing away with democratic freedoms, including the right to strike, etc. Others, backed by various fascist organisations, were preparing a coup d'état.

The fascist danger in France, Austria and Spain had assumed threatening dimensions. Preparations were on foot in Bulgaria for a fascist coup. In Poland and Hungary the ruling circles were attempting to complete the fascistisation of the political regimes. The fascist movement was gaining momentum in Finland. Fascist organisations were becoming more active in the United States. Fascist military groups had appeared upon the political scene in Japan, demanding a still more reactionary and aggressive line on the part of the country's rulers. The sinister shadow of fascism threatened to creep across the whole of Europe and spread to other continents, throwing mankind back many decades.

Everywhere, and not only in Hitler Germany, the fascist gangs chose as the main target for their attacks the working class; they were out to crush the communist parties and other of their organisations by bloody terror and prevent the proletariat from rallying its class forces. Fascism set itself the aim of destroying all the rights and freedoms which the working people had won in the course of many decades of hard fighting, and turning the workers into the submissive slaves of finance capital. But fascism did not only challenge socialism and the working class—it was hostile to all democratic sections of the population. The fascists regarded bourgeois-democratic institutions as a danger to capitalism, which had been hit by the crisis. They therefore launched frenzied attacks

on the bourgeois-democratic institutions, on parliamentary regimes and on all forms of democracy.

The attacks of fascism and imperialist reaction were a deadly threat to the land of socialism, to the international labour movement, to the democratic rights and freedoms of the working people, to the national existence of many countries. Imperialism and its striking force—fascism—had become a growing challenge not only to the Soviet Union and the international working class, but to all democratic and peace-loving forces. This meant that developments confronted the working class of the capitalist countries and their allies with the necessity of dealing first and foremost with the anti-fascist, general democratic problems, chief among which was that of fighting fascism.

By the middle of the thirties the working class and the progressive members of the democratic strata were badly in need of a new policy that could bring about unity among all the anti-fascists. This need could be met neither by the organisations of petty-bourgeois democracy nor the Social-Democratic parties. The communist movement, albeit somewhat belatedly, began to devise a new strategy aimed at uniting all the revolutionary and democratic forces for the defeat of fascism. The Communists pointed out that only by defeating fascism could the way be cleared for further social progress.

The Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I., as early as the beginning of 1934, emphasised that the Communists needed a skilful policy and a timely response to the workers' pressing demands in order to win over the broad masses and direct them against fascism as their chief enemy.

The events of 1934, especially the clashes with fascism in France, Spain and Austria, were a turning point in the development of the anti-fascist struggle of the working class. In the course of these events and on the basis of their experience the Comintern and the communist parties started step by step to work out a new line. The communist movement elaborated Lenin's ideas and views about the united workers' front and a broad union of the working people and tried to apply them creatively under conditions in which the fight against fascism had become the chief task.

A wider policy of the united workers' front was adopted by the French Communist Party. At the beginning of 1934 the fascist organisations in France had strengthened their positions and were preparing to seize power. The F.C.P., correctly weighing the chief danger, put forward a demand for repulsing fascism in the most determined manner and defending the democratic freedoms and

economic rights of all the working people. When the fascist bands in February 1934 came out into the streets and attempted to seize power, the Communist Party called upon the workers of all trends to come out and disperse them. The united action of the working class played the chief role in repulsing the fascists. The general strike of February 12 called jointly by the Communists and socialists and involving four and a half million people, demonstrated the formidable strength of proletarian unity. The working class repulsed the first major attack of fascism in France. Alarm over the attacks of fascism gave place to confidence in the possibility of its defeat.

Guided by the lesson of these events, the French Communist Party developed the policy of the united workers' front, enriched it with new important deductions. At its Plenum in March 1934 the C.C. of the F.C.P. pointed out that unity of action by the workers of all political trends should be built up and strengthened on the basis of general anti-fascist demands.*

The National Conference of the F.C.P. at Ivry held at the end of June 1934 called for the concentration against fascism of "the whole force of action by the mass of the proletariat joined with the action of all sections of the working population".** The Communist Party declared that the chief aim was the defeat of fascism and that the Communists were fighting to safeguard and widen the democratic freedoms; they were out to draw into the struggle against fascism, for democracy and immediate economic demands, not only the workers, but the broad masses of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals. The outlines of a policy of a broad anti-fascist front began to take shape.

The Communist Party started active work among the masses, conducted unity meetings and demonstrations, and organised a rebuff to every fascist sortie. The urge towards unity of anti-fascist action spread among growing sections of the workers—socialists and members of the reformist trade unions. Simultaneously the F.C.P. made persistent offers for a united front to the French Socialist Party—the SFIO*** and its leadership.

Thanks to the increased activity of the Communist Party, agreements for a united front between the leaderships of the F.C.P. and the SFIO were concluded in many towns and departments. Under pressure from below the leadership of the SFIO accepted the proposal of the F.C.P. for a unity pact between the two parties against

* *La Correspondance Internationale*, 1934, No. 34-35, p. 647.
** *L'Humanité*, July 6, 1934.
*** SFIO—Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière.

fascism. This pact was signed officially on July 27, 1934. The Communists acceded to a number of proposals by the SFIO, while at the same time securing a gain for the entire labour movement, namely: both parties undertook to use effective methods of the class struggle against fascism and reaction. The united workers' front in France became a reality and marked an important turning point in the world labour and communist movements. For the first time, after years of acute struggle between Communists and socialists, an agreement was reached for unity of action against the common enemy—fascism. The united workers' front in France became an inspiring example to the labour movement in other capitalist countries.

The events of early 1934 in Austria served as an important lesson to the international working class. Gradually strengthening their positions, the fascists here launched their attack. The Communist Party warned the workers of the coming fascist attack and urged the need for joint action by all anti-fascist workers. But the Communist Party was weak, whereas the Austrian Social-Democrats at that period carried with them the overwhelming majority of the working class. The "Austro-Marxists" were not sparing of declarations to the effect that they would act when the situation called for it. The Left elements were strong in the Party's rank and file. There were Social-Democratic Schutzbund, possessing arms which were hidden from the authorities. But the Party leadership, which took a Centrist stand, merely mouthed brave phrases and fooled the workers, whom they restrained all the time from mass action outside parliament against fascism, which was growing more and more brazen. Only when the fascists on February 12 attacked the premises of the Socialist Party of Austria at Linz and the Schutzbund came into armed conflict with the fascists and the police in Linz, and then in Vienna, did the Social-Democratic leaders issue a belated call for a general strike. The four-day armed combat, in which the Communists took an active part, ended in the defeat of the workers.

The events in Austria signified that the Centrist policy of Social-Democracy did not stand up to the test of history in confrontation with fascism. The failure of all forms of reformist policy and tactics in face of aggressive fascism was only too obvious.

Whereas the lessons of the united front in France had demonstrated to the workers of the world that fascism could be successfully repulsed, the Austrian example drove home the fact that the refusal of the reformist parties to take resolute class action led in the long run to severe defeats of the workers.

The events in Austria showed also that the rank and file of Social-Democracy, despite their leaders, had taken the road of active class struggle. After February 1934 about 13,000 former Social-Democrats in the course of several months joined the Austrian Communist Party, which until then had had a membership of about three thousand.* Strong Left groups arose within the Austrian Social-Democratic Party itself.

The Communist Party of Spain worked for broad-based unity of the masses against reaction and fascism. The Communists explained to the masses that the defeat of fascism was an essential condition for the development of a democratic revolution within the country. Already in 1933 the Communist Party had put forward the slogan of an anti-fascist front, which it regarded as a broad mass movement of all who were prepared to bar the way to reaction.** One of the first successes to be achieved along this road was the formation of a popular bloc of Communists, socialists and republicans in the city of Malaga, which won the elections in November 1933. The policy of the united proletarian front with a pronounced anti-fascist orientation enabled the Communist Party to secure a number of joint actions not only with the socialists and anarchists, but with the Left-wing republicans.

The Young Socialist League of Spain joined with the Young Communist League in a militant alliance. In September 1934 the Communist Party joined the socialist-sponsored "workers' alliances". The Communist Party, in doing so, declared that the peasants, as an important motive force of the democratic revolution, should be drawn into the common anti-fascist front. By joining the workers' alliances and campaigning for the broad participation in them of the peasants, the Communist Party of Spain took an important step in the direction of a policy of anti-fascist unity.

In October 1934, when the Spanish workers declared a general strike, a temporary victory was won only in Asturias, where the socialists, anarchists and Communists were working together. Despite the bloody suppression of the insurgent workers by the reactionary forces, the October events in Spain afforded an important lesson, namely, that for victory over fascism it was necessary to secure unity of action by the workers of all political trends, it was necessary to overcome sectarianism, parochialism and

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1934, No. 35, pp. 35, 36.
** *Istoriya Kommunisticheskoi partii Ispanii* (History of the Communist Party of Spain), p. 82.

claims to a monopoly of the movement's leadership characteristic of the policy of the anarchists and the Socialist Party. At the same time the possibility of united action by the Communists, socialists and anarchists was proved in practice.

A switchover to the policy of a united workers' front based on an anti-fascist platform was made by the Communists in Italy. The ties between the Communists and socialists in the course of their resistance to fascism grew steadily stronger. In August 1934 an agreement was reached between them for united action. The pact defined their common aims in the struggle for the overthrow of fascism, for peace and freedom, for better living conditions for the workers.* This pact became the militant programme of the anti-fascists both at home and among the emigrants abroad. Many communist parties at that time were engaged in active search for ways of rallying the workers of all political trends to the fight against imperialist reaction, fascism and war. They were accumulating experience and re-evaluating the lessons of the practical struggle.

Discussion of the Tasks of the Communist Movement on the Eve of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern

The new political orientation of the international communist movement was formed as a result of the common efforts of the communist parties and the governing bodies of the Comintern, as a result of the creative application of Lenin's ideas to the new situation. In discussing, hot on the trail of events, the lessons of the class struggle in France, Spain, Austria and other countries, the Presidium and Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I., working in close contact with the representatives of the Comintern's sections, first and foremost with the C.P.S.U.(B.), supported in the main the deductions drawn by the communist parties and contributed to the further development of these deductions. A gradual revision of certain outdated or incorrect guidelines standing in the way of unity of the whole working class against fascism began to take place in the governing bodies of the Comintern.

* *Trenta anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, pp. 146-47.

On June 11, 1934 the E.C.C.I. sent a letter to the C.C. of the French Communist Party drafted in co-operation with the F.C.P. representative on the E.C.C.I. This letter contained a number of recommendations which helped the French Communists at the Conference at Ivry to adopt important decisions. The letter emphasised that the main blow should be directed against fascism, that a front of workers of all political trends should be raised against this enemy. It recommended evolving a programme of struggle against fascism that would incorporate the demands of the broad groups of the population and their organisations. The letter stated that Communists should ably and persistently defend all the demands of the petty-bourgeois strata that were not reactionary and did not run counter to the interests of the proletariat and other working people. The question of a change of attitude towards bourgeois democracy was highlighted. The Communists, the letter said, had to put a stop to statements in the press and elsewhere to the effect that the Party was out to do away with bourgeois democracy, as such statements were "politically erroneous". The task was to fight with all one's might not only against the attempts of fascism and the bourgeoisie at large to abolish or curtail democratic freedoms, but to "fight for their extension".

In a number of decisions passed at that time by the Political Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. on the aims of the struggle of the Communist Parties of Austria, Greece, Bulgaria, Canada and other countries, not only was support given to the efforts of the communist parties towards a broader policy of the united workers' front, but they were advised to go forward more boldly with this policy in regard to the reformist trade unions, to endeavour to draw the petty-bourgeois masses into the anti-fascist camp, to spotlight concrete slogans for real defence of the democratic rights and gains of the working population and, on this platform, to work towards united action by the anti-fascists.

Profound and thorough discussions of the lessons of the class struggle and heated debates demanding a revision of outdated guidelines developed with particular force in the governing bodies of the Comintern during the summer and autumn of 1934 in connection with preparations for the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

On May 28, 1934 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. determined the agenda of the Seventh Congress and the opening procedure and also decided the question of distribution of mandates. Committees were shortly set up to draft the chief items of the agenda. The Committees were made up of prominent leaders of the C.P.S.U.(B.)

and other big sections of the Comintern, among them: Dimitrov, Kuusinen, Manuilsky, Pieck, Togliatti, Béla Kun, Šmeral, Heckert, Pyatnitsky, Varga, Lozovsky, Bronkowski (Bortnowski), Maddalena and Wan Min. Subsequently, representatives of many other communist parties took an active part in the work of the Committees. A very important role in raising many new questions was played by the representatives of the C.P.S.U.(B.) in the Comintern's governing bodies. The problems of the international labour movement were thoroughly discussed at the meetings of the Preparatory Committees, in the course of which communist thought collectively sought new solutions to pressing problems.

At its first meeting on June 14, 1934 the Preparatory Committee on Item 1 of the Congress agenda touched on the question of the fundamental task of the proletarian class struggle in the developed capitalist countries. Manuilsky, representing the C.P.S.U.(B.) suggested that the slogan of direct struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat did not fit the conditions that prevailed at the moment in many capitalist countries. Socialism remained the ultimate aim of the movement. "We should, however, have a more concrete programme of struggle," he said. "Not proletarian dictatorship, not socialism, but one which brings the masses to the struggle for proletarian dictatorship and socialism."* In this way there ripened the idea of the inevitability of an anti-fascist, general democratic phase of the struggle. Speaking at this meeting, Kuusinen drew attention to the need for modifying the tactics of the communist movement.

A great stride towards a new orientation was Dimitrov's letter to the E.C.C.I. and the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and his speech on July 2, 1934 at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee on Item 2 of the Congress agenda and his proposed plan for a report on "The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism". These documents stressed the need for making the problem of the struggle for a united workers' front against the onset of fascism and the menace of war the high point of the discussions and resolutions of the Seventh Congress. In view of the changed situation, Dimitrov said, the obsolete tactical guidelines had to be fearlessly revised. He sharply criticised the sectarian mistakes of the Communists and challenged the indiscriminate appraisal of Social-Democracy as social-fascism, which barred Communists the way to the Social-Democratic workers. He spoke against Social-

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/1/1/7-8.

Democracy everywhere and always being regarded as the chief social pillar of the bourgeoisie, and the Left-wing Social-Democratic groups as the chief danger. He criticised the thesis that the united workers' front could be effected only from below and called for a change in the communist parties' attitude towards the personnel of the Social-Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions, which had to be won over to the anti-fascist struggle. The revolutionary and reformist trade unions, he said, should be amalgamated without making recognition of the communist party's hegemony a preliminary condition for amalgamation. The tactics of the united front were to be made "an effective factor in the mass struggle against the onset of fascism".*

Dimitrov spoke about the necessity of putting an end to stereotyped stock phrases, which were often used as a substitute for a Marxist analysis of reality and which prevented the communist parties from becoming real organisers and leaders of the anti-fascist struggle. As it was impossible to exercise effective leadership of all sections of the Comintern from a single centre, Dimitrov proposed that the Comintern modify its methods of work and concentrate on the general ideological and political guidance of the communist movement. The "Report Plan" also posed questions concerning the possibility of the communist parties amalgamating with those Social-Democratic organisations which repudiated the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie and embarked on the path of revolutionary struggle; concerning the communist parties' slogans in the anti-fascist struggle; concerning the attitude towards the different strata of the petty bourgeoisie, and other questions.** This was a vigorous criticism of sectarian guidelines and errors, which stood in the way of anti-fascist proletarian unity.

Dimitrov's proposals, which were drafted with the support of the C.P.S.U.(B.) representatives in the Comintern and were based on the creative application of Leninism to the new conditions of the class struggle, met with a warm response among the representatives of the other communist parties. In his report on the draft theses "The World Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern" made on August 22, 1934 at a meeting of the Preparatory Committee on Item I of the agenda and in his speech on August 29 Kuusinen strongly urged the need for a sober analysis of the situation regardless of previous formulations, which suffered from a tendency

* G. Dimitrov, *Letters. 1905-1949*, Sofia, 1962, p. 298.
** Cf. *Voprosy istorii K.P.S.S.*, 1965, No. 7, pp. 85-86.

to overrate the degree of maturity of the revolutionary crisis; for a revision of the communist parties' tactics, which were either wrong in certain parts or did not meet the changed conditions; for a serious fight against Leftist-sectarian deviations and mistakes; for a revision of the attitude towards the Social-Democrats, within whose ranks important shifts were taking place and Left groups and trends were arising, which stood for a policy of resistance to fascism.*

The policy of the communist parties in the trade union movement came in for a critical analysis at the meetings of the Preparatory Committees. Dimitrov, Manuilsky, Kuusinen, the representative of the German Communist Party Maddalena, and others declared for amalgamation of the revolutionary trade unions with the reformist unions, for unity in the struggle against fascism.

In putting the question of the united workers' front as a key issue, the participants in the discussion advanced also the idea of widening this front by way of an alliance with the non-proletarian strata and parties. Manuilsky urged that the communist parties should start talks with the petty-bourgeois, peasant parties and other organisations which the fascists were trying to gain control of. B. Bronkowski of the Communist Party of Poland held that the united front should include the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, especially the peasant revolutionary organisations. Expression was thus given to an idea which eventually took the form of a popular front.

Various points of view were expressed in the course of the discussion. Some of the committee members—Béla Kun, Lozovsky, Knorin and Wan Min—at first defended the obsolete guidelines and only agreed to certain changes in tactics. They demanded a higher assessment of the maturity of the revolutionary upsurge, involving the Comintern in unrealistic forecasts. They maintained at first that the Social-Democrats should still be regarded as the mainstay of the bourgeoisie, that the Right deviation still remained the chief danger in the international communist movement, that the communist revolutionary trade unions in most countries should be kept independent, and so on.** In the course of intensive discussions, however, these views were gradually overcome and their adherents themselves admitted the need for their revision.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/1/3/28-37, 206.
** Ibid., 495/1/3/201-204.

The discussions in the Preparatory Committees, held during June-August 1934, laid the foundations for a new political orientation of the communist movement.

These discussions showed that thorough, more profound preparations for the congress were needed. In view of this, and considering the extremely complex international situation, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. passed a decision on September 5, 1934 shifting the date of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern to the first half of 1935.*

The Beginning of the Comintern's Political Reorientation

The deductions derived from these discussions were promptly embodied in concrete decisions of the Comintern. Thus, already in the resolution of its meeting on July 9-10, which dealt with the aims of the German Communist Party's struggle against fascism, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. posed the question of the united workers' front much wider than before. Lenin's idea of the united workers' front was concretised in accordance with these aims, and a minimum of the most urgent demands affecting the interests of the masses was put forward as a basis for the united front. The Communist Party of Germany was recommended to take upon itself the task of restoring the free trade unions and uniting within them the anti-fascist workers, including the best of the functionaries who were formerly members of the free, that is, reformist, trade unions.** This decision, too, thus reflected the beginning of a new approach by the communist movement to the establishment of trade union unity.

In a letter to the Central Committee of the French Communist Party dated August 21, 1934, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. approved the policy of the F.C.P. and called upon it "to ensure by aid of a flexible and consistent policy the greatest possible development of the united front", to foil the attempts of the Right leaders of SFIO to torpedo the united front, and, on the basis of joint action by the workers, to have committees of the united front set up in the local areas. The E.C.C.I. supported the line of the F.C.P. aimed at running a campaign for the amalgamation of the trade unions and preparing a trade union unity congress. It was also

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1934, No. 28, p. 3.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/189/252.

recommended that the F.C.P. offer the leadership of the SFIO an agreement for the mutual withdrawal of candidates in the second round of the cantonal elections in order to secure a majority vote for one of the candidates, either a socialist or a Communist.

The E.C.C.I. replied in the affirmative to the question of the prospects of the fight for organic unity with the SFIO, that is, for amalgamation with it; but the way to this unity, the letter pointed out, was difficult and unity itself could be achieved only on the basis of the SFIO's complete break with the bourgeoisie and recognition of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The collective thought and collective experience of the Comintern and its sections gradually led to the shaping of a new political orientation. An important contribution to this was the slogan of the popular front advanced by the French Communist Party, the slogan of an alliance of all proletarian and democratic forces for curbing, disarming and disbanding the fascist leagues, for defending the workers' democratic rights and freedoms and meeting the urgent economic demands of all those who were oppressed by the "two hundred families".* The programme for setting up a popular front was first proclaimed by Maurice Thorez at a meeting in Nantes on October 24, 1934. The decision of the F.C.P. anticipated the evolution of the views of some of the Comintern workers. This accounts for the fact that a few hours before his speech at Nantes, Thorez received advice "to abandon the formula and idea of a popular front".**

The new idea, which met the needs of rallying a broad alliance against fascism, quickly seized the minds of the masses and took root in the political struggle. It received support at the meeting of the E.C.C.I. Presidium on December 9, 1934. At this meeting, which was attended by the representatives of most of the Comintern sections (in all over 170 members) Thorez delivered a report on the experience of the French Communist Party's struggle for a united workers' and broad popular front. He showed that the new policy, the unity-of-action pact had greatly enhanced the prestige and influence of the Communist Party among the masses. "The Party has become an effective political factor in the life of the country."*** The speaker raised many controversial issues, namely: the question of ways and conditions for achieving trade union unity; the slogan of nationalisation of the monopolies in the programme of the popular front; support for a possible government of

* *L'Humanité*, October 25, 1934.
** Maurice Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Paris, 1960, p. 102.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/192/15.

socialists and socialist radicals in the event of its taking measures against the fascist gangs and putting through measures that were in the interests of the working people. Thorez proposed also working out a common point of view on the question of whether Communists should or should not participate in such a government. The discussions at the meeting of the E.C.C.I. Presidium revealed a bias against certain aspects of the F.C.P.'s new policy on the part of various members of the Comintern (Lozovsky). While recognising the tremendous importance of the united front, some of the speakers expressed a fear that this would tie the hands of the communist parties, "work up republican feeling" among the masses and prevent the growth of revolutionary strivings among the working class.*

At its meetings on December 9 and 19, 1934 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. criticised the underestimations of the new policy and stressed the international significance of the French Communist Party's experience. Kuusinen and Manuilsky subjected the sectarian and mechanistic approach to the handling of new problems of the communist and labour movement to a sharp and searching criticism; this approach was exemplified by the use of outworn stereotyped formulations, and accusations of reformism or Right opportunism levelled against the very line which attracted the broad masses to the anti-fascist movement. The leaders of the C.P.S.U.(B.) supported the policy of the French Communist Party. Thorez wrote that Stalin "expressed satisfaction at the bold policy of unity conducted by our Party, a policy which, he stressed, was in keeping with the spirit of Leninism".**

The support of the Comintern Executive helped the French Communist Party to develop its unity policy. By the middle of 1935, thanks to the policy of the Communists, a popular front was set up in France. This signified the appearance for the first time of a union of democratic forces which differed fundamentally from those which had formerly been created under the name of "Left blocs" in opposition to the bourgeois political parties of the extreme Right. The "Left blocs" had operated under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, and in the final analysis had carried out the policy of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, they were upper-level alliances. The popular front was a union of the broad labour masses founded on the activity of the masses themselves. The guiding force of the popular front was the working class, acting in league

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/192/15, 495/2/192/154-156.
** Maurice Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Paris, 1960, p. 102.

with the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois strata of the cities. The principal aims of the popular front fell in with the passionate desire of all the working people, of all democrats, to repulse that most sinister type of capitalist reaction—fascism, and safeguard the rights of the masses.

The establishment of a united workers' front in France and the adoption of the policy of the popular front put the French labour movement in the front rank among the countries of capitalist Europe.*

The movement for a united workers' front and a broad popular front made headway also in Spain despite the brutal terror which the government loosed upon the Communists and the advanced workers after the defeat of the uprising in Asturias. In the campaign for an amnesty and the release of political prisoners, and the repeal of martial law the Communists succeeded not only in strengthening their ties with the labour organisations, but in establishing contacts with the bourgeois-democratic forces. Although various Left political groups tended towards coalitions of the old type, the Communist Party in the summer of 1935 succeeded in achieving real progress in the campaign for a popular front. The experience of the Spanish Communist Party's struggle played an important role in the framing of the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

Important progress towards a new orientation was made at that time by the Communist Parties of Greece, Italy, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the U.S.A. and a number of other countries. The discussion of the aims of these parties' struggle in the governing bodies of the Comintern led to the adoption of new important decisions or to the posing of questions to which an answer had still to be found.

The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. at the beginning of December 1934 discussed the tasks of the Communists in the U.S.A. and approached the problem of the Communist Party's trade union policy in a broad way. It was recommended not only to get the revolutionary trade unions to join the American Federation of Labor, but to develop there an active campaign in defence of the everyday interests of the workers, to see to it that the aims of the Communists in the AFL should not be reduced to the creation of a "minority movement" or "opposition" uniting only workers who stood close

* Cf. D. Manuilsky, *Itogi VII kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (The Seventh Congress of the Communist International Summed Up. Report to the Moscow and Leningrad Party Active), Moscow, 1935, p. 39.

to the Communists, but should set out to win the confidence of the vast rank and file of the AFL.* In this connection criticism was levelled at some former slogans of the Communist Party's trade union policy, specifically that of "independent leadership of the economic struggle", on the narrow nature of which Kolarov commented with the words "in adhering to an allegedly independent leadership of the struggle, the Communists in practice will remain outside this struggle".** Approval was given to the American Communist Party's line towards the foundation of a Labor-Farmer Party.

Analysing at the end of 1934 and beginning of 1935 the experience of the Greek Communist Party in the fight for a united workers' front, the Political Secretariat and Presidium of the E.C.C.I. approved the policy of the Greek Communists and recommended that the tactic of the united front be spread to all parties and strata capable of making a stand against fascism.***

In March 1935 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. discussed the report of Harry Pollitt concerning the preparations for the Thirteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain. His report and especially his article dealing with the problems facing the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, were aimed at eliminating sectarianism in the policy of the united front. The writer condemned the practice of putting forward such conditions for unity of action with the Labourite workers as were unacceptable to them and yielded no practical results.**** Pollitt also raised a number of questions concerning the establishment of a united front with Social-Democracy on an international scale. These proposals were an appreciable contribution by the Communist Party of Great Britain to the framing of a new orientation.

With the help of the Comintern a reorientation was adopted also by those communist parties in which the Leftist-sectarian groups and elements had been offering stubborn resistance to the new policy.

The Communist Party of Germany, working in difficult conditions of the underground, and subjected to the unremitting blows of fascist terror, had mapped out its tactical switchover to the united front, as early as in the summer of 1934. But in applying it, the C.P.G. came up against a serious relapse into sectarianism,

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/191/124.
** Ibid., 495/2/191/88.
*** Ibid., 495/2/196/87, 93, 103.
**** Ibid., 495/2/198/63.

virtually a continuation of the "ultra-Left" Neumann-Remmele line. The Schubert-Schulte group in the leadership of the C.C. of the C.P.G. sabotaged the policy of the united workers' front and raised a campaign against the Left Social-Democrats in the Party press. The group accused Pieck and Ulbricht of Right-wing deviation and sharply criticised the early agreements that had been concluded between the underground organisations of the C.P.G. and the Social-Democratic Party. The sectarian-doctrinaire group caused great harm to the Party by delaying its switchover to the new policy.

In October, at the end of December 1934 and in January 1935 the Political Secretariat and Presidium of the Comintern Executive examined the question of the C.P.G.'s policy and condemned sectarianism, advising the Party to wage a determined fight against sectarianism and "Left" doctrinairism at all levels. In its decision on January 19, 1935 the Political Secretariat recommended the Party to discuss ways and means of setting up a broad anti-fascist popular front in Germany.* The support of the E.C.C.I. helped Pieck and Ulbricht to rally a majority in the Politbureau and afterwards in the whole C.C. of the C.P.G. in support of a creative Marxist-Leninist policy and to work out a detailed policy of the united workers' and popular front to fit the conditions prevailing in fascist Germany.

The German Communist Party came to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern with definite experience in the struggle for a united workers' and popular front under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship, with experience of anti-fascist work in an atmosphere of harsh persecution, and confronted with a whole system of mass fascist organisations embracing, among others, working people.

The Communist International also rendered assistance to the Bulgarian Communist Party in coping with sectarian mistakes. The sectarian leadership of the Party for a long time underestimated the fascist danger and made the Agricultural Union, which united the bulk of the peasantry, and the Social-Democratic Party the chief targets for its attacks. After the fascist coup on May 19, 1934 the "Left" sectarians not only failed to rectify their mistakes, but aggravated them and continued to increase their attacks against the Agricultural Union and the Social-Democratic Party instead of fighting together with them in a united front against fascism.** The

* Ibid., 495/3/432/71.
** Cf. *Istoriya Bolgarskoi kommunisticheskoi partii* (History of the Bulgarian Communist Party), Moscow, 1960, p. 303.

Comintern supported the Bolshevik hard core of the Party headed by Dimitrov and Kolarov. The reorganisation of the Party leadership helped to straighten out the Party's course. The E.C.C.I. gave great assistance to the Bulgarian Communist Party in coping with sectarianism within its ranks, and helped it onto the broad road of mass struggle and skilful application of the tactic of the united and popular front.

The process of revision of obsolete guidelines started also in the Communist Party of Hungary. The situation here was complicated by the fact that its outstanding leader, Béla Kun, who had done great services to the revolutionary movement, displayed a definite tendency towards sectarianism. In the spring of 1935 he still persisted in the belief that the tactic of the united workers' front should be built on an anti-capitalist, and not anti-fascist, platform.* But already at that time the Party, in its practical struggle against the reactionary Horthy regime, had begun the search for a policy and forms of anti-fascist unity.

Of great importance in bringing the anti-fascists closer together was the wide international campaign against fascist terror which was then afoot. A movement was launched among the working class and progressive intellectuals in many countries in defence of the leader of the German Communists Ernst Thälmann, the courageous champion of the Finnish workers Toivo Antikainen and other revolutionaries. The campaigns of solidarity with the prisoners of fascism saw the establishment of co-operation among the anti-fascists of different political trends.

The communist parties of the capitalist countries came to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern with constructive views and considerable experience in the struggle against fascism.

Simultaneously a search went on for new political decisions within the communist parties of the colonial and dependent countries, where the situation urgently called for unity of action by all the anti-imperialist forces.

The Communist Party of China during this period was living through a difficult time. The Leftist-sectarian elements headed by Li Li-san, who had regained control of the Party leadership, not reckoning with the actual conditions, had again pursued a course aimed at the armed seizure of the cities throughout the country, at a pitched battle with the military forces of the Kuomintang regime. The proclaimed policy of a united front against Japanese imperialist aggression, which threatened to enslave China, was not

* *The Communist International*, No. 11, June 5, 1935, p. 480.

carried out consistently by the C.C.P. The Leftists denied the possibility of a united front with a part of the national bourgeoisie or with military-political groups, who were for offering resistance to the Japanese imperialists; they considered even the petty bourgeoisie counter-revolutionary. Adventurism, "Left" deviation, failure to understand the need for a national anti-Japanese front and tactics that lacked flexibility caused tremendous harm to the policy of the C.C.P. The failure to repulse the fifth campaign of Chiang Kai-shek with the consequent loss of extensive areas of revolutionary bases was due in part to these mistakes. Engaged in heavy fighting and suffering tremendous losses, the Chinese Red Army during 1934-1935 made a break through to the North-West, where a new area of revolutionary bases was created near the borders with the Soviet Union.

The lessons of the 1934 defeat demanded of the C.C.P. renunciation of the adventurist line of the "Leftists". The expansion of Japanese aggression confronted the Communists with the task of starting an immediate campaign for rallying all patriotic anti-Japanese forces. In June 1935 an appeal issued by the Central Government and the Revolutionary Military Council of the revolutionary bases put forward the idea of establishing "a united popular front of all who are fighting against Japanese imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek".*

The E.C.C.I. rendered tremendous assistance to the Communist Party of China in working out the new policy. The E.C.C.I. took an active part in drafting the appeal of the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party and the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government (known as the Declaration of August 1, 1935) calling for a stop to the internecine struggle and expressing the Red Army's readiness to cease hostilities against the Chiang Kai-shek troops and organise a joint struggle against Japanese imperialism.** This was an important turning-point in the policy of uniting the anti-imperialist forces of China.

The communist parties of many colonial and dependent countries, with the help of the Comintern, once more proclaimed the slogan of a struggle for a united anti-imperialist front, the idea of which was contained in the decisions of the Second and Fourth Congresses of the Comintern and in a number of other Comintern documents.

* *Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung*, 1935, No. 34, S. 1690.

** Cf. *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1935, No. 33-34, pp. 106-11.

At first the communist parties had striven to create such a front without having yet succeeded in overcoming sectarian notions concerning it. The Communist Party of India, in proposing the slogan of an anti-imperialist front in December 1934, believed that it should unite only the working class, the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois anti-imperialist elements without attracting other anti-imperialist sections of the population. The aim prematurely set before this front was the establishment of a workers' and peasants' Soviet republic, and confiscation of the landed estates and capitalist industry.* This was a narrow conception of the aims of the new slogan, which in effect hindered the establishment of a broad alliance between all anti-imperialist forces. These misconceptions still had to be dissipated.

The communist parties of Latin America at a joint conference at Montevideo in October 1934 arrived at the view that the agrarian peasant revolution had a close bearing on the national liberation struggle against imperialism, and therefore advanced the task of forming "the widest national anti-imperialist front".** Although the delegates to the conference were unable completely to overcome a sectarian attitude towards the national-reformist and petty-bourgeois parties, they recognised the need for seeking an agreement with these organisations for a common struggle against imperialist oppression. Equipped with this policy, the Communist Parties of Brazil, Chile and Cuba launched a campaign to unite anti-imperialist organisations and movements.

On the eve of the Seventh Congress the journal *The Communist International* carried a big article dealing with the problems of the struggle for a united anti-imperialist front in the colonial and dependent countries. While criticising a number of sectarian mistakes of the Communists in the national liberation movement, the article contained an analysis of the activities of some of the communist parties aimed at broad unity among the anti-imperialist forces and examined the possibility of such unity, including that of drawing the bulk of the national bourgeoisie into the anti-imperialist struggle. Emphasis was laid on the fact that the slogan of establishing Soviet rule in the backward countries under the conditions prevailing there could be put forward only as a propaganda motto, that this slogan, like the demand for the alienation of the landed estates without compensation, could not be put forward without taking into consideration the phase of the revolution and

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/300/45, 50.
** *The Communist International*, No. 10, 1935, p. 571.

the specific features of the struggle in one or another of the oppressed countries. "Refusal to apply the tactics of a united national front in view of the alleged dangers which joint action with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism would involve," said the article, "is actually a refusal to work for the national liberation revolution and inevitably leads to the isolation of the communist parties from the broad popular movement."*

The new policy of the Communists, born in the fight against fascism and imperialism, influenced the Social-Democratic workers, many of whom began to demand of their parties that they join the Communists in an active fight against fascist violence.

On October 10, 1934 the E.C.C.I. made a proposal to the leadership of the Socialist Labour International to organise immediately joint action in aid of the fighting Spanish proletariat. The E.C.C.I. authorised Thorez and Cachin to conduct negotiations on this question. At the talks, which were held at Brussels on October 15, Vandervelde and Adler, the leaders of the Socialist Labour International, attempted to question the sincerity of the Comintern's proposal. Not until a month later did the Executive of the S.L.I. pass an official decision in connection with the proposal of the Comintern. It virtually rejected the proposal for a joint campaign in aid of the Spanish workers, declaring that this aid was now too late. At a meeting of the Executive of the S.L.I. the delegations of the socialist parties of France, Spain, Italy, Austria and others came forward with a "Minority Declaration" demanding that the S.L.I. get in touch with the Comintern and "seek conditions for unity of action on an international scale against war, in defence of democratic rights in those countries where they exist, for a revolutionary struggle in those countries where fascism has destroyed this freedom".** Yielding to pressure from below, the Executive of the S.L.I. lifted its ban prohibiting its sections from entering into an agreement with the Communists for a united front. By this time this ban had been broken in a number of countries. The leadership of the S.L.I. Executive itself, however, continued to oppose the idea of a united front with the Communists.

The idea of united action by all anti-fascists proclaimed by the Communists had seized the minds also of the progressive intellectuals. Thousands of their best representatives joined the movement of the popular front, realising as they did that the time had

* *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1935, No. 20-21, p. 109.
** *Rundschau über Politik, Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung*, 1934, No. 61, S. 2718.

come for resolutely defending the ideals of democracy, humanism, freedom of creative work and the values of civilisation against bloody fascist terror and medieval obscurantism. Earnest calls for anti-fascist unity were made by such world-famous personalities as Maxim Gorky, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Paul Langevin, Tom Mann, Leon Feuchtwanger, Martin Andersen Nexö, Rafael Alberti, Rabindranath Tagore and many others.

The world's first socialist state won growing sympathy among the anti-fascists. The advanced workers and foremost intellectuals placed their hopes on the Soviet Union in which they saw a bulwark against the menace of fascist enslavement which hung over the world.

The Communist International, on the eve of its Seventh Congress, could already see that the new policy strongly appealed to the broad masses who were determined to bar the way to brutal fascism.

THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, which opened in Moscow on July 25, 1935, lasted nearly a month and ended on August 21. At the time of the Congress the Comintern united 76 communist parties and organisations, of which 19 had the status of sympathisers.

During the seven years that had elapsed since the previous Congress the number of Communists in the world had increased to over 3,140,000. The number of Communists in the capitalist countries had increased from 445,300 to 785,000.* There was an increase also in the ranks of the communist youth—from 127,230 to 221,100 members.** The communist parties of the capitalist countries, contending with imperialist reaction, worked under difficult conditions. In 1935 only 22 parties, 11 of them in Europe, were able to carry on legal or semi-legal activities; the remainder worked underground and were subjected to the most relentless terror.***

The Congress was attended by 513 delegates representing 65 communist parties and a number of international organisations affiliated to the Comintern. Among the delegates were prominent leaders of the international communist and labour movement: Khalid Bagdash, John Gollan, B. A. Gonsalves, Klement Gottwald, José Díaz, Georgi Dimitrov, J. Jacquemotte, Antonin Zápotocký, Dolores Ibárruri, Marcel Cachin, Vasil Kolarov, Johann Koplenig, Béla Kun, Otto Kuusinen, J. Lenski, D. Manuilsky, Sanzo Nosaka (Okano, Susumu), Wilhelm Pieck, Harry Pollitt, I. Pyatnitsky, Waldeck Rochet, Joseph Stalin, Palmiro Togliatti, Maurice Thorez, Walter Ulbricht, William Foster, Hilding Hagberg, Ho Chi Minh, Lawrence Sharkey, Ján Šverma, B. Šmeral and others.

Wilhelm Pieck, opening the Congress, warmly greeted the people of the Soviet Union, who, in building socialism, had put new strength and confidence into the hearts of the workers in the capitalist countries. He paid tribute to the heroism and dedication of the Communists who were languishing in the jails of the bour-

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* *Rundschau*, op. cit., 1935, No. 43, S. 1974. These figures, apparently, make no allowance for the losses sustained by the Communist Party of China in the bitter armed struggle of 1934 and the first half of 1935, as a result of which its membership dropped sharply. See also the C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/400/3-4.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/400/6.

*** *Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1939, p. 54.

geois regimes. The Congress elected Thälmann, the leader of the German Communists, who was in a fascist prison, honorary chairman.

The agenda of the Seventh Congress was made up of the following items: (1) Report on the Activities of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (speaker W. Pieck); (2) Report on the Work of the International Control Commission (speaker Angaretis); (3) The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism (speaker G. Dimitrov); (4) Preparations for Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communist International (speaker Ercoli-Togliatti); (5) The Results of Socialist Construction in the U.S.S.R. (speaker Manuilsky); (6) Election of governing bodies of the Comintern.

Pieck's report on the activities of the Comintern Executive assessed the progress which the international communist movement had made in its struggle since the Sixth Congress, which he described as a turning-point which had confronted the Comintern and the communist parties with a host of complex problems. The communist parties, in their fight for the interests of the working people, had set splendid examples of staunchness and heroism. "But in the face of the rapid and politically complicated development of events," the speaker said, "they often came out too late with their slogans, did not always correctly estimate the relation of class forces, and frequently persisted in slogans and fighting methods which somewhat earlier had been correct, but which had become antiquated with the change in the situation."* The report gave an analysis of the important sectors of communist parties' activities, and the role of these parties in the class battles of that period, and highlighted the tasks of the struggle against fascism.

The central event at the Congress was the report by Dimitrov, which was the result of months of collective work by the Preparatory Committee and the governing bodies of the Comintern as well as considerable creative efforts by Dimitrov himself. An active part in drafting the theoretical propositions of the report was taken by the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.), and the basic ideas of the report, prior to the Congress, had received the approval of the Politbureau of the C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.) and of the representatives of other sections of the Comintern. Seventy-six delegates, representing practically all the parties, took part in the discussions on the problems of the struggle for a united workers' and broad popular front against

* *Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1939, p. 33.

fascism and war, which were dealt with in the report. All supported the new political orientation and tried to concretise it conformably to the conditions of their respective countries.

The Seventh Congress on the Fight Against Fascism

Considerable attention in Dimitrov's report and the delegates' speeches was devoted to a characterisation of the fascist menace and fascist dictatorship. In view of the sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism and the revolutionising of the labour masses, "the ruling bourgeoisie", said the speaker, "more and more seeks salvation in fascism, with the object of taking exceptional predatory measures against the toilers, preparing for an imperialist war of plunder. . . and by all these means preventing revolution".* The Congress noted with grave concern that fascism was becoming an international menace, that it was the most dangerous and most cruel enemy that the international labour and democratic movement had ever come up against; this enemy was out to destroy the forces of socialism, democracy and progress, and perpetuate the terrorist rule of imperialist reaction. Emphasis was laid on the exceptionally dangerous role of German fascism, which embodied the most reactionary and most monstrous features of the fascist movement in general. German fascism, Dimitrov said, acted as the mailed fist of the international counter-revolution, the main force of world fascist reaction, the main instigator of another imperialist war, the mortal enemy of the Soviet Union.

The Congress alerted the communist parties to the danger of any underestimation of the fascist menace and condemned "the dangerous illusions about the automatic collapse of the fascist dictatorship". It called upon the workers to exercise vigilance in regard to every step of the fascist movement. Dimitrov reminded the Congress that the notions that the attacks of fascism could be expected only when the country was nearing a socialist revolution were wrong, that fascism was really trying to deliver a death blow to the organisations of the working class before the masses definitely identified themselves with the revolution. Some delegates said that the communist parties should reckon with the possibility

* G. Dimitrov, *The United Front. The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, London, L. Lawrence & Wishart, 1938, p. 9.

of both a gradual fascistisation of the political regimes of the bourgeoisie and a head-on attack by the fascists.

Characterising the class essence of fascism, Dimitrov repeated in his report the view of the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. that fascism in power was an undisguised terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, the most chauvinistic, the most imperialistic elements of finance capital. This characterisation revealed the basic class function of fascism, showing fascism to be an instrument of monopoly capital. The Congress delegates spoke about the tremendous harm of the Social-Democratic view which regarded fascism as a petty-bourgeois movement. Such views brought confusion into the labour movement, deadened people's vigilance in regard to the fascist menace, as a result of which many of the workers, at the crucial hour, "failed to recognise in fascism the most blood-thirsty monster of finance, their most vicious enemy".* The Congress emphasised the role of fascism as a tool of the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital and warned against a stereotyped interpretation of this formula, urging "the need to study and take into account the special features of fascism and the various forms of fascist dictatorship in the individual countries and at its various stages".** The delegates of the Spanish, Italian and Polish Communist Parties stated that fascism's ties with the reactionary landowners in their countries were clearly manifest.

The Congress came to the conclusion that "the accession to power of fascism is *not an ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie—bourgeois democracy—by another form—open terrorist dictatorship".*** This conclusion was important in point of principle, as it repudiated the tendency to equate the various bourgeois parliamentary regimes with fascism, demonstrated the contradictions between fascism and bourgeois democracy, and provided a scientific basis for an understanding and utilisation of these contradictions.

Dimitrov, Thorez, Kolarov, Palme Dutt and a number of other delegates pointed out that Lenin's theses about the two methods of bourgeois rule held good under present conditions and that Communists should modify their rigid view of the bourgeois camp, draw a line between fascism and the political trends antagonistic to it, and direct their fire against the chief enemy.

* G. Dimitrov, op. cit., p. 13.
** Ibid., p. 97.
*** Ibid., p. 12.

Fascism, the Congress stated, was a tremendous step backward in comparison with bourgeois democracy.

"Now the fascist counter-revolution is attacking bourgeois democracy in an effort to establish the most barbaric regime of exploitation and suppression of the toiling masses. Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a *definite* choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism."* The Congress clearly pointed out that the most important thing for all workers in the capitalist countries at the given stage was anti-fascist general democratic objectives, and that further progress depended upon these objectives being achieved. Fascism was confronted not only by the U.S.S.R. and the revolutionary workers, who are adherents of socialism, but by all who stood for democracy, peace and social progress against brute force and war. Under these circumstances, the label "fascist", slapped on to parties and organisations which united semi-proletarian masses and middle strata and within which anti-fascist feeling was growing strong, was particularly harmful. Kolarov, who devoted the greater part of his speech at the Congress to the attitude of the communist parties to the peasantry, convincingly disproved the thesis about the alleged inevitable gravitation of the peasant organisations towards fascism. Thorez stated in his speech that the French Communists had found the way to the middle strata of the cities and to those of their organisations which the fascists had been trying to gain control of. The Congress discarded the time-honoured guideline concerning the need, at all stages of the revolution, of aiming the main blow at the intermediate political forces, a "rule", which had shown itself to be a complete failure. The Communists clearly stated that in the fight against fascism for democracy the intermediate forces were capable of playing an important positive role.

It was underlined at the Congress that the formation of opposite political camps depended largely upon whether the communist parties and the working class succeeded in rallying the middle strata under the anti-fascist banner, or whether fascism would succeed in bamboozling them and using them for their own reactionary ends. Of great importance in this connection was the fight against fascism's attempts by social and nationalist demagogy to create for itself a broad mass basis among the middle strata of the population.

* Ibid., p. 110.

The question of combating fascist influence among the middle strata and fighting fascist demagogy and fascist ideology was brought into sharp focus at the Congress.

Dimitrov nailed the lie to fascist cynicism and demagogy, which not only exploited the base proprietory and nationalist prejudices of the masses, but often attempted to play on both the feelings of hatred towards predatory big capital and the working people's radical demands. A tremendous effort on the part of the communist parties, the delegates declared, was needed to expose fascist demagogy in the eyes of the masses and bring home to the millions of petty bourgeois, duped by fascism, the gulf that lay between fascism's aims and the interests of the people.

The Congress pointed to the danger of the masses becoming infected with fascist ideology—an ideology of chauvinism, racialism and man-hatred. Fascist ideology, under its cunning demagogic disguise, was a poisoned weapon of imperialist reaction which had to be challenged with an unremitting, well-argued ideological struggle which took into account the various specific national conditions.

The policy of the united workers' and popular front charted in detail by the Seventh Congress was securely based on a thorough and profound analysis of fascism. The policy of unity of the labour movement and the rallying of all democratic forces around it for an effective struggle against fascism and war was the keynote of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

Development of the Policy of a United Workers' Front

The Congress attached paramount importance to the task of establishing a united workers' front. The vital need for rallying the anti-fascist workers was the primary lesson taught by the whole of the preceding fight against fascism.

"Fascism was able to come to power," said Dimitrov, "*primarily* because the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social-Democratic leaders, *proved to be split, politically and organisationally disarmed*, in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. The communist parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the Social-Democrats, *were not strong enough* to rouse the masses and to lead them

in a decisive struggle against fascism."* The Congress stressed the historic guilt of Right-wing Social-Democracy, which was responsible for the fact that most of its working-class following remained inactive at a time when the fascist thugs were making their bid for power. The Congress sharply criticised the mistakes of the communist parties, who, irreconcilably opposed as they were to fascism, did not always act in a way that would unite all anti-fascist workers.

In the workers' urge towards unity of action the Communists saw not only a defensive reaction to the attacks of the fascist gangs, but the embryo of militant unity of the workers for their coming counter-offensive. "*Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale*," Dimitrov said in his report, "*is the mighty weapon which renders the working class capable not only of successful defence, but also of successful counter-attack against fascism, against the class enemy.*"**

In its appraisal of the communist parties' struggle in France, Spain and a number of other countries for a united workers' front the Seventh Congress of the Comintern stated clearly that such a front could most successfully be created around anti-fascist, general democratic slogans. The workers belonging to organisations of different political trends could not yet unite for the overthrow of capitalism, but they could come out together against fascism, for their immediate demands. The Congress decisions stated that defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class, its defence against fascism, must be a point of departure and the main content of the workers' united front in all capitalist countries.*** Simultaneously, the Congress pointed out that where the situation permitted, the united front could be used for making preparations for a socialist revolution. The policy of united action by the workers thus underwent a change in its very substance. Whereas previously it was mainly linked with the task of winning the majority of the working class for making direct preparations for a socialist revolution, it was now primarily and essentially an anti-fascist struggle, which was capable of drawing the masses into active action and then introduce them to the next stage of the class struggle—the socialist revolution. We see here the development of Lenin's teaching on the policy of a united workers' front.

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* G. Dimitrov, op. cit., p. 19.
** Ibid., p. 31.
*** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 575.

The establishment of a united workers' front both on an international scale and in the separate countries depended first of all upon the relations between the communist parties and the Social-Democratic parties. The Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie which caused and deepened the split in the working class, was largely responsible for the defeat of the workers in a number of countries. Under the conditions of fascist onset, however, the attitude of Social-Democrats in many countries underwent a noticeable change and anti-fascist feeling among the Social-Democratic rank and file began to grow.

The smash up of labour organisations, including those of the Social-Democrats, and the threat of fascist aggression to a number of countries made it more difficult, and in some countries simply impossible, for the Social-Democrats to continue in the role of a mainstay of the bourgeoisie. Left-wing groups in Social-Democracy grew stronger and began to take a stand on the platform of revolutionary class struggle. The Comintern rejected the view which regarded Social-Democracy as a solid reactionary mass, and pointed to the possibility of united action with the Social-Democrats, the possibility of establishing close contact with its Left-wing groups and trends. The Congress urged the communist parties to work persistently for a united front with Social-Democracy against fascism at all levels—at the factories in the cities, on a national scale and at the levels of the Internationals.

At the same time the Congress pointed out that in pursuing the policy of a united workers' front the Communists were never for a moment to forget their own independent class position, the need for combating the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. "Joint action with the Social-Democratic parties and organisations," ran the resolution, "not only does not preclude, but, on the contrary, renders still more necessary the serious and well-founded criticism of reformism, of Social-Democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and the patient exposition of the principles and programme of communism to the Social-Democratic workers."*

The questions dealing with the struggle for unity of the trade union movement were posed at the Congress in a new way, for this unity was the most important link in the establishment and consolidation of the united workers' front. The delegates condemned the splitting policy of the Right-wing reformist trade union leaders,

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, p. 577.

which raised a wall between the communist and reformist workers and weakened them in face of the class enemy. They also criticised the sectarian-dogmatic mistakes in the communist parties' trade union policy, namely: the view which regarded the reformist trade unions as organs of the bourgeois state, the line towards the establishment of independent communist trade unions, poor participation of the Communists in the revolutionary trade unions and the strike struggle, which was waged under the leadership of the reformists, and so on.

The delegates of some communist parties gave a detailed analysis of the first steps towards the restoration of trade union unity which had already been taken in a number of countries. In addition to the experience of the French Communists, the trade union policy of the Communist Party of Finland attracted a great deal of attention at the Congress. The Finnish delegate Hannes Mäkinen said that already in 1933 his Party had ruled that all Communists and revolutionary workers should join the new trade unions founded by the Social-Democrats during the fascist coup. This strengthened the Left wing of the trade union movement.*

On the basis of the positive experience of the Communist Parties of France, Finland and other countries in the struggle for trade union unity, the Seventh Congress dealt confidently with the question of the conditions for such unity. The Communists put forward only two conditions, namely: conduct of the class struggle and observance of inner-trade-union democracy. The communist parties agreed to accept the slogan of the trade unions' independence of political parties. This slogan by no means implied that the Communists turned supporters of trade union neutrality in the class struggle. The Communists stood, as before, for the most active class position of the trade unions, against any dependence whatever upon the bourgeoisie, but they recognised the organisational independence of the united trade unions. "We are even prepared," said Dimitrov, "to forego the creation of communist groups in the trade union if that is necessary in the interests of trade union unity. We are prepared to come to an agreement about the independence of the united trade unions from all political parties. But we are decidedly opposed to any *dependence* of the trade unions on the bourgeoisie, and do not give up our basic point of view that it is imper-

* Cf. *Kommunisticheskiye partii Pribaltiki v borbe za yediny front protiv fashizma i voiny* (The Communist Parties of the Baltic Region in the Fight for a United Front Against Fascism and War), Moscow, 1935, p. 19.

missible for trade unions to adopt a neutral position in regard to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie."*

The Congress advised the revolutionary trade unions, which had not become mass organisations, to join the reformist unions. The mass revolutionary unions, on the other hand, were to work persistently and patiently for unification with the mass reformist unions on an equal footing. The Congress also went on record for the amalgamation of the two trade union Internationals. We were prepared, said Lozovsky, the leader of the Profintern, to sit down and "discuss all political questions and organisational details for achieving unity of the international trade union movement."**

The importance which the Comintern attached to trade union unity is borne out by the fact that on the very next day after the closing of the Seventh Congress the E.C.C.I. called an international trade union meeting, which was to give an answer to the question of what practical steps the communist parties contemplated taking towards achieving trade union unity.***

To achieve unity of action with the Social-Democratic and reformist trade unions it was important, as the Congress pointed out, for the communist parties everywhere to put forward demands which would really unite the workers, *regardless of their political views*. You could not make a condition for the establishment of a united workers' front something that could only be its result. The practice of putting forward unrealistic demands with the sole aim of demonstrating to the masses the exploiter nature of capitalism or showing up the reformist leaders was condemned as being an obstacle to effective measures. It was repeatedly mentioned in the speeches at the Congress how important it was to organise a successful campaign for satisfaction of the workers' daily needs and limited demands, how important it was for Communists to seize upon every question that agitated the minds of one or another group of workers in order to establish a united front. Only by drawing the broad masses into the struggle for these demands could the communist parties set themselves new and higher aims of the struggle.

The united workers' front was not only to unite the Communists and Social-Democrats, but to win over the anarchist and Catholic

* Dimitrov, op. cit., p. 127.

** S. Lozovsky, *For a United World Trade Union Movement* (in Russian), Moscow, 1935, p. 29.

*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1061(a). A report at this meeting was made by Lozovsky. Among the delegates of the communist parties who took part in the debates were those of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Japan, Austria, China, Finland, Brazil, Spain, Bulgaria, Chile and many other countries.

workers and the workers in the fascist trade unions. It was pointed out in the reports and the speeches of the delegates that heroism alone on the part of the Communists in the fight against the fascist dictatorship was not enough. What was needed was painstaking daily work in the fascist trade unions and other mass organisations in which the workers were united. The task was to find common language with the workers of these organisations in defence of their urgent, most elementary demands. The Congress urged Communists not to shrink from the idea of going into the fascist mass organisations in order to work there for the destruction of fascism.

The Seventh Congress stated that in the event of unity of action being achieved, a definite organisational framework for this movement should be created to consolidate the militant co-operation of the workers. It was necessary, the Congress pointed out, to work for the establishment of non-party class bodies of the united front at the factories, among the unemployed, in the working-class districts, among the townspeople and in the villages. These bodies of the united front could, without superceding the organisations taking part in it, unite the vast unorganised mass of the working people.*

Developing the policy of the workers' front, the Seventh Congress posed the question of the possible prospects of the struggle for political unity, for the creation of mass political parties of the working class in each country.

In dealing with this question consideration was given to the fact that most of the communist parties had passed through the comprehensive school of class struggle and had forged the unity of their ranks on a Marxist-Leninist foundation by cleansing themselves of Trotskyism and Right and "Left" opportunism. The parties had cadres which formed a sufficiently strong backbone of the organisation and a hard core of a Marxist-Leninist leadership. In uniting with the leftward shifting Social-Democratic parties, the Communists were in no danger of being absorbed by the stronger and more experienced reformist apparatus. The Congress also took into consideration the fact that the Left wing of Social-Democracy was beginning to draw closer to the ideological positions of the Communists.

To establish a united party of the working class it was not sufficient for the Communists and Social-Democrats to come to an agreement for a joint struggle against fascism, against the onset

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 578.

of capital and the threat of war. Political unity could be achieved only on a Marxist-Leninist basis. The conditions for such unity, as stated in the decisions of the Congress, were: a break of the bloc between Social-Democracy and the bourgeoisie and complete independence from the bourgeoisie, preliminary implementation of unity of action, recognition of the need for the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois rule and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, withdrawal of support to one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist war, and building up of the party on the basis of democratic centralism.* These conditions determined the revolutionary features of the future united workers' parties.

Considerable attention at the Congress was devoted to the question of the struggle for anti-fascist unity among the working-class youth. The delegates pointed out in their speeches that the most active work among the rising generation was needed, especially in those countries where fascism was recruiting large masses of youth into its detachments. The Congress resolution stated: "The task of creating an anti-fascist association of communist and socialist youth leagues on the platform of the class struggle must be brought to the fore."**

The Basic Problems of Popular Front Policy Worked Out by the Seventh Congress

The policy of proletarian unity was considered at the Congress inseparable from the task of uniting all anti-fascist forces. The efforts of the working class alone, even if united, were not sufficient to secure victory over fascism. The policy of alliances had to be extended to those social groups which, though not being adherents of proletarian dictatorship, were concerned in safeguarding the traditional democratic freedoms and preventing fascist enslavement. This line found expression in the policy of the popular front, to the framing of which the Seventh Congress gave special attention. The policy of the popular front was based on a profound understanding by Communists of the interdependence which existed between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. The Congress stressed that Communists were for democracy; they were not

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 585.
** Ibid., p. 582.

indifferent to the conditions under which the proletariat had to fight—conditions of open terrorist dictatorship of the monopolies or conditions of bourgeois democracy, when the proletariat had more opportunities for its organisation and forward movement. Dealing with the conditions of bourgeois democracy Lenin wrote: "A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general."* It was not a matter of indifference to the proletariat what form the rule of the bourgeoisie took. But Communists came out in defence of bourgeois democracy not only because it was the "lesser evil" compared with fascism. Not everything in bourgeois democracy was of equal worth. The important thing for Communists was the freedoms which the popular masses had won in years of hard struggle. The safeguarding and expansion of these freedoms were regarded at the Congress as a way which led to the undermining of the positions of the most reactionary forces of the bourgeoisie and to new vistas for the struggle of the working class and all the working people.

The idea that in standing out for general democratic demands one could unite the broad strata of the working people and defeat fascism, restrict the power of capital and create favourable conditions for the fight for socialism, was one of the most fruitful ideas underlying the policy of the popular front.

This idea was founded on Lenin's teaching about the interconnection between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. "It would be a radical mistake," wrote Lenin, "to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy."** Lenin repeatedly stressed that the struggle for democracy helped the workers to prepare their victory over the bourgeoisie, as the working class and its allies united in this struggle, passed through a school of experience and rose to an awareness of the need for fighting for socialist aims; the struggle for democracy could become the starting point, the prelude to the development of the fight for socialism, since "the struggle for the main thing may blaze up even though it has begun with the struggle for something

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 454.
** Ibid., Vol. 22, p. 144.

partial"*; in the struggle for democracy the proletariat masters the art of leadership of the masses, including the non-proletarian masses, and prepares for the exercise of its political rule, for the achievement of its political aims.

On the basis of Lenin's teaching about combining the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism, about the allies of the proletariat, the Congress arrived at important doctrinal conclusions concerning the need for and possibility of unity of action in the anti-fascist, general democratic struggle of the vast majority of the population in every country—the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the cities, the artisans and the intellectuals. The possibility of anti-fascist-minded elements among the bourgeoisie participating on occasion in the popular front was also mentioned at the Congress.

In working for a union of anti-fascist forces the communist party in each country should come forward with such a platform of the popular front as would express the general political strivings of the broadest masses of the population, first and foremost the demands for a repulse of fascism, for the defence of the democratic rights and freedoms of the working people and the defence of peace, including the economic demands of the peasantry, the middle strata of the urban population, the intellectuals and all democratic forces. The working class could enlist the democratic forces into the popular front only by carrying on an active fight in defence of their demands, in defence of all demands which did not run counter to the interests of the proletariat. The important thing, as Thorez, Gottwald, Kolarov, Rochet and Lenski stressed in their speeches, was for the communist parties to organise the fight for the immediate needs, for the most urgent economic and political demands of the peasant masses, to find the correct approach to the urban middle strata and persuade them that the popular front was aimed at preventing the ruin of these strata, preventing their descent into the ranks of the proletariat or even lumpen-proletariat.

Speaking of the experience of the French Communist Party, which had succeeded in setting up a popular front, Thorez said: "The starting point for the successful development by our Party of the united popular front against fascism was that we concentrated our attention on the direct demands of the masses of the toilers, on defending their day-to-day interests."** The second element in the success of the French Communist Party, Thorez

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 268.
** *The Communist International*, No. 19-20, 1955, p. 1402.

said, was its consistent defence of the people's democratic freedoms and national interests. The Communists had once more declared their love of their native land, their defence of all the revolutionary and democratic traditions of the people. This policy persuaded the masses that the Communists were true and consistent champions of their country's liberty and independence, her true patriots.

The Congress clearly declared that Communists could not be indifferent to the national interests of their peoples, that the communist parties, while constantly upholding their internationalist positions, should become real national political forces. The working class, stated the resolutions of the Congress, "is the only genuine protagonist of national freedom and the independence of the people". "While Communists are irreconcilable opponents, on principle, of bourgeois nationalism of every variety, they are by no means supporters of national nihilism, of an attitude of unconcern for the fate of their own people."*

To draw the broad masses of the middle strata into the popular front the communist parties were recommended to work in all organisations and parties in which these strata were united, despite the fact that the leadership of these organisations was controlled by the bourgeoisie or by pro-capitalist elements. The Congress rebuffed the declarations of the "Left" opportunists to the effect that the popular front would land the Communists in an unprincipled bloc with the petty-bourgeois organisations. Lenski, the representative of the Polish Communist Party, criticised these views, saying that the popular front was not a reformist fancy, but a compelling demand of life itself. "The people's front," he said, "must launch the struggle of million-strong masses, break fascist barriers and strive for the overthrow of the fascist clique of oppressors of the people."**

The communist movement found in the popular front a form of unity within which the working class could play a leading role in the struggle for general democratic, anti-fascist aims and act increasingly as a force exercising a decisive influence on the development of political events. Such a role of the proletariat would make it possible, through the handling of general democratic tasks, for mass activity to move upward to new socialist levels of the struggle.

United in a popular front in the course of the struggle and increasing its attacks on the reactionary forces, the broad masses

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 581.
** *International Press Correspondence, Special Number*, Vol. 15, No. 57, October 30, 1935, p. 1409.

could get the existing reactionary governments removed. In this event, the question of setting up a government of the united workers' or anti-fascist popular front would become the order of the day. In advancing the slogan of a government of the popular front the Seventh Congress was guided by the conclusions of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Comintern, arrived at together with Lenin, notably by the slogan of a "workers' and peasants' government". As Dimitrov said at the Seventh Congress, "originally the issue turned essentially upon a question which was almost comparable to the one we are discussing today".*

The Congress defined the conditions under which the establishment of a government of the popular front became possible: the bourgeois machinery of state was thrown out of gear and could not prevent such a government from being formed; the movement of the working masses was mounting, but the masses were not yet ready to fight for a socialist revolution; the parties taking part in the popular front demanded ruthless measures against the fascists and were ready to enforce such measures together with the Communists.

The task of the government of the popular front in all cases was to take resolute measures against fascism and reaction and strengthen the positions of the working class and all the working people. Depending upon the concrete conditions, the government of the popular front, in some cases, organised the rebuff of fascism and reaction without touching the foundations of the bourgeois regimes; in other cases, especially in countries where a bourgeois-democratic revolution had been launched, it could become the government of a democratic dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry. The government of the popular front could become a special transitional form to proletarian rule in imperialist countries where oppression by the monopolies made the struggle for democratic demands a matter of growing urgency. "Fifteen years ago," said Dimitrov, "Lenin called upon us to focus all our attention on 'searching out forms of *transition* or *approach* to the proletarian revolution'. It may be that in a number of countries the *united front government* will prove to be *one* of the most important transitional forms,"** and will pave the way to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Congress enjoined Communists to give every possible support to the governments of the popular front, and for certain definite exigencies considered it proper and desirable for Communists to take part in such a government, which was fighting reaction and fascism. The Communists declared their readiness to share in a government of the popular front and in parliament responsibility for anti-fascist measures and deep-going democratic reforms.

In his book *"Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder,* Lenin made it clear that in so far as the masses still believed in the bourgeois parliament, the Communists were in duty bound to utilise this tribune for educating the masses and exposing the reactionary bourgeois policy. In the thirties, with the growing strength of the labour and communist movement in a number of capitalist countries, conditions arose under which parliamentary forms of struggle could play a greater part than ever before in organising a rebuff to fascism and reaction. Drawing attention to these possibilities and emphasising that the success of the parliamentary struggle of the Communists and other anti-fascist parties could only be achieved with the backing of a broad movement of the masses outside parliament, the Seventh Congress developed the policy of the communist parties towards parliamentarism under conditions of a general democratic struggle.

The working out of a policy of the popular front, and especially the problems of a government of the popular front as a possible transitional form to the dictatorship of the proletariat, was a further creative elaboration of Lenin's teaching about the paths of the socialist revolution, about combining the struggle for democracy with the struggle for socialism, about the alliance of the working class with other strata of the working people. Important doctrinal conclusions on these issues were arrived at as a result of the collective creative efforts of the communist parties.

The conception developing Lenin's teaching about the interdependence between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism took into account the fact that the revolutionary process in the capitalist countries would not go forward immediately and directly through a socialist revolution, but would move towards it by way of the anti-fascist general democratic stage of the struggle.

This road did not by any means imply that the socialist aims were overshadowed. On the contrary, the united workers' and popular front drew the broadest masses into the struggle against fascism, for the victory of the new democracy, thereby preparing the necessary preconditions for a socialist revolution. This was the sum and substance of the policy of the popular front. The new orientation thus opened up new prospects for the movement towards the socialist revolution.

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* Dimitrov, op. cit., p. 72.
** Ibid., p. 75.

The decisions of the Congress stated that the organised struggle against fascism was "accelerating and will continue to accelerate the development of the world socialist revolution".*

Questions of the United Anti-Imperialist Front in the Colonies and Dependent Countries

Of great importance were the conclusions of the Seventh Congress on the questions of the national liberation movement. At this time Germany, Italy and Japan had begun a struggle for a redivision of the world. The Japanese imperialists were extending their aggression in China, creating a threat to the country's territorial integrity and to the national existence of the Chinese people. Fascist Italy was preparing to attack Ethiopia. German and Italian economic and political penetration into the countries of Latin America was proceeding apace. The imperialist states—Britain, France, Holland, Belgium and others—who had vast colonial possessions, were out to consolidate their rule and increase their pressure upon them. All this evoked increasing resentment among the oppressed people and drew more and more millions into the national liberation struggle. At the same time the growing antagonisms between the imperialist powers in the colonies and dependent countries created a situation in which the national liberation movements could make definite use of these antagonisms.

Most important for the destinies of the national liberation movement was the determination of the character of the revolutions which were developing or coming to a head in the colonies and dependent countries.

The Seventh Congress repudiated the Leftist views according to which the revolution in the colonial countries was characterised merely as a bourgeois-democratic revolution, which was rapidly evolving into a socialist revolution. The representatives of the communist parties of the colonial and dependent countries stressed at the Congress that the previously formulated slogans of "a workers' and peasants' revolutions", "Soviet government", etc., were premature as far as most of these countries were concerned, and indicated an underestimation of the general national anti-imperialist aims.

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 586.

It was pointed out at the Congress that for most of the colonies and semi-colonies the first step of a truly popular revolution would necessarily be the national liberation stage of the struggle spearheaded against the imperialist oppressors. The idea that the liberation of the colonies was possible only by way of proletarian revolutions or following socialist revolutions in the metropolises was repudiated. The Congress held that the cause of national liberation could not be deferred until the conditions for the victory of a workers' and peasants' government were ripe for it.

To fight "against growing imperialist exploitation, against cruel enslavement, for the driving out of the imperialists, for the independence of the country"*—was how the chief aims of the communist parties in the colonies and semi-colonies were defined in the Congress resolutions.

The need was stressed, in defining political aims, of taking into consideration the tremendous differences in the conditions under which the anti-imperialist struggle was being waged in the colonies and semi-colonial countries which were at varying stages of dependence upon imperialism.

In many dependent countries, owing to the sharpened antagonisms between the great mass of the population of these countries and imperialism, the anti-feudal, general democratic revolution was bound to have also an anti-imperialist slant.

To ensure the success of the anti-imperialist revolution the Communists had to work for an anti-imperialist united front in the oppressed countries. This was the principal slogan advanced by the Congress for the peoples of the oppressed and dependent countries. This front was capable of uniting all the forces of national liberation.

The slogan of the anti-imperialist united front stood for the consistent continuation and development of the Comintern's policy on the national-colonial question, which was worked out under Lenin's guidance. Enriched with the diversified experience of the liberation struggle in the oppressed countries, the Communists understood the slogan of the anti-imperialist front as a means of rallying all the healthy forces of the nation for a determined struggle against imperialism. The Congress sharply criticised the views which regarded the national bourgeoisie of the colonies as wholly pro-imperialist and which demanded of the Communists that they make the organisations of the national bourgeoisie the main targets for their attacks. These views prevented the Commu-

* Ibid., p. 583.

nists from taking an active part in the anti-imperialist actions sponsored by the national bourgeoisie, and even in the mass petty-bourgeois movements. Some of the speeches at the Congress were still tinctured with these old views and guidelines.

The Congress orientated the communist parties of the colonies and semi-colonies towards a resolute policy aimed at rallying into a united front all who were capable of fighting imperialism, including the national bourgeoisie, whose antagonisms with imperialism not only continued, but in a number of countries were considerably aggravated. At the same time it was pointed out that in the countries where a fairly strong national bourgeoisie had been formed, it was necessary to carefully weigh to what extent it tended towards a deal with imperialism and the landowning oligarchy, on the one hand, and how far the growing imperialist oppression induced the national bourgeoisie to take up an anti-imperialist position.

Of special significance for the establishment of an anti-imperialist front was the proletariat's alliance with the peasantry, which formed the majority of the population in the enslaved countries. Unless there is a firm alliance with the peasantry, declared the delegates of the communist parties of the oppressed countries, we shall never be able to destroy imperialism. The creation of such an alliance would mean a tremendous step forward in the development of the liberation struggle. It was important to draw into the anti-imperialist front the broad middle strata of the towns, which the Arabian delegate described as "an anti-imperialist force of great magnitude".*

The Seventh Congress examined in great detail the problems of the national liberation struggle in China and pointed to the need for the Communists to come to an agreement with all who sincerely desired to fight the foreign aggressors. "The Communist Party of China," stated the resolution, "must exert every effort to extend the front of the struggle for national liberation and to draw into it all the national forces that are ready to repulse the robber campaign of the Japanese and other imperialists."**

For the countries of the Arabian East the Congress advanced the slogan of a united anti-imperialist front on an all-Arab scale, a close alliance between the national liberation forces of all the Arabian states. "It is necessary to unite the anti-imperialist struggle of all the Arabian countries," said the delegate of the Syrian Communist Party. "This is an essential condition, without which a conclusive victory over imperialism is impossible."*

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/295/10.
** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 593.

The Congress gave serious attention to the framing by the communist parties of a concrete anti-imperialist programme adjusted to the specific conditions of each oppressed country. A possible anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme for China was discussed in detail, and suggestions were made for a revision of certain measures of the C.C.P. in order to give its policy at the given stage a more clearly expressed popular, national character.**

As a model for many countries of Latin America, the Congress examined the programme of the National Liberation Alliance of Brazil, which combined anti-feudal and democratic demands with demands for the liquidation of imperialist dominance and the establishment of an anti-imperialist revolutionary government of the people.

The Congress strongly stressed the idea of a union between the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples and the international working class. Common interest in the defeat of fascism and imperialism and in averting a world war formed the basis for close unity between the international labour movement and the national liberation struggle. It was pointed out at the Congress that the forces of the revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies were growing under the direct and tremendous impact of the Great October Revolution and its historic victories, and that these forces rested on the support of the Soviet Union and the entire world proletariat. Attaching tremendous importance to the unity of all the world's revolutionary forces, the Congress declared it to be the bounden duty of the communist parties "actively to support the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, especially the Red Army of the Chinese Soviets. . . ."***

In order to closely unite the liberation revolutions in the colonies with the revolutionary movement of the working class it was necessary, the Congress pointed out, to educate the labour masses in the metropolises and colonies in the spirit of internationalism and irreconcilability to chauvinism. Fascism and imperialist reaction were spreading the poison of chauvinism not only in the home-countries, but in the colonies as well. Lenin had warned that age-old oppression of colonial peoples by imperialism had not only

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/295/14.
** Ibid., 494/1/265/57-58.
*** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 593.

aroused hatred towards the oppressor nations, but distrust in these nations in general even in their proletariat.* These nationalist habits die hard: many delegates cited examples of chauvinism and national enmity fanned by the colonialists in an attempt to split the ranks of the national liberation movement.

The report elaborated on Lenin's idea about the Communists of the oppressed nation coming out vigorously against chauvinism in the ranks of their nation, while at the same time demonstrating by deed what they were doing for the liberation of the people from the imperialist yoke. The Communists of the home-countries, on the other hand, were obliged to do their utmost to assist the national liberation movements. The union between the national liberation revolutions and the international labour movement, it was stressed, had to be built on secure internationalist foundations in order that it be kept free from chauvinism, which caused rifts and splits that weakened the general front of the struggle against imperialism.

Development of the Comintern's Policy on Questions of the Anti-War Struggle

An important place in the proceedings of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was occupied by questions of the fight for peace, against the danger of another world war and anti-Soviet intervention. A special report by Togliatti was devoted to this question. The representatives of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and its leaders took a most active part in formulating the basic problems of the report. The aggressive forces of world imperialism, the report stated, had begun direct preparations for an imperialist war, for a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R.

Pointing out the ominous menace of war, the Seventh Congress strongly emphasised that "the central slogan of the communist parties must be: struggle for peace",** this struggle being regarded by Communists as a condition for strengthening the forces of the revolution. "We defend peace," Togliatti said in his report, "not because we are numbered among the flabby Tolstoyans, but because we are striving to ensure the conditions for the victory of the

* Cf. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 150.
** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1959, p. 591.

revolution."* This was a new approach to the question of the significance of the fight for peace, which developed the conclusions of the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The Congress came out against the Left opportunist underestimation of the struggle for peace and the Leftist-Trotskyite views on war, which was alleged to serve as a means for clearing the way to revolution. The report gave the lie to the slanderous allegations "that Communists are in favour of war, that they base their hopes on war, as if they think that only war will create a situation in which it will be possible to fight for the revolution, for the conquest of power".**

In treating the struggle for peace as a key issue, the Comintern had to give an answer to the question as to how real were the prospects of the struggle to avert war. The Seventh Congress took note of the fact that under the existing conditions the struggle for peace could not be regarded as a hopeless struggle without prospects. It had new chances of success as a result of the changed alignment of class forces in the world arena, the growth of the Soviet Union's political, economic and military power and the strengthened ranks of the world revolutionary movement.

Developing the idea about the new possibilities of the struggle for peace Knorin said: "The victory of the October Revolution and the transformation of the U.S.S.R. into a powerful socialist state prosecuting an active peace policy and drawing into its wake entire nations and states who do not want war today, has given the proletariat new opportunities for bringing an influence to bear on the organisers of war. The combination of this force with that of the vast mass movement of the working people should give incomparably greater strength to the struggle for peace than ever before."***

The preservation of peace, even a temporary postponement of war, the Congress pointed out, would ensure the further successes of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the growth of its economic and political power, and strengthen the positions of the revolutionary proletariat and of all anti-war forces throughout the world. The struggle for peace offered the communist parties the greatest opportunities for uniting the anti-fascist forces into a popular front, for

* Ercoli, *The Fight Against War and Fascism. The Preparations for Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communist International*, M.-L., 1935, p. 51.
** Ibid., p. 52.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/357/58.

rallying behind the proletariat all its allies and all people concerned in averting war.

The Seventh Congress did not adopt the point of view which ascribed equal responsibility for the unleashing of war to all the capitalist states, but directed the spearhead of its attacks against the fascist warmongers—Germany, Japan and Italy. German fascism was described as the chief enemy of peace.

The Congress drew the important conclusion that in a situation where fascist aggression threatened not only the Soviet Union, but a number of other countries, national liberation wars against the fascist aggressor were possible in Europe. Pieck, the delegates of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Gottwald and Šverma, the delegate of the Communist Party of the Netherlands De Leeuw and others spoke about this at the Congress. De Leeuw cited Lenin's comments on the possibility of national liberation wars in Europe made during the First World War, and emphasised that in a situation where the nazis were out to enslave many European countries these words of Lenin's acquired an added significance.*

The Congress recorded in its resolution that if any small state was attacked by one or more imperialist states who were out to destroy its national independence "a war conducted by the national bourgeoisie of such a country to repel this attack may assume the character of a war of liberation, in which the working class and the communists of that country must intervene".** This position did not imply unqualified support by Communists of the bourgeois government of the small country subjected to aggression. As Togliatti said, winding up the debate, the proletariat should ably and flexibly combine defence of the country in the national liberation struggle with defence of the class aspirations of the broad masses; it should work for the democratisation of the regime, especially the democratisation of the army, and nip in the bud any tendencies towards capitulation on the part of the bourgeoisie. The Congress went on record for a flexible policy in regard to the defensive measures of the bourgeois governments. The communist parties, stated the resolutions of the Congress, were to be "in the front ranks of the fighters for national independence and to fight the war of liberation to a finish without allowing 'their' bourgeoisie to strike a bargain with the attacking powers to the prejudice of the interests of their country".*** The Communists acted as true patriots and staunch defenders of their country's national interests.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 494/1/368/7-8.
** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 593.
*** Ibid.

In the prevailing situation the small countries threatened by fascist aggression were greatly interested in securing close co-operation with the U.S.S.R., which was a reliable support for all the world's peace forces. This interest created favourable conditions for rallying the supporters of peace on a world scale.

The sharp antagonisms among the imperialists, and especially the attacks of the fascist powers, created a situation which made possible collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and those capitalist states which were interested at the moment in preserving peace. The Soviet Union's peace policy contributed to the arrangement of such co-operation. The Soviet Union's admission to the League of Nations (September 1934) and the conclusion in May 1935 of the Soviet-French and Soviet-Czechoslovak mutual aid treaties laid the foundations for a system of collective security in Europe and collaboration among all the peace-loving states for the purpose of repelling the nazi aggressors.

The Seventh Congress thus raised the question of setting up the widest possible peace front embracing not only the working class, the working people and democratic strata, but all those countries which were threatened by fascist aggression. The Communists called to this front all pacifists who were prepared to fight against war. The creation of such a broad front and vigorous action by all its forces could turn the scale in favour of the supporters of peace.

If an imperialist war broke out, the Congress resolution pointed out, the Communists were to endeavour to turn the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie in order to overthrow the exploiter regimes and open the way to peace and national liberation.

The Congress stated that defence of the Soviet Union, the country which was defending the interests of socialism and peace for all the world's working people, was the most important task of the international communist movement. In the event of a counter-revolutionary war against the U.S.S.R. the Communists were recommended to urge the working people by every means in their power to contribute towards the victory of the Red Army over the imperialist aggressors. The Congress orientated the communist parties towards combining a principled stand in defence of the first land of socialism with a flexible tactic in keeping with both the international and national interests of the labour movement.

The Congress warned that in the event of war the most unexpected situations could arise, and that it was necessary right now

to educate all communist parties, all their cadres, every single Communist, in the spirit of maximum initiative and personal responsibility.

The conclusions of the Seventh Congress on the tasks of the communist parties in connection with the impending world war armed the Communists in face of the forthcoming armed conflicts with fascism.

The Seventh Congress on the Historic Significance of the Victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

The Congress heard Manuilsky's report on the results of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and the significance which the historic transformations in that country had for the development of the world revolution. In submitting this report to the Congress the Communist Party of the Soviet Union rendered an account to the international working class, to all the world's working people, on how the victorious working class, for the first time in history, had put into practice the principles of socialism. The C.P.S.U.(B.) showed what it had done and what it was doing to turn the socialist country into a great industrial power and an invincible bulwark of the world socialist revolution, an impregnable bastion against fascism and the forces of war. The report underlined that the first land of socialism, by all its victories, was serving the cause of all the world's working people, and its achievements "belong to the toilers of the whole world irrespective of nation and race, language and colour, to all those who are fighting exploitation and oppression".*

The victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R., socialist industrialisation, were, as the Congress delegates pointed out, a source of socialism's profound influence upon the entire subsequent course of human history. On the basis of the Soviet Union's great achievements the working people of all the world could conduct their fight against the attacks of fascism, imperialist reaction and war with greater confidence and success. The Congress resolution stated that the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. "marks a new,

* D. Manuilsky, *Results of Socialist Construction in the U.S.S.R.*, M.-L., 1935, p. 64.

great change in the relation of class forces on a world scale in favour of socialism, to the detriment of capitalism"*; that the U.S.S.R. had become a great political, economic and cultural force, which influenced world policy, a centre of attraction for all forces that were fighting against imperialist reaction, fascism and war. The development of the revolutionary struggle in the world was inseparably bound up with the consolidation of the Soviet Union, whose successes, the resolution pointed out, heightened the significance of the world labour movement and its communist vanguard, the significance of the ideas of socialism.

Foreseeing that the brunt of the coming clash with fascism and imperialist reaction would be borne by the U.S.S.R., the Congress laid special emphasis on the duty of the international working class and all the communist parties "to help with all their might and with all the means at their disposal to strengthen the U.S.S.R. and to fight against the enemies of the U.S.S.R."**

Decisions on the Question of the Relationships Between the Communist Parties and the Governing Bodies of the Comintern

The decisions of the Seventh Congress on the question of the relationships between the parties and the governing bodies of the Comintern were of primary importance. The Congress recommended the E.C.C.I. to focus its activities on working out the fundamental political and tactical guidelines for the world labour movement, taking into account the concrete conditions and peculiarities of each country, and advised the E.C.C.I. "as a rule to avoid direct intervention in internal organisational matters of the communist parties".*** This was a line aimed at developing independent initiative by the communist parties at their assuming greater responsibility for the destinies of the class struggle in their country, at their more effective adaptation to the specific conditions prevailing in each country. This line ruled out the stereotyped and mechanical application of forms and methods of work of the communist party of one country to that of another country where the condi-

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 602.
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., p. 566.

tions were different, and orientated the Communists towards a creative, active attitude to the experience of the fraternal parties. Later, in June 1937, at a meeting of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat, Dimitrov spoke about greater autonomy and independence for the communist parties: "It is right that the Seventh Congress has made a change in this field of the Communist International's guidance of the communist parties. The parties should stand more and more on their own feet and be capable of determining their own policy and tactics, and also their operative leadership at any moment. And we want this to be achieved for good and all by all our sections."* Greater independence of the communist parties, however, required of them care not to slip down to a path of national isolation and to remain always true to the general international aims of the movement.

The Seventh Congress did a great deal to clarify in the Leninist spirit the question of the correlation between the national and international aims and activities of the communist parties. It criticised every manifestation of national nihilism in the work of Communists. "Proletarian internationalism," said Dimitrov, "must, so to speak, 'acclimatise itself' in each country in order to sink deep roots in its native land. *National forms* of the proletarian class struggle and of the labour movement in the individual countries are in no contradiction to proletarian internationalism; on the contrary, it is precisely in these forms that the *international interests* of the proletariat can be successfully defended."**

The Congress strongly emphasised that the Communists, who marched in the van of the working class and were the champions of the true interests of the nation, should always take care of the international unity of their efforts. Each party should therefore take all that is best in international revolutionary experience. In this connection the resolution of the Seventh Congress made it incumbent upon the E.C.C.I. "to assist the communist parties in making use of their own experience as well as the experience of the world communist movement. . .".*** Thus, the Seventh Congress, taking into consideration the diversity and complexity of the communist parties' tasks, and also the heightened level of the communist movement, took an important step towards the greater mobility and independence of the communist parties while simultaneously strengthening their international unity.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1206/101-102.
** Dimitrov, op. cit., p. 80.
*** *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, op. cit., p. 567.

The Congress elected the governing bodies of the Communist International, namely: The Executive Committee of the Comintern consisting of 46 members and 33 alternate members; the International Control Commission—20 members. The following were elected to the Executive Committee: Gottwald, Dimitrov, Cachin, Kolarov, Koplenig, Kuusinen, Lenski, Manuilsky, Marty, Moskvin (Trilisser), Wan Min, Okano (Nosaka), Pieck, Pollitt, Stalin, Thorez, Florin, Foster, Ercoli (Togliatti). The following were elected members of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I.: Dimitrov (General Secretary), Togliatti, Manuilsky, Pieck, Kuusinen, Marty and Gottwald, with Moskvin, Florin and Wan Min as alternate members. Subsequently, in 1939, Díaz and Ibárruri were elected to the Secretariat.

The Historic Significance of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern

The decisions of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, permeated as they were with the ideas of Lenin, were of prime historic significance for the international communist and labour movement, for the development of the struggle of all the revolutionary and democratic forces against fascism, imperialism and war.

On the basis of a profound Marxist-Leninist analysis of the facts of reality and the generalisation of the experience of class battles, the Congress worked out a new orientation for the communist movement—the policy of a united workers' and broad popular front for dealing with the anti-fascist, general democratic tasks, which opened up new prospects for the advance towards the socialist stage of the revolutionary struggle. This was not only a new tactic, it was also a new strategic line arising from the changed alignment of class forces in the world, from the growing contradictions of monopoly capitalism, which was becoming more and more hostile to the broad masses of the population. The decisions of the Seventh Congress were the communist movement's natural response to the urgent needs of the class struggle. The Congress enriched Marxist-Leninist theory, elevated the communist movement ideologically to a new level and equipped it with a clear understanding of the prospects of the struggle against fascism and war. The Congress was an ideological and theoretical school for the communist party cadres.

The decisions of the Congress gave a clear answer to the burning problems of the day. They pointed out to the working people, to all democrats, to all who stood for peace, the real way towards victory over fascism, towards peace and social progress. They also showed the growing role of the international working class and its vanguard—the Soviet Union—in the struggle against imperialist reaction and for a happier future for mankind.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern embodied the creative forces of Marxism-Leninism, which proved capable, on the basis of an analysis of the cardinal problems of the class struggle, of working out a policy which opened the doors into the future.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress dealt a severe blow to opportunism, dogmatism and sectarianism in the communist and labour movement. It opened the way to the widest initiative and creative activity for every communist party. The Congress condemned the sectarian mistakes as being the greatest hindrance at the moment to the prosecution of a mass policy by the communist parties. Simultaneously, it stressed the danger of a Right-opportunist interpretation of the new orientation and impressed upon the communist parties the need for "bearing in mind that the Right danger will grow".*

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern marked the beginning of a new phase in the development of the international communist and labour movement.

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 584.

THE NEW STRATEGY IN ACTION

Repercussions of the Seventh Congress Decisions

The new political orientation worked out by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern evoked a wide response among the most diverse sections of the population. The Communists accepted these decisions as their programme. "The problem of putting into practice the reorientation outlined by the Seventh Congress," *Pravda* wrote in its editorial on August 29, 1935, "now faces all the sections of the Communist International in all its magnitude. This reorientation has nothing in common with stereotyped barren formulas, and cut-and-dried schemes. The Communists are holding the key to victory. The thing is to use that key properly." Assimilation of the new decisions in a number of parties met with certain difficulties arising from the fact that sectarian conceptions had a tendency to linger and make themselves felt. However, the decisions of the Seventh Congress and the experience of some of the communist parties in the struggle for a united workers' front were so convincing that sectarianism and dogmatism quickly began to lose ground. Armed with the new orientation, the communist parties promptly took up a more active position in the class struggle. Their political role perceptibly increased. At that moment was strikingly revealed the role of the subjective factor in the class struggle, the significance of the communist movement's ability in difficult conditions to work out a policy in keeping with the urgent needs of the masses and their level of consciousness. The fact that the Comintern was able to provide the workers in the middle of the thirties with a profoundly correct policy had an immediate effect on the development of the struggle. Whereas, up till 1934, and in some countries up till the following year, fascism had continued its advance, from that moment on the anti-fascist struggle of the working people gained strength and momentum. The Communists' new policy became a powerful key factor in the development of the struggle of the working class and other democratic sections of the population against fascism and war. The ideological and political role of the Comintern rose considerably.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress met with approval among large sections of the Social-Democratic workers, among Left-wing groups of Social-Democracy. They rightly considered that the Seventh Congress had created a favourable atmosphere for joint action by all contingents of the working class. In many countries the Social-Democratic workers welcomed the new orientation of the Comintern, showed greater trust in the Communists and a stronger urge towards unity of action. Fearing the development of these tendencies the Right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy launched a propaganda campaign against the Seventh Congress. On the eve of the October session of the Executive of the Socialist Labour International, one of its leaders, F. Adler, sent a lengthy letter to all members of the Executive, adjuring them not to believe the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which he described as a maneuver, as merely the adoption of "a more elastic tactic".* The reaction to the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern on the part of the leaders of Right Social-Democracy showed that the development of the struggle for a united workers' front would continue to meet with serious resistance by this political force.

The Leftist, semi-Trotskyist elements in the labour movement and in the democratic organisations tried to criticise the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern "from the Left". They accused the Comintern of abandoning its class positions and adopting a reformist and petty-bourgeois pacifist stand. This kind of criticism "from the Left" was an attempt to sow doubts as to the correctness of the Seventh Congress's new line and to nourish sectarian prejudices in the communist ranks.

A virulent campaign against the Comintern in connection with its Seventh Congress was launched by the reactionary bourgeois press, which demanded that the policy of a united workers' and popular front be opposed by a united anti-communist front.

Every political trend expressed its attitude to the decisions of the Seventh Congress. This was a peculiar recognition of the tremendous impact which the new communist orientation had upon the class struggle throughout the world.

* Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Bd. II, Hannover, 1963, S. 502.

Reorganisation of the E.C.C.I. Staff

In view of the fact that the new orientation demanded greater initiative and mobility on the part of the communist parties, leaving the leadership of the Comintern to concentrate on the framing of the basic political and tactical guidelines, it became necessary to reorganise the work and the very structure of the Comintern Executive's staff. In September 1935 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. passed a decision to reorganise the apparatus of the E.C.C.I. This was endorsed at the meetings of the E.C.C.I. Presidium in October. The day-to-day management of the parties passed directly into the hands of the parties themselves. In view of this, the regional secretariats (Ländersekretariats), which previously effected a measure of operative leadership, were dismissed. The body of authorised representatives of the E.C.C.I. attached to the parties was likewise abolished, since the level of the parties' leading functionaries had risen.* In place of the former departments of the E.C.C.I. only two departments were set up, namely: the Personnel Department and the Propaganda and Mass Organisations Department. The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. had also a Bureau, a Business Management Division and a Communication Service. The General Secretary and secretaries of the E.C.C.I. exercised their functions in co-operation with the parties' representatives on the E.C.C.I., who played an important role in the preparation of recommendations or decisions affecting their sections. Each secretary of the E.C.C.I. was accountable to the Secretariat and the Presidium for a definite group of countries.

* The authorised representatives of the E.C.C.I., who discharged their functions in closest contact with the central committees of the communist parties, rendered great assistance to the parties in carrying out the decisions of the Comintern and framing concrete political guidelines. Many of these representatives enjoyed great and well-earned prestige among the Communists of the countries to which they were sent. Elías Lafertte, Chairman of the Communist Party of Chile, wrote that Miguel Contreras, the representative of the E.C.C.I., was well acquainted with the problems that agitated the party and "was far from being an inspector, as many people believe. No, the Comintern did not send inspectors, it sent comrades, friends." (Cf. Elias Lafertte, *Vida de un comunista*, Santiago de Chile, 1957, p. 187.)

The French Communists speak with great respect of E. Fried (Clément), who was the E.C.C.I.'s representative attached to the Communist Party of France. During the Second World War Fried, who was a member of the Resistance, died the death of a hero.

The reorganisation created such an apparatus of the E.C.C.I. as answered the purpose of co-ordinating the efforts of the communist parties and ensuring competent preparation of political guidelines for the various communist parties. It was an important measure marking the beginning of a new phase in the development of interrelations in the international communist movement, when initiative and self-dependence on the part of every party acquired more and more significance.

The Comintern and the Communist Parties in the Struggle Against Aggression of Fascist Italy in Ethiopia

Within a few months after the Seventh Congress urgent measures were called for on the part of the Comintern and the communist parties for mobilising the forces of the international proletariat against the aggression of fascist Italy in Ethiopia. The communist parties long before this had warned the workers that Italian fascism was planning war against Ethiopia.

In the summer of 1935, with the active participation of the Communists, Committees for the Defence of the Ethiopian People were set up in many countries, which launched a wide campaign against the aggressive plans of fascist Italy. On September 3 an international conference in defence of the Ethiopian people and peace convened by these Committees was held in Paris. The representatives of the progressive intellectuals, anti-fascist organisations and workers' parties demanded of the League of Nations determined steps to avert war. They demanded also unity of all anti-fascist parties and organisations against the aggressor. Under the circumstances the leaders of the Socialist Labour International declared their readiness to discuss at the next meeting of the Executive the terms for joint action with the Communists against war and fascism, against the threat to Ethiopia. However, the meeting of the Executive Committees of the Socialist Labour International and the Amsterdam Trade Union International on September 6, 1935 passed a resolution which placed all hopes on the League of Nations. Both reformist Internationals refrained from calling for mass action, and merely

recognised the need for mobilising public opinion against the aggressor.*

The Communist Parties of France, Britain, Italy, Czechoslovakia and a number of other countries came forward at that time with concrete proposals specifying what joint action should be taken by all the labour organisations in order to avert war. Appeals to seek ways for concerted action by the international working class were made also by Left-wing Social-Democratic groups and parties. The Executive of the Comintern took an important initiative in formulating proposals to the Socialist Labour International for united action against war in Ethiopia. The text of an appeal by the E.C.C.I. to the Second International was endorsed at a meeting of the Secretariat on September 24, 1935 and the delegation appointed by the Comintern for the talks on this question was confirmed.** Included in the delegation were Cachin, Thorez, Pollitt and Šverma. The telegram to the Secretariat of the Socialist Labour International dispatched on September 25 stated that the military measures of Italian and German fascism "may lead to a world war". In view of the threatened outbreak of a new imperialist war, the E.C.C.I. declared that both Internationals "must act in concert and by their common efforts stay the hand of the fascist instigators of war". The E.C.C.I. suggested that urgent measures for preserving peace be discussed at a joint meeting of representatives of the Internationals.***

The directives of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat to the Comintern delegation emphasised that the Comintern's proposals were to be regarded "as a starting point to a discussion for the implementation of a united front on an international scale on the basis of the decisions of the Seventh World Congress".**** This document formulated the Comintern's proposals calling for mass anti-war campaigns, a ban on arms shipments for Italy and Germany, sanctions by the League of Nations, closure of the Suez Canal to shipments for fascist Italy, suspension of financial assistance to Italian and German fascism, etc. At the same time it was pointed out that these proposals "would not be in the nature of an ultimatum.

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* *Rundschau*, 1935, No. 46, S. 2055.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1017.
*** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 15, No. 48, September 28, 1935, p. 1207.
**** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1018/24.

The delegation must try to come to an agreement, even on a limited number of points."*

In reply to the telegram of the E.C.C.I. the Secretariat of the Socialist Labour International promised to submit the Comintern's proposals to the Executive and communicate their decision "as soon as they have arrived at one".** This tardiness played into the hands of the enemies of peace. On October 3 the troops of fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia.

The Executive of the Comintern issued an appeal on October 7 "Down with War!" addressed to all workers and their organisations, to all opponents of war, to all nations. The E.C.C.I. said in this appeal: "Not for another instant must there be any postponement of the establishment of unity of action by all workers' organisations and all the friends of peace in all countries, so as to isolate and curb the fascist instigators of war."*** The appeal set forth a programme of concrete measures, the realisation of which would lead to a cessation of Italian fascist aggression. The same day Dimitrov, on behalf of the Comintern Executive, forwarded a second telegram to the S.L.I.,**** pointing out once again the urgent necessity of a positive reply to the Comintern's proposals.

The Executive of the S.L.I. examined the proposals of the Comintern at its meeting in Brussels on October 12, 1935 at a time when many rank-and-file socialists in the European countries were demanding unity of action and expressing the hope that this time a negative reply would not be given to the Comintern's initiative. The representatives of 12 out of the 17 parties attending the Executive meeting declared for united action against fascist aggression. The representatives of the other five parties—those of Great Britain, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and Czechoslovakia—insisted on united action with the Communists being rejected.*****

The blocking of unity of action by the Right-wing socialist leaders and their complete reliance on League of Nations remedies prevented the possible unity and consolidation of the peace front. The S.L.I. confined itself to a demand for support of League of Nations sanctions, thereby renouncing independent action by the

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1018/24.
** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 15, No. 58, October 12, 1935, p. 1329.
*** Ibid., p. 1318.
**** Ibid.
***** *Internationale Information*, October 14, 1935, No. 35.

international proletariat and making their own actions subservient to the foreign policies of their bourgeois governments. Nor was such an attitude helpful in compelling the League of Nations to take effective steps against war and the threat of war.

The Executive of the Communist International, in a special statement, sharply condemned the splitters of the anti-war labour movement, who sacrificed the interests of the working class, the interests of the fight for peace, for the sake of their union with the bourgeoisie. The E.C.C.I. appealed again to all anti-fascists "to frustrate the resistance of the opponents of the united front and put an end to the division of their forces in the fight against fascism and war".*

The Communist International and the communist parties organised no few active demonstrations against the aggression of fascist Italy and the aggressive tendencies of nazi Germany. A wave of anti-war meetings and demonstrations swept through the big seaports of Britain, France, Greece, the U.S.A., Mexico and other countries. The dockers in a number of ports refused to load ships bound for fascist Italy. The crews of some of the ships refused to transport any cargoes whatever for the aggressor. In various countries the Italian embassies and consulates were besieged by demonstrators. Signatures were collected to petitions of protest against the fascist war of conquest in Ethiopia. The International Committee for Fighting War and Fascism conducted imposing anti-war measures, among them an international conference against war and fascism, which was held in Paris at the end of November 1935. A Peace Fund was set up and collections started in aid of the victims of aggression.

None of these measures, however, through the fault of the Right-socialist splitters, acquired the necessary scope, nor did they develop into a powerful international campaign capable of exerting its influence upon the aggressor. Moreover, the Right-wing socialists in many countries started a propaganda line boosting the thesis that strong sanctions against Italy or Germany were only likely to lead to a world war and therefore it were better to try and come to an agreement with those countries. This propaganda played down the danger of fascist aggression and introduced into the labour movement false illusions about the measures taken by the League of Nations being quite sufficient to preserve peace.

* *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 15, No. 59, November 9, 1935, p. 1447.

The New Orientation in Practice

The Communist International during this period urged its sections to apply the policy of the united workers' and popular front with greater boldness. In its decisions on the tasks of the various communist parties the Presidium and Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. stressed that these parties were taking flexible steps towards uniting the anti-fascists. The E.C.C.I. approved the idea of a broad front of all opponents of the monarcho-fascist reaction in Greece and supported the Communist Party's proposal for collaboration with all the republican forces, including the Liberal Party.* At the beginning of November 1935 the E.C.C.I., in its advice to the Communist Party of Spain, urged that more active efforts be made to establish a popular front, and decided to send Jacques Duclos to Madrid for talks with Largo Caballero, the leader of the Left-wing socialists, in order, in face of the growing menace of a fascist coup, to try to convince him and other leaders of the Socialist Party "of the need to reach a popular front type of agreement with the Communist Party".** The question of contact with the Left Republicans was also raised.

A joint meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. with representatives of the parties was held on November 20 to deal with the question of shortcomings in the application of the tactic of the united front. The speaker, Kuusinen, said in his report that some of the communist parties were so far conducting general propaganda for the united front without taking sufficiently active mass action capable of breaking down the resistance of the opponents of unity. This passivity had to be overcome.

At its meeting on December 1, 1935 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. discussed the results of the Fourth Conference of the Communist Party of Germany and made a number of recommendations for widening the scope of the popular front in the concrete conditions prevailing in Germany. It was pointed out that there were in Germany the remains of bourgeois parties which could today take a stand against fascism, while the popular front could unite even these temporary allies of the proletariat.***

The Comintern took into consideration, however, that the application of the new political line was fraught with definite

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1024/1.
** *World Marxist Review*, December 1965, Vol. 8, No. 12, p. 16.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/203/66.

Right-opportunist dangers in the event of too much attention being given to negotiations with the leadership of Social-Democratic and petty-bourgeois parties while activities at rallying the masses were allowed to relax. Some of the communist parties at that moment had made mistakes of such a nature. The Executive of the Comintern highlighted the danger of Right-wing mistakes, especially during the discussion of the tasks of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the Secretariat and Presidium of the E.C.C.I. at the end of 1935 and beginning of 1936. The Party, Gottwald pointed out, had shown a tendency to give preference to parliamentary combinations in place of mobilising the masses for vigorous action, while the parliamentary group was guilty of a number of erroneous steps.* The fear that some parties, in applying the new orientation, might lapse into Right-opportunist courses, induced the Comintern to adopt a decision on the Czechoslovak question which contained some extremely sharp criticism. At the meeting of the Secretariat and Presidium of the E.C.C.I., however, it was pointed out that rectification of Right-wing mistakes should not lead to a situation which would throw the Party into sectarianism.**

The Comintern fairly quickly overcame the exaggerated fears of a bold policy of the united workers' and popular front entertained by some leaders of the communist movement.

Thus, in discussing questions relating to preparations for a unity congress of trade unions in France, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. at its meeting on February 21, 1936 rejected certain sectarian misgivings of Lozovsky's about the French Communist Party's trade union policy. Dimitrov, Manuilsky and others commented highly on the trade union policy of the F.C.P. aimed at achieving trade union unity among the workers.***

In framing recommendations on questions raised by different parties, the E.C.C.I. steadily broke down the prevailing sectarian prejudices. An important role in this connection was played by the meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. held during March-April 1936, at which the question of the major results of united front tactics and the most important tasks of the anti-war struggle was discussed. The meeting was attended by nearly all the members and alternate members of the E.C.C.I. Presidium including representatives of most of the parties.

* *The Communist International*, 1936, No. 2, pp. 79-91.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1040/154.
*** Ibid., 495/18/1075/328.

The Presidium examined in detail the experience of the Communist Parties of France, the U.S.A., Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Great Britain and the problems of the anti-imperialist struggle in China. Note was made of the definite successes of the united front policy in France, Spain and several other countries. Dimitrov said that the correctness of the new orientation "is now evident, established, proved". The question of the possibilities of creating concrete forms of the popular front was discussed. It was stressed that in many countries the new policy was not yet sufficiently concrete, "the slogans making for the mobilisation of the masses have not yet been found".* This especially applied to questions of the anti-war struggle. The desire was expressed that "a concrete platform for the present definite struggle against war" be evolved and unity achieved with the main section of the Social-Democratic parties in the struggle against fascism and war.**

The problems of the anti-war struggle claimed the chief attention of the March-April meeting of the E.C.C.I. Presidium.

Fascism had subjugated the working class in some countries and had now launched an attack upon the rights and independence of other nations. The aggressive plans of Hitler Germany and imperialist Japan were directed in perspective against the U.S.S.R. War against the Soviet Union remained the chief aim of international fascism and imperialist reaction. At the moment, however, said Dimitrov, the threat of a nazi attack was aimed directly against Czechoslovakia, Austria, France, Poland, and, "in all probability the blow at the East against the Soviet Union would not be in the first line of Hitler's plans".*** In the Far East, too, Japan was aiming its first blow against the Chinese people and preparing the blow against the U.S.S.R. as its next step. In these circumstances the communist parties of the European countries had to prepare their peoples to meet nazi aggression. They had to define their attitude in this connection to the defensive measures of the bourgeois governments, to the military budgets, to the actions of the League of Nations, and so on.

The members of the Presidium said that a negative attitude towards the defensive measures of the bourgeois governments of the countries threatened by fascism would be wrong, and that the communist movement had to come forward with its positive programme on questions of international policy. The concrete

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/215/6-8.
** Ibid., 495/2/215/6.
*** Ibid., 495/2/222/26.

points of such a programme, capable of consolidating all the forces that stood for peace, were discussed. It was pointed out that the communist parties of the countries directly threatened by fascist aggression should not close their eyes to the danger of fascism from without, but should take an active part in measures for the defence of those countries, and in the various military commissions of parliament, while work in the army should become an essential element of the parties' general policy.*

The resolution of the E.C.C.I. Presidium of April 1, 1936 emphasised that "the curbing of the fascist warmongers, the fight for peace, is today the central task of the whole international proletariat".** The communist parties were to link questions of their countries' defence as closely as possible with the demands for the extension of the workers' democratic rights, for the democratisation of the army, which was to be purged of fascist and reactionary elements, and for meeting the most pressing demands of the worker and peasant masses. Only by putting these measures resolutely into practice, especially that of democratising the army, could the defensive capacity of the nation be strengthened to meet a fascist attack. The Communists could not support the military policy of the bourgeois governments and the military budget as a whole, inasmuch as the bourgeoisie used the machinery of state and the army against the working people. The resolution stated, however, that this, on concrete occasions, did not preclude the possibility of the Communists supporting such measures as had the aim of protecting the population against the horrors of war (gas-proof shelters, masks, ambulance aid, etc.) and strengthening the nation's defensive capacity in face of the threat of fascist aggression.

The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. went on record for support of those measures of the League of Nations which were really directed towards preserving peace, but it made it incumbent on the communist parties to criticise the inconsistency and inadequacy of those measures. The Comintern reaffirmed its readiness, in conjunction with the Socialist Labour International and the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions, to work for a universal mutual aid pact in which the U.S.S.R. would be included. Stress was laid on the tremendous importance which trade union unity in each country and on an international scale had as a means of strengthening the peace front and rendering it more

* Ibid., 495/2/222/34-39.
** *Kommunist*, Moscow, 1969, No. 2, p. 4.

active. The decisions of the E.C.C.I. Presidium not only concretised a number of guidelines of the Seventh Congress in regard to the struggle for peace, but elaborated them and established a theoretical basis for the communist parties' active policy in questions concerning their countries' defence against fascist aggression.

The Comintern and the French Communist Party's Struggle for a Popular Front

The Communist International and its sections, equipped with the new orientation, started to put into practice a policy that quickly won over the masses to the united workers' and popular front. By creatively applying the conclusions of the Seventh Congress to the conditions prevailing in their countries, the communist parties demonstrated their ability to deal with complex problems of the class struggle and unite the masses. The period 1935-1937 saw the growing activity of the international labour and anti-fascist movement and its upswing in a number of countries, which made it possible to deal serious blows to reaction and forced it to retreat in many sectors.

An effective policy was developed by the Communist Party of France. It succeeded in winning the bulk of the Socialist and Radical parties' membership over to the programme of the popular front. The foundation of that front—the united workers' front, was strengthened too. With the amalgamation in the spring of 1936 of the Confédération Générale du Travail and the Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire, there was created in the country a single united General Confederation of Labour, whose leadership included Communists. The membership of the G.C.L. grew rapidly. The victory of the popular front at the 1936 elections opened up ample opportunities for the further struggle of the working class, the peasantry and the middle strata of the cities. In the summer of 1936 powerful strikes spread throughout the country in demand of profound social and economic reforms.

The mass movement exerted strong pressure on the employers and induced the government of Leon Blum, formed after the elections with the backing of the popular front, to introduce reforms.

The workers succeeded in getting a wage increase of from 7 to 15 per cent and the establishment of a guaranteed minimum wage; collective agreements were introduced, laying down the conditions of labour. For the first time in history, the legislation of a bourgeois country introduced on a national scale a forty-hour week and holidays with pay. The trade unions had their rights considerably expanded at the factories.

Some of the demands of the peasantry and urban middle strata were met. The policy of the popular front proclaimed by the Communists thus won for the working people of France tremendous social gains.

The popular front in France rendered the country a great service in saving it from fascist barbarism. By ensuring the unity of its ranks and rallying behind it the broad masses of the middle strata, the working class foiled the plans and plottings of the fascist leagues. These successes were of tremendous international significance. Fascism failed at that period to establish its domination throughout Western Europe.

Thanks to the policy of the popular front the working class of France established itself as a leading force of the general democratic struggle, an active motive force of the nation. The policy of the popular front was a truly patriotic policy aimed at uniting the nation against the monopolistic ruling clique, who were betraying the interests of the country. The policy of the popular front played a vital role in developing the Communist Party itself. The F.C.P. increased its influence among the masses, and strengthened its ties with the mass organisations of the working people. Its membership increased eightfold between mid-1936 and the end of 1937, reaching the figure of 320,000.

The F.C.P. was the principal political force in the struggle for the popular front within the country. It worked boldly and flexibly for a programme of the popular front, in which it received constant ideological and political assistance from the Comintern. The latter's governing bodies, together with the F.C.P.'s most prominent leaders, systematically discussed the major problems of the labour and anti-fascist movement in France.

After the success of the parties of the popular front at the parliamentary elections in France the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. repeatedly discussed the question of the Party's attitude to the government of the popular front. It was pointed out that given a more striking victory of the popular front in France and unity among still greater masses of the people it would have been possible to form a government of Communists and socialists. How-

ever, such unity had not yet been achieved. The government could not do without the Radicals and other groups. Participation in the government of the F.C.P. would frighten the Radicals and might serve as the signal for a frontal attack by the reactionaries against the government of the popular front.* The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. therefore examined the question of the Communists' participation in the government of Leon Blum not as a question of principle, but one of political expedience. Such participation, it was pointed out, might become possible with the further upsurge of the mass struggle.

In June 1936 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. approved the decision of the Plenum of the C.C. of the F.C.P. promising the Communist Party's honest and loyal collaboration with the government in carrying out the programme of the popular front and its support of this government. The E.C.C.I. agreed with the Plenum's view that in the given situation no useful purpose for the popular front would be served by the Communist Party joining the government. Carefully weighing the reasons and motives by which the F.C.P. was guided in refraining from joining the government, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. stressed in its resolution that the chief task in the given situation was to carry out the programme of the popular front, and this would call for the further development of co-operation among the parties and organisations of the popular front and the strengthening of this front among the masses in the local areas.**

The examination of these questions, posed by the very practice of the F.C.P.'s struggle, enabled the Comintern to concretise the conclusion of the Seventh Congress concerning the possible participation of Communists in a government of the popular front, and to go deeper into the question of the conditions and prerequisites for such participation. The Comintern supported the measures of the F.C.P. aimed at strengthening ties with the SFIO and the Radical-Socialists for joint action with them. Another question that came in for serious consideration was that of drawing the Catholic masses into the movement. The policy of the "proffered hand" to the Catholics proclaimed by Thorez met with approval in the Comintern.

When the Blum government began to vacillate in carrying out the programme of the popular front, the Executive of the Comintern supported the F.C.P. in its striving not to force a government

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1086/5.
** Ibid., 495/2/229/130.

crisis, since resignation of this government, under the prevailing conditions, would signify a political shift to the right.*

After the resignation of the Blum government in the middle of 1937 and the accession to power of a government of the Radical Chautemps, the Executive of the Comintern rendered the F.C.P. assistance in its strenuous efforts to preserve the popular front against attempts to weaken it from within.

The Comintern and the Problems of the National-Revolutionary War in Spain

The highest point of the mounting labour and democratic movement in the capitalist countries during the second half of the thirties was reached in the national-revolutionary war of the Spanish people. Owing to the policy pursued by the Communist Party of Spain there was created a popular front, which in February 1936, at the elections to parliament (the Cortes) heavily defeated the reactionary parties. A democratic revolution began to develop within the country.

The Executive of the Comintern orientated the Spanish Communist Party at that period towards democratic reforms. The E.C.C.I. in its directives strongly stressed the fact that fascism within the country still had considerable backing "and would seek to engineer a civil war in order to torpedo the programme of the popular front".** The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. and the leadership of the Spanish Communist Party in May 1936 stated clearly that the chief aim of the Spanish working people was to fight for a democratic republic without at present setting itself the task of effecting a transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to a socialist revolution.*** The Comintern supported the S.C.P. in its efforts to draw closer together with the social-democratic and anarcho-syndicalist workers and seek ways of approach to the Catholic masses. Special significance was attached to the task of purging the army of reactionary monarchist and fascist conspirators and strengthening the worker and peasant militia. The Comintern approved the S.C.P.'s line of loyal support to the Left-Republican government without foregoing

* Ibid., 495/18/1125/71-72.
** Ibid., 495/18/1075/85.
*** Ibid., 495/18/1092/6.

criticism of its inconsistencies, and orientation towards the possible establishment in the future of a government of the popular front.*

Frightened by the development of the democratic revolution, the reactionary forces in Spain raised a revolt in July 1936 which was supported from without by the fascist powers—Germany and Italy. A battle royal was launched in Spain against fascism on an international scale. The struggle to unite all republican forces against the fascist rebels, who were supported by the German and Italian interventionists, was interwoven with the struggle for profound general democratic reforms. An agrarian reform was being introduced, the big industrial enterprises were nationalised and the whole of socio-political life was being democratised. The Communist Party, which had joined the new government headed by the Left socialist Largo Caballero, strenuously and patiently pursued a policy aimed at uniting all anti-fascists for achieving military victory over the rebels and interventionists and carrying out democratic reforms.

The democratic revolution developing within the country went far beyond the bounds of any previously known bourgeois-democratic revolutions. Its nature and aims became an object of searching scrutiny in the governing bodies of the Comintern in which representatives of the Spanish Communist Party and other sections participated.

Already on September 18 and 19, 1936 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I., discussing the report by Manuilsky concerning the situation in Spain, raised the question of the nature of the revolution in that country. This question was touched on during the debate by Dimitrov, Codovilla, Florin, Kuusinen, Pieck, Gottwald, Pollitt and others. Dimitrov said that under the existing alignment of class forces in the world, and the fact of the Soviet Union's existence, on the one hand, and the existence of a fascist dictatorship in a number of big states on the other, the question of a bourgeois-democratic revolution and a bourgeois-democratic state should be posed in a different way. The Spanish democratic republic for which the people were fighting would not be the old democratic republic, but "a special state with a genuinely people's democracy. It will not yet be a Soviet state, but it will be an anti-fascist Left-wing state, participated in by the genuine Left elements of the bourgeoisie."**

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1092/7-14.
** Ibid., 495/18/1135/7-8.

Challenging the old guidelines to the effect that a state essentially was always either a capitalist or a socialist state, Dimitrov said that there was now coming into being a democratic state in which "the popular front is of decisive importance". "It is here a question of organising production without doing away altogether with private capitalist property; organising production with the participation and under the control of the working class and its allies... namely, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry. Theoretically, this may perhaps be correctly expressed as a special form of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry."*

In his article on the Spanish revolution Togliatti described it as a people's, a national, anti-fascist revolution carried out under new international conditions and under the growing role of the proletariat; he drew the conclusion that "the democratic republic which is being established in Spain is... a new type of democratic republic",** a "new democracy".

José Díaz, General Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, formulated at that time the thesis that the fight was on "for a new type of democratic republic",*** in which the rule of the privileged classes was done away with and the working people were able to improve their condition.

The thesis about a revolution of a new type and a state of the new democracy represented the further creative development of the doctrinal postulates of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and of Lenin's teaching on revolution. Lenin wrote on the eve of the October Revolution that the multiformity of revolutions could not be reduced to an antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution.**** Later on he often said that a revolution in "pure" form does not happen in real life, that the forms and ways of the revolution's development do not fit into ready-made schemes, that they are always more complex than schemes, that revolutions all too often do not follow a path that seems clear, straight and easiest. It was for this reason that Lenin as early as in 1920 called upon the Communists of the West to concentrate all their forces, all their attention "on the search after forms of the *transition* or the *approach*

* Ibid., 495/18/1135/8.
** *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 16, No. 48, October 24, 1936, p. 1295.
*** *The Communist International*, Vol. XIV, 1937, No. 4, p. 1001.
**** Cf. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 416.

to the proletarian revolution".* The communist movement discovered in theory and began to apply in practice a profound approach to the socialist stage of the struggle through a democratic revolution of a new type and a state of the "new democracy". All this was of tremendous importance for the strategy of the communist movement in the capitalist countries.

The searching analysis by the Comintern and the Communist Party of Spain of the character of the national-revolutionary war and its motive forces provided a secure basis for the policy of the Spanish Communists directed towards the greatest possible strengthening of the popular front and the establishment of close militant co-operation with the socialists and anarcho-syndicalists for achieving victory over the rebels and interventionists. On December 28, 1936 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. confirmed the correctness of the Party's line that nationalisation should be made subservient to the interests of the republic's defence and should be applied only to enterprises which belonged directly or indirectly to people who had taken part in the rebellion. The E.C.C.I. also approved the decision to hand over to the peasants lands which had been confiscated from their fascist owners, and the policy of safeguarding and securing the property rights and interests of the small and medium proprietors, and putting a stop to requisitions from the working people of town and country. The E.C.C.I. condemned Leftism and attempts to carry out collectivisation of peasant farming, as being a policy that was likely, under the existing conditions, to impede the common cause of the popular front and the fight against the fascist rebels.**

The policy of the popular front in Spain was furthered by the letter of the leaders of the C.P.S.U.(B.) and the Government of the U.S.S.R. In this letter to Largo Caballero dated December 21, 1936, over the signatures of Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov, the Spanish Government was offered the following friendly advice:

"(1) Attention should be given to the peasants, as this is of great importance for an agrarian country like Spain. It would be a good thing to give decrees of an agrarian and fiscal nature to meet the interests of the peasants. It would also be a good thing to draw peasants into the army or form guerilla detachments of peasants behind the lines of the fascist armies. Decrees in favour of the peasants might make this easier.

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 92.
** *The Communist International*, Vol. XIV, 1937, No. 2, pp. 865-66.

"(2) The petty and middle urban bourgeoisie should be won over to the government or, at any rate, given a chance to take up a position of benevolent neutrality by protecting them from attempts at confiscation and enabling them as far as possible to freely carry on trade. Failing this, these sections of the population will back the fascists.

"(3) The leaders of the Republican Party should not be repelled, but, on the contrary, they should be won over, drawn closer and encouraged to run in the same harness with the government."*

This advice visualised the idea of broad unity of all the republican forces against the rebels and interventionists.

The leadership of the Spanish Communist Party and the Comintern reacted swiftly to all attempts to weaken the popular front in Spain and devised measures for rallying the broad masses to the struggle against fascism. The Comintern helped the S.C.P. to work out a flexible policy aimed at drawing closer with the anarcho-syndicalist workers and counteracting the adventurist experiments of the anarchists, who attempted to establish immediately so-called "free communism" at a time when the fascist rebels and interventionists were seizing more and more districts. In an effort to achieve wider unity of the republican forces for repelling the advancing interventionists, the Communist Party of Spain, with the assent of the E.C.C.I., put forward a new slogan in 1938—that of a bloc of all Spanish patriots. With this aim in view, it demanded that a stop be put to the extremes in the practice of confiscations of small and medium private property and restitution be made to the small and medium proprietors, that all citizens loyal to the republic be guaranteed religious liberty, and so on.

In Spain, during these years, the process of closer alignment between the two trends in the labour movement—that of the Communists and the socialists—had made considerable headway. The trade unions controlled by the Communists and socialists amalgamated, and this was followed by the youth organisations of the two parties. Santiago Carrillo, until then a leader of the young socialists, became one of the leaders of the united organisation. In Catalonia, as a result of the amalgamation of four workers' parties there arose the United Socialist Party. In 1937 the Communist Party and the socialists of Spain formed a Na-

* *Voina i revolyutsiya v Ispanii 1936-1939* (The War and Revolution in Spain 1936-1939), Moscow, 1968, pp. 419-20.

tional Liaison Committee and framed a joint programme of action. Preparations were afoot for the formation of a united proletarian party. The Communist International closely followed these developments. When it transpired that some of the socialists were not yet ready for such unification, the Communist Party and the E.C.C.I. came to the conclusion that the Communists "should not force amalgamation of the Communist Party with the Socialist Party", that the important thing was "unity of action by both parties within the government, in all government bodies, in the trade unions, in the army, in the leadership of industry, as well as in joint action at the parliamentary and municipal elections".* It was recommended that those socialists who were already prepared to join the Communist Party should be persuaded that it would be of greater benefit for them to continue to work within the Socialist Party to strengthen unity of action and prepare the amalgamation of the two parties. Subsequent events arising from the defeat of the republic at the fronts and the revival of capitulatory elements within the Socialist Party interrupted this process of unification of the workers' parties.

The experience of the Spanish Republic not only confirmed the correctness of the historic decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, but considerably enriched the theory and practice of the international communist and labour movement. "Spain," said Dolores Ibárruri, "was the first country where in the course of the fight against fascism a democratic dictatorship of workers, peasants, petty and middle bourgeoisie was established."** This popular government, in its development and steadily consistent embodiment of the new democracy, gradually cleared a straight path towards socialist reforms. This tendency was clearly revealed despite the defeat of the Spanish Republic.

Some Communists, even after the Seventh Congress, regarded the policy of the popular front merely as a new tactic deriving from the need of defence against fascism and war. The course of events in Spain revealed a fact of paramount importance, namely, that the popular front, the new democracy, was a connecting link between the defensive anti-fascist struggle and the ultimate aim—the struggle for socialism. The significance of the Spanish experience for an understanding of the means of approach to the socialist stage of the revolution was fully grasped and appreciated by the Comintern.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/257/77.
** *World Marxist Review*, December 1965, Vol. 8, No. 12, p. 34.

The Comintern's Aid to the Communist Parties of Other Capitalist Countries in Their Struggle for a Popular Front

The line aimed at an anti-fascist democratic revolution and the establishment of a democracy of a new type helped to strengthen the unity of action between the Communists and socialists of Italy. A new unity-of-action pact was concluded between them in 1937. The Communists and socialists came out together for a new republic within the framework of which questions regarding the demand for land, abolition of the power of the monopolies and the rights of the people would be solved.* Thus were laid the foundations for a broad anti-fascist movement in Italy.

The struggle under the slogan of a united workers' and broad popular front was of definite benefit to the workers of the U.S.A. The Left forces increased their influence in the labour union movement. In 1938 a new labour union centre arose—the Congress of Industrial Organisations (C.I.O.), which at that time took a progressive stand. The workers of the U.S.A. won important concessions in the field of social legislation.

The Communist Party of the U.S.A., basing its line on the general principles of the Comintern, put forward the slogan of setting up a Farmer-Labor Party, which would organise sections and groups that stood for a popular front. Shortly afterwards the Communist Party saw the necessity of not limiting the popular front to the Farmer-Labor Party which was not yet acceptable to a number of political groups. In April 1937 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. supported the steps taken by the Communist Party of the U.S.A. to draw into the popular front the Left elements of the Democratic Party. At the meetings of the Secretariat, however, William Foster passed critical remarks about Earl Browder (who later became a renegade), who idealised the policy of the Roosevelt Government and considered that the forces supporting Roosevelt would act as one of the main factors of the popular front.**

In January 1938 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. dealt with the American question and approved the resolute guidelines of the

* Palmiro Togliatti, *Il partito comunista Italiano*, Ed. Riuniti, 1961, pp. 76-77.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1188/13.

Party aimed at the establishment of "a democratic front against the danger of fascism". It noted, however, that the Party betrayed a certain fear of joining "a wide joint movement with the petty-bourgeois, progressive and democratic forces".* Simultaneously, the E.C.C.I. commented on Browder's one-sided appraisal of the policy of the Roosevelt Government and the consequent danger of tailism for the Party, and gave a searching analysis of that policy.

Speaking at the American Commission of the E.C.C.I. Dimitrov advised the Communists of the U.S.A. to give skilful support to the progressive measures of that government, but stressed that it would be "wrong to create an apology of Roosevelt"; those of his measures which ran counter to the demands of the anti-fascist democratic front should be subjected to practical criticism.

The assistance of the E.C.C.I. helped the American Communists to take a more effective stand. They succeeded in gaining influence among the masses and stirring the labour and democratic movement within the country to greater activity. The ranks of the Communist Party itself grew quickly in strength, reaching a membership of nearly 90,000 by 1939.

The new policy of the Communists played an important role in the struggle of the British workers against reaction, for the economic demands of the working class, for democracy, for a foreign policy of peace. The mass movement of the workers kept the British fascists in check. The struggle reached its culminating point in October 1936, when Londoners blocked the way to the march of Mosley's thugs. The E.C.C.I. had a hand in framing the policy of unity, which led at the end of 1936 to an agreement between the British Communist Party and the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist League and to a campaign by these three organisations for the unity of the labour movement, for a change in the policy of the Labour Party. In the autumn of 1937 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. approved the British Communist Party's campaign for joining the Labour Party as a collective member, special attention being given to the need for Communists to explain to the workers that their Party recognised the Rules of the Labour Party and would assume the same duties as the other organisations affiliated to the Labour Party and enjoy the same rights as they did.** The Communists were confident that the achievement of unity in the labour movement would lead to

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1234/17.
** Ibid., 495/18/1223/8.

great progressive changes within the Labour Party itself, and this would make it possible to launch a successful attack upon the home and foreign policies of the Chamberlain Government.

The Comintern, together with its sections, pursued a policy aimed at uniting all the anti-fascist forces in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria and other countries ruled by a fascist or semi-fascist dictatorship. An important factor in this respect was that the communist parties of these countries and the Comintern clearly defined the chief aim, namely, the establishment of anti-fascist democratic republics. This aim also held good for such developed capitalist countries as Germany and Austria. Already in May 1936, when this question was being dealt with, Dimitrov said that if certain comrades and the Social-Democratic Left were "too radical-minded and do not want the slogan of struggle for a democratic republic, then this means that people do not understand the most elementary things and do not want to understand them". Only by putting forward the demand for a democratic republic could the Communists win a wide circle of allies and unite the anti-fascists.* Arguing with those who considered the slogan of a democratic republic merely as skilful tactics, W. Ulbricht declared at a meeting of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat on February 7, 1937: "But I am of the opinion that the first thing we must really do after the overthrow of Hitler is to set up a democratic republic, that there is no other way, except through the achievement of this strategic aim, of furthering our demand for a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat."**

The communist parties in the countries of fascist dictatorship were pursuing at this time a consistent policy aimed at uniting all opponents of fascism, including the anti-fascist opposition of bourgeois circles. The Communists were marching at the head of the anti-fascist struggle despite the savage terror, relentless persecution, jails and tortures. The communist parties in many of these countries succeeded in setting up committees of the popular front both locally and nationally. An appreciable role in the anti-fascist struggle was played by these committees in Germany and Poland.

Dealing with the tasks of the Communist Party of Poland, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I., in its decision of December 30, 1936, orientated the Polish Communists towards a struggle for a wide democratic front and emphasised that efforts should be directed

* Ibid., 495/18/1086/12.
** Ibid., 495/18/1169/192.

towards "mobilising all democratic forces in the country in order to break Poland away from the bloc with nazi Germany". Approval was given to the Communist Party's statement to the effect that it would support a democratic government and was prepared to carry out the democratisation of the country and enforce a peaceful foreign policy.*

The communist parties of the capitalist countries put many complex problems before the governing bodies of the Comintern, and here, as a rule, in close co-operation with the representatives of the parties and after a thorough study of the situation, decisions were formed which orientated the Communists towards a more profound policy in the struggle against reaction, fascism and war.

The leadership of the Comintern helped the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to rectify the sectarian mistakes of its April Plenum of 1936. The E.C.C.I. called a meeting in Moscow in June 1936 at which new recommendations were worked out rejecting the sectarian orientation towards a united front "only from below".** The E.C.C.I. also helped to frame the Y.C.P.'s policy on the national question, by pointing out that the slogan of self-determination of nations was not to be interpreted as an instruction for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, that the Communist Party was to come out actively for unity of the democratic popular forces under the slogan of a Federative Democratic Republic in which all the formerly oppressed nationalities would receive internal autonomy. In this connection there arose the question of setting up a separate Communist Party of Slovenia and Croatia. The E.C.C.I. supported a proposal for the machinery of leadership of the Y.C.P. to be transferred inland.*** This was in line with the Comintern's practice of encouraging the initiative of every party and applying a carefully thought out policy in keeping with the concrete conditions of every country.

Important assistance in reorientation towards an effective policy of the anti-fascist popular front was given by the Comintern to many other parties, including those of Hungary, Denmark, Holland and so on. In December 1937 the question of the Dutch Communist Party's sectarian mistakes was discussed in the Dutch Commission of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat. At the meeting of the

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1133/6-7.
** *Pregled istorije Saveza kommunista Jugoslavije*, T. 1, Beograd, 1963, pp. 285-36.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1109/5.

Commission the Dutch Communist Party was found to be suffering from a serious disease, which had penetrated deep into its ranks. "This disease is sectarian self-complacency and an overrating of one's own strength, overestimation of one's own possibilities and underestimation of the difficulties and the strength of the enemy."* The E.C.C.I. gave concrete advice on a number of questions aimed at eradicating sectarian errors and improving the Party's mass work.

The consistent line of the Comintern and the communist parties of the capitalist countries towards a united workers' and popular front was the foundation upon which the successes of the anti-fascist movement and the gains of the workers were built up. Vast masses of the working people were mobilised against fascism in many countries, and fascism was obliged to retreat. The role of the working class in the life of the nation was heightened. The communist party and other organisations of the working class gained tremendous experience of the anti-fascist struggle. Many communist parties became acknowledged leaders of the workers' struggle. The prestige of the Communists was enhanced. The communist parties in many countries grew considerably in strength during 1936-1938. In 1939 the Communists in the capitalist world numbered 1,750,000, being 120 per cent more than at the time of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.**

The Comintern and the Policy of the Communist Parties of the Colonies and Dependent Countries

The new strategy of the communist movement enabled the communist parties to become more influential political factor in the struggle of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. In the years following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the liberation movement of the masses mounted on vast territories of the colonies and semi-colonies, while at the same time there spread in this area the flames of war sparked off by the imperialist aggressors with the aim of a redivision of spheres

* Ibid., 495/18/1230/197.
** *Velikaya hartiya kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii* (The Magna Charta of the Communist and Workers' Parties), Moscow, 1961, p. 268.

of supremacy and influence. Many nations, including the many-millioned Chinese people, were threatened with enslavement and overwhelming national disaster. Under these circumstances the policy of a broad anti-imperialist front proclaimed by the Comintern paved the way towards unity among the vast majority of the oppressed nations against the colonialists.

This policy was of especially great significance for the development of the revolutionary struggle in China. Guided by the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, the Communist Party started a campaign for ending the civil war in the country and setting up an anti-Japanese national front. The Comintern regularly discussed the basic problems of the liberation struggle in China. The meeting of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat held in October 1935 had emphasised the need for uniting all anti-imperialist, anti-Japanese forces and had criticised some of the steps taken by the C.C.P. to dispossess the rich peasants and tradesmen, which at that stage of the struggle in China merely impeded the establishment of a broad anti-imperialist front.*

At the end of 1935, with the help of the Comintern, the basic principles of the policy of a united anti-Japanese national front in China were defined. The decision of the Politbureau of the C.C. of the C.C.P. of December 25, 1935, proposing a new course contained, however, a number of serious errors and old views, which virtually orientated the Party towards a simultaneous fight against both the Japanese invaders and the Kuomintang. Analysing this decision, the E.C.C.I. pointed out that such a guideline was erroneous, since the Chinese people's chief enemy was Japanese imperialism, to the struggle against which, at that stage, everything else was to be made subservient. Moreover, it was impossible simultaneously to fight both the Japanese aggressors and Chiang Kai-shek. Neither could the whole Kuomintang and the whole of Chiang Kai-shek's army be considered allies of Japan. Criticism by the E.C.C.I. helped to rectify a number of erroneous guidelines of the C.C. of the C.C.P. and work out a policy aimed at uniting all national forces against Japanese imperialism. The Communist Party started to work towards drawing the national bourgeoisie into the united front and uniting all honest patriots against the Japanese imperialists. With this aim in view the slogan of a "workers' and peasants' republic" was superceded by the slogan of "people's republic". Representatives of all sections of the population belonging to the national

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1014/276-278.

front were admitted to the government bodies. A policy of protection for the enterprises of the national bourgeoisie was proclaimed.

Important assistance was given by the Executive of the Comintern to the Communist Party of China in its struggle for a united national anti-imperialist front during the Sian events of December 1936, when Chiang Kai-shek was arrested by the insurgent soldiers. The intervention of the E.C.C.I. helped to eliminate the danger of another outbreak of civil war in China, which would have played into the hands of the Japanese aggressors.

In keeping with the Comintern's line, the C.C.P. proposed to the Kuomintang conditions for ending the civil war in the country and agreed to substitute the slogan of a democratic republic for that of a people's republic, and to suspend confiscation of the landed estates.

Questions concerning the C.C.P.'s struggle for a united national anti-imperialist front were regularly placed on the agenda of the Comintern's governing bodies. In August 1937 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. heard the report of Wan Min on the situation in China. The speaker stood for the C.C.P. negotiating an anti-imperialist, anti-Japanese front with the Kuomintang while at the same time urging the need for the Party to retain its independence, keep control of the Red Army, and maintain vigilance in regard to Chiang Kai-shek, who was out to smash the Communists and the Left forces.* This political line was adopted.

Its application made it possible to secure a cessation of the civil war in the country and the formation of a united anti-Japanese national front. China was thus able to rally her forces for a successful struggle against Japanese imperialism.

At this period contradictory tendencies were to be observed in the development of the Communist Party of China. The Party's struggle for a united anti-Japanese, anti-imperialist front enhanced its prestige and influence. Active work among the peasantry was a positive and necessary factor, since the peasant masses constituted the bulk of the anti-imperialist force. On the other hand, the fact that the C.C.P., having lost its southern revolutionary bases, withdrew into the remote rural districts and found itself far removed from the industrial centres, tended to isolate the Party from the working-class masses, and give it a peasant character. In the thirties the C.C.P. had a peasant membership of 90 per cent, whereas in 1926 as many as 66 per cent of its

* Ibid., 495/2/263/23.

membership was made up of workers. The conversion of the C.C.P. into a party with a predominantly peasant membership was attended by a growth of petty-bourgeois-nationalist attitudes within its ranks and by the consolidation within the Party's governing bodies of the positions of Mao Tse-tung and his supporters, in whose views these tendencies were strongly reflected.

The Comintern saw certain negative aspects in the development of the C.C.P. and tried to help the Party overcome them.

The Secretariat and Presidium of the E.C.C.I. together with the representatives of the C.C.P. carefully analysed the developments in China and worked out recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of the Party in the national anti-Japanese front, especially among the working class of the big cities, and at stepping up armed resistance to the aggressors. The resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. of June 11, 1938 drew special attention to the need for developing the Party's independent action, strengthening the fighting efficiency of the Eighth Army and the new Fourth Army, which were under the leadership of the C.C.P., and turning the Special District into "a model of the most democratic integral part of the entire Chinese Republic". The E.C.C.I. attached great importance to the establishment of party organisations in the Kuomintang districts and throughout Chinese territory, especially in the big cities, among the war industry workers and the railwaymen, and to the training of cadres of the Party on the basis of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.* A Marxist-Leninist schooling of C.C.P. cadres was more necessary than ever in view of the growth of petty-bourgeois-nationalist tendencies within the Party.

The formation of a united anti-imperialist front in China had a great impact on the development of the national liberation struggle throughout Asia.

The policy of the anti-imperialist front put an impulse behind the national liberation movement in India. In February 1936 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. adopted a motion on the Indian question recommending that efforts be made to get the workers' and peasants' anti-imperialist organisations admitted to membership of the Indian National Congress and to form an anti-imperialist election bloc and unity of action by all forces of the nation against British imperialism and against any compromise with it.** After the Communists joined the Indian National Congress a strong Left wing appeared in this party of the national bourgeoisie. Backed by the amalgamated trade unions and the united national peasant organisation, this Left wing exercised no little influence on the programme of the national liberation movement and its development.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/263/24-26.
** Ibid., 495/18/1073/403-404.

The new policy was adopted also by the Communists of the Arabian countries. The Comintern, together with the representatives of the communist parties of the Arabian countries, subjected the activities of the Arabian Communists to a critical analysis. After a long and careful study of the state of the national liberation movement of the Arabian peoples carried out with the active co-operation of representatives of the Arabian communist parties, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. adopted a resolution in February 1936 laying bare many of the mistakes and weaknesses of the Arabian Communists. The resolution condemned the line aimed at fighting the national-reformist organisations and building up an independent Red trade union movement, and pointed to the need for a widest possible anti-imperialist front in the Arabian countries. "The Communists of the Arabian countries," the resolution said, "must fully realise that they are answerable for the fate of their people and their country, that they bear responsibility for the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the struggle for national independence and social emancipation, that they are heirs to and defenders of their nation's best national and cultural traditions." The communist parties were recommended "to ensure close co-operation with the national-revolutionaries, to work for collaboration with the national-reformist organisations, support the demands of these organisations directed against the positions of imperialism"* and fight against any compromise with imperialism, against chauvinism and Zionism. The Communists of some of the Arabian countries were recommended to join the mass national revolutionary organisations and carry on active positive work in them. All these conclusions focussed the attention of the Arabian Communists on the complex problems of the national liberation movement. Armed with these new decisions, the Arabian Communists strove to take a more active part in the national liberation struggle. The Communist Parties of Tunisia and Algeria began to function as independent sections of the Comintern.

The national liberation and democratic struggle under the slogan of the popular and anti-imperialist front dealt a serious blow to fascism in the countries of Latin America.

* Ibid., 495/18/1079/21.

A popular front was established in Chile in 1936 with the active co-operation of the Communist Party. It united all progressive sections of the population who stood for the democratisation of socio-political life, against foreign capital, for national independence, for satisfaction of the workers' economic demands. The Communists strove to direct this broad alliance of forces not only against the North-American and German imperialists, but against the Chilean landowners, the big Chilean oligarchy. Following the victory of the popular front at the parliamentary elections in 1938 a government of the popular front was set up in Chile. This success, combined with the wave of big strikes, dealt a serious blow to the positions of Chilean reaction and foreign imperialism. The reactionaries' plans for establishing a military-fascist dictatorship were quashed by the masses. The working people of Chile won for themselves certain social and economic gains.

The working class of Chile, however, did not yet play a leading role in the popular front and this was the front's weakness.

A broad front of Left-wing forces came into being in 1936 in Argentina, but it was not firmly established and properly organised. The Communist Party tried to secure a democratic alliance against imperialism, reaction and fascism. In July 1937 the Comintern endorsed the documents submitted by the Communist Party of Argentina and agreed that the aim of the democratic alliance was "the liquidation of the remnants of feudalism and the establishment in Argentina of a democratic regime, which would enable the working class, all the working people, the whole nation, to defend their rights and interests and improve their conditions of life".* At the same time the E.C.C.I. considered it advisable to highlight in the platform of the democratic alliance the questions of the struggle against the foreign usurpers who appropriated the country's wealth and fruits of the people's labour.

A popular-revolutionary bloc was formed in Cuba in 1937 on the initiative of the Communists. It consisted of the Communist Party, trade union organisations and peasant leagues. This bloc compelled the government to make certain concessions to the workers and to give legal status to the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions.

The policy of the popular front played an important role in the struggle of the Mexican workers for the enactment of anti-

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1210/9.

imperialist reforms at the end of the thirties. The government of Lázaro Cardenas, the leader of the Left wing of the National Revolutionary Party, on the rising tide of the mass movement, started to carry out an agrarian reform and the nationalisation of the railways and the oil industry belonging to foreign capital. The party itself, having absorbed the mass organisations, was reorganised into the Party of the Mexican Revolution (P.M.R.).

The Communist Party expressed the desire to join the P.M.R. on the basis of collective membership ensuring its political independence. This would enable the P.M.R. to be converted into a broad national front. The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. supported this tactic of the Communist Party. It drew attention to the need for Communists to clearly realise that it was not a question of establishing in Mexico a dictatorship of the proletariat, and not to attempt to skip the stage of democratic struggle, which would only split the popular front. Simultaneously, however, strong emphasis was laid on the need for resolutely opposing all tendencies likely to lead to a policy of tailism, to subservience of the Communist Party to the petty-bourgeois revolutionaries.*

The policy of the popular front in the countries of Latin America rallied great masses of the proletariat, the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie and radical circles of the national bourgeoisie to action. In many Latin American countries the long-range plans of fascist reaction were foiled by the movement of the masses.

The struggle for anti-imperialist unity in the colonial and dependent countries, however, met with great obstacles. The colonialists, imperialist capital, used all kinds of maneuveres to keep a part of the national bourgeoisie to a policy of compromise. Some groups of the national bourgeoisie in a number of dependent countries, in an attempt to take advantage of the antagonisms among the imperialists, sought a close alliance with the imperialist competitors of their imperialist oppressors. The hopes for such an alliance tended also to weaken the mass movement. But despite all this, the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle in the colonies and dependent countries gained in strength and scope compared with the preceding period. An important role in this was played by the Communists' new policy.

* Ibid., 495/2/264/187-189.

The Comintern at the Head of the Struggle for a Broad Peace Front Against the Fascist Warmongers

Special tasks were imposed on the Comintern and the international communist movement by the growing menace of a world war, into which the capitalist powers were steadily slipping. The aggressive fascist states were co-ordinating their plans and actions in preparation for war more and more closely. In October 1936 Germany and Italy carried out their long-premeditated alliance and formed the Berlin-Rome Axis. The aggressors arranged their initial positions for a campaign of plunder and seizure of foreign territories. In November 1936 Japan joined the alliance between Germany and Italy, forming the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact. This pact was directed against the Soviet Union and the international labour and national liberation movement, but its aim also was a redivision of colonies, the enslavement of entire countries and nations in Europe and Asia.

The Comintern and the communist parties redoubled their efforts to seek ways of rallying the supporters of peace. The relative failure of the attempts to organise united action by the international proletariat against Italian aggression in Ethiopia had not discouraged the Communists. The Comintern and the communist parties sponsored new international anti-war actions.

The Executive of the Comintern set before the communist group in the Joint World Committee Against Imperialist War and Fascism the task of spurring this Committee to the greatest possible activity and getting it turned into the headquarters of a mass movement against fascism and war. While strictly observing the supra-party character of this Committee the Communists strove to unite "all friends of peace in all social strata" within the framework of the peace movement. At a discussion of questions relating to preparations for a world peace congress, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. underlined in its decision of March 17, 1936 that the first to be invited to this congress were the representatives of the Social-Democratic parties and trade unions, the functionaries of these organisations, and representatives of the organisations of the peasants, the middle strata of the towns, intellectuals and bourgeois pacifists.* It was recommended that such

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1082/62.

questions be raised at the congress as would unite around them all supporters of peace.

The World Peace Congress was held in Brussels in September 1936. On the eve of the Congress the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I., in its recommendations to the communist delegates, pointed out once more that the most important thing was to ensure "the further and greatest possible enrolment into the movement of the most diverse elements, groups and organisations standing for peace, irrespective of their political or religious trends".* This stand on the part of the Communists made for a broad representation of the various organisations of peace supporters. Four and a half thousand delegates from 35 countries representing 750 national and 40 international organisations attended the Congress. Although the representatives of the Socialist Labour International and Amsterdam International of Trade Unions took no official part in the Congress, most of the trade union organisations and a number of socialist parties sent their delegates, among them prominent leaders of both reformist Internationals. The Congress was attended not only by representatives of the workers' organisations, but by all kinds of bourgeois-democratic, pacifist, religious and bourgeois anti-war groups.

The Communists did not put forward any special platform, and agreed that it was necessary to fight for aims that were acceptable to all honest defenders of peace. The Congress proclaimed as a basic platform four points: (1) the inviolability of treaties, (2) reduction and limitation of armaments, (3) collective security and strengthening of the League of Nations, (4) creation within the framework of the League of Nations of an effective system capable of dealing with international tensions likely to cause a war. A proposal was made to hold an international peace plebiscite. The results of the Congress testified to the growing unity of the forces which came out against the imperialist aggressors—Germany, Japan and Italy.**

The International Youth Congress, which was held at the same time in Geneva, called upon the youth organisations of different trends to come out actively against the threat of war.

The Comintern tirelessly exposed the plans of the fascist aggressors, brought home to the masses the grave danger which threatened from those two main hotbeds of war—fascist Germany and imperialist Japan, and helped the communist parties to frame

* Ibid., 495/18/1102/27.
** *Rundschau*, 1936, N. 41, S. 1714.

a policy for uniting the forces of peace in each country and establishing an international peace front.

The Comintern drew the special attention of the working people of Europe to the danger of Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia and other neighbour countries of Germany. In May 1936 the E.C.C.I. warned the workers of Austria that their country was in danger of losing its independence. Point 1 of the Secretariat's resolution of September 3, 1937 read: "The greatest danger now threatening the Austrian people is the danger of Austria's independence being destroyed by Hitler Germany."* At the beginning of 1938 the Comintern declared once more in its documents and appeals that still more truculent acts of aggression by the nazis against Austria, Czechoslovakia and other countries were to be expected.

In answer to this threat the communist parties took steps to ensure joint action by all organisations of the working people and all the forces of peace in order to build up the defensive capacity of their countries against fascist aggression.

Already in 1936 the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, pursuing a policy of defence of the nation against Hitlerite fascism, launched an active campaign for democratisation of social and political life and the army, and for satisfaction of the urgent demands of the working people; it proposed to the workers' and democratic parties and to the government concrete measures for strengthening Czechoslovakia's defensive power and her friendship with the Soviet Union.

With the seizure of Austria by the nazis in the spring of 1938, Czechoslovakia found herself half-surrounded by Germany. The more reactionary part of her bourgeoisie were inclined towards an agreement with Hitler. On May 25, 1938 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. passed a resolution on the Czech question fully endorsing the line of the Czechoslovak Communist Party at establishing a front in defence of the republic's independence. It was proposed to draw into this front the broad masses of not only the Czech and Slovak peoples, but also the Germans, Hungarians, Ukrainians and Poles living in Czechoslovakia. "The Party's efforts," said the resolution, "should be directed towards uniting not only the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and the labour intellectuals, but also those sections of the bourgeoisie whose interests would be threatened by loss of the republic's independence and who would be inclined to

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1222/79.

defend the country's independence."* The slogan calling for a front in defence of the republic's independence to be participated in by different social sections, including the patriotic members of the bourgeoisie, signified that the C.C.P. had adopted a policy of the national front against nazism. Thus were laid the foundations of the future policy of the Resistance Movement.

The Communist Parties of Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia revealed to the masses the danger of a nazi attack and strove to form an alliance of all anti-reactionary forces capable of resisting aggression. The Comintern and the communist parties impressed upon the working people that in the event of a European or world conflict these countries would not be spared by the war and that the way to fascist aggression had to be blocked immediately. In 1938 the E.C.C.I. repeatedly discussed with the representatives of the Communist Parties of Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian countries the tasks of these parties and advised them to make every possible effort to rally the popular masses against fascism and the menace of aggression on the part of nazi Germany. For this purpose the communist parties had to offer a positive programme on the questions of defence while demanding a combing-out of fascists from the state apparatus and the army. The Communists denounced the so-called policy of neutrality pursued by the ruling circles of the Scandinavian countries, as this actually implied surrendering to the demands of the Hitler government and to the reactionary circles within these countries who were associated with it. It meant renunciation of collective security.

The fight against Hitler's aggressive plans was a pressing problem also for the Balkan peoples. Together with the Comintern the communist parties of the Balkan countries put forward slogans opposing nazi Germany's economic and political penetration in this area.

The international communist movement acted as the most consistent force of the struggle for peace. The aggressive actions of the fascist powers, the local wars unleashed by them, were correctly appraised by the Comintern as direct steps towards a world war. The Comintern strove to rally the broad masses against this danger.

* Ibid., 495/18/1245/14.

For Militant Solidarity with the Fighting Peoples of Spain and China

A vivid page in the life of the communist movement, in its challenge to the forces of war, was the Comintern's endeavours to organise an international anti-fascist campaign of solidarity with the Spanish Republic against the Italo-German intervention. In September 1936 the Secretariat and Presidium of the E.C.C.I. put forward a comprehensive programme of united action by the working class and all the world's anti-fascists in defence of the Spanish Republic. It was decided to launch a wide campaign of assistance to the Spanish people in the following directions: denunciation of the violation of neutrality by the fascist governments of Germany, Italy and Portugal; prevention of deliveries of arms to the insurgents; organisation of a campaign in defence of the Spanish people; the demand to allow shipments for the Spanish Republic and "the recruiting among the workers of different countries of military-trained volunteers to be sent to Spain".*

The E.C.C.I. considered it necessary to obtain the consent of the Socialist Labour International to call an international conference of labour organisations to discuss the question of rendering joint practical aid to the Spanish Republic. It recommended organising pressure by the working people upon the governments of various countries and upon the League of Nations to make them stop the delivery of arms to the insurgents and ensure the necessary means of defence for the lawful government of Spain. The Comintern appealed to the labour organisations and to all democrats to render practical moral and material aid to the Spanish people.

In response to the appeal of the Communists a stream of volunteers flowed into Spain. Sympathy towards the Spanish Republic is borne out by the fact that in the autumn of 1936 nearly 300,000 people in the U.S.A. applied to the Spanish Embassy for permission to join the Republican army.** The United States authorities, however, prevented most of the volunteers from going to Spain.

Anti-fascist volunteers arriving in Spain from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Belgium, the U.S.A., Latin America and other countries were formed into international brigades. A leading role in their organisation and in the leadership of their military operations was played by the Communists, among them such prominent figures as Togliatti, Luigi Longo, Di Vittorio, Codovilla, Máté Zalka, Hans Beimler, and Karol Swierczewski, to mention only a few. The international brigades united anti-fascists of all political trends and contained many socialists and non-party people. The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in its decision of December 28, 1936 emphasised that the international brigades were "a component part of the United People's Army of Spain, fully subordinate to the government and the military command of the Spanish Republic",* and they had no aims of their own distinct from the aims of the government of the popular front. Thirty-five thousand volunteers from 54 countries fought in the international brigades. From a military point of view they were no match for the 300,000-strong Italo-German army of the interventionists. But they embodied the spirit of solidarity of the world's working people with the embattled Spanish people. The international anti-fascist front became a tangible reality on the battlefields of Spain, a real school of warfare and politics, through which many parties, many political and public figures passed.

An active part on the side of the Spanish working people was taken by the Soviet Union, which regarded their struggle as part of the general struggle against international fascism. The U.S.S.R. rendered considerable aid to the Spanish Republic. This aid took the shape of a mass campaign of solidarity with and collection of funds for the Spanish Republic. The Soviet Union sent dozens of ships with food, medical supplies and arms for the Republicans. Spain received from the U.S.S.R. tanks, planes and artillery. Soviet military specialists—airmen, tankmen, artillerymen, naval men, engineers and technicians—fought on the war fronts of Spain. And although they were not very many, they played a tremendous role both as soldiers and as aides to the Spanish Republican Command.

"In the course of the Spanish people's war against the fascist rebellion and against the forces leagued with fascism and international reaction," wrote Ibárruri, "the solidarity of the peoples of the Soviet Union with the Spanish people, their effective material assistance to the Republican government and the Spanish fighters played an exceptionally important role. The Spanish working people during their liberation struggle learned by experience what proletarian internationalism meant, what the existence of

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1135/2.
** *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1936, No. 16, p. 84.

* *The Communist International*, No. 2, 1937, p. 866.

the Soviet Union meant for the liberation struggle of the working class and of all peoples."*

On the initiative of the Communists the anti-fascists of many countries took steps in support of the Spanish Republic. An International Co-ordination and Information Committee for Aid to the Spanish Republic was formed. International conferences were held in aid of Spanish women and children. Collections were made everywhere and considerable funds raised. The Communists initiated a sustained political campaign throughout the world, holding meetings and demonstrations, and arranging speeches in parliaments and the municipalities and articles in the labour press. In many countries there arose Joint Defence Committees in Defence of Republican Spain and Vigilance Committees which prevented the shipment of war materials for the insurgents and interventionists. Not only the Communists, but all honest democrats called passionately for unity among the friends of peace, for concerted action against fascist aggression. The international rally of writers in defence of Spanish culture and against fascist barbarism declared that "the defeat of the Spanish people will increase the threat to world peace. Its victory will strike a blow at the plans of those who are out to engineer and instigate another world war. The Spaniards have to be helped to beat fascism..."** declared the motto of the progressive writers.

The communist parties in many countries proposed to the socialists practical steps for united demonstrations of solidarity with Spain.

On October 14, 1936, three months after the outbreak of the rebellion in Spain, Cachin and Thorez, acting on the instructions of the E.C.C.I., met the leaders of the Socialist Labour International and proposed the organisation of immediate joint aid for the Spanish people. These proposals were made again by the Comintern to the Socialist Labour International and the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions on October 25, November 7 and December 28, 1936.***

The leaders of the S.L.I., however, refused to take joint action in defence of the Spanish Republic. They did nothing practical to get the blockade of Republican Spain raised. At the London Conference of the S.L.I. and the Amsterdam International in March 1937 they confined themselves to a promise "to alert world public opinion",* at a time when the Spanish socialists were demanding weapons. The Spanish Socialist Party walked out of the Conference as a sign of protest against its decision.

In view of the determination of the international working class to help Spain and the stepping up of intervention on the part of Germany (the shelling of Almeria by nazi warships), the Comintern in the summer of 1937 made yet another proposal for joint action by the Communists and socialists in defence of the Spanish Republic. Under the pressure of world public opinion the leaders of the S.L.I. agreed to meet representatives of the E.C.C.I. The talks, held in France in June and July 1937, ended with arrangements being made for a number of joint actions.** The agreement, however, remained a scrap of paper as far as the reformist leaders were concerned—they confined their assistance to clothes, food and medical supplies. While swearing solidarity with the Spanish Republic, these leaders, who held posts in the governments of a number of countries, refused to defend the interests of the Republic. The Government of Blum, by pursuing a "policy of non-interference", virtually blockaded the Spanish Republic and closed its frontier. This placed the Republic in a difficult position. The socialist Spaak, head of the Belgian Government, encouraged persecution of the volunteers of the international brigades. Socialist ministers at the League of Nations opposed, in effect, the application of sanctions to the fascist aggressors in Spain. By rejecting united action in aid of the Spanish Republic the leaders of Social-Democracy dealt a serious blow to the anti-fascist policy of the popular front.

The Communist International and the international communist movement alone remained true to the internationalist principles of fraternal mutual assistance in the fight against fascism and war.

The Comintern also did a great deal towards organising an international working-class campaign in aid of the Chinese people's liberation struggle. Decisions on this question were repeatedly adopted by the E.C.C.I. In its directives of October 3, 1937 concerning "Aid to the Spanish and Chinese People", the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. formulated a programme of action by the communist parties in support of the Chinese people.*** On October 15, 1937 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. adopted a decision to

* *Mezhdunarodnoye znacheniye Oktyabrskoi revolyutsii* (The International Significance of the October Revolution), Moscow, 1957, p. 10.
** *Pravda*, October 9, 1936.
*** *The Communist International*, No. 2, 1937, p. 866.

* *Bulletin des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, 1937, No. 11, S. 4.
** *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1937, No. 8, p. 87.
*** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1225/131-142.

issue an appeal to the reformist Internationals and to all anti-war organisations calling for solidarity with and aid to the Chinese people in their just struggle against the Japanese invaders. In December 1937 the Secretariat again discussed the progress of the campaign in aid of the Chinese people and approved the initiative of the Communist Parties of the U.S.A., Britain, Holland and other countries in setting up Friends of China Committees. These committees played an important role in the collection of funds, in organising a solidarity campaign and carrying out a boycott of Japanese goods. Tremendous assistance was rendered to the national liberation struggle of the Chinese people by the Soviet Union.

The Soviet people gave not only ardent moral support to this struggle. The Soviet Union in August 1937 signed a non-aggression treaty with the Chinese Republic, thereby strengthening the hopes of the Chinese people for success in their struggle against the imperialists. This agreement contributed to the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front in China. At the same time the U.S.S.R. granted the Government of China a big loan for the purchase of weapons. Soviet military advisers and several Soviet volunteer air force units operated on the vast Chinese fronts. The Comintern and the Soviet Union took no little part in organising resistance to Japanese imperialist aggression in China.

Mobilisation of the International Sections of the Comintern Against Fascism and War

The Communist International mobilised for the struggle for a united workers' and popular front against fascism and war all the forces of the international organisations affiliated to it: the Profintern, the Young Communist International, the Sport International, the International Red Aid and others.

The most important task that faced the Red International of Trade Unions after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern was that of achieving unity of the trade unions in the capitalist countries and uniting them on a platform of struggle against reaction, fascism and war, and in defence of the workers' economic demands and rights. Such trade union unity, as the experience of France went to prove, enhanced the militant power of the proletariat. The Executive of the Comintern therefore recommended

the Profintern to concentrate its efforts on achieving unity of the trade unions both on a national and, especially, on an international scale.

In June 1936, when the Red trade unions in a number of countries had already joined the reformist unions and things in other countries were rapidly moving towards this, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. defined the aim of the Profintern, which was to set up an international unity committee backed by the already united trade unions or united trade union centres. "The activities of the Profintern should be concentrated on the setting up of an international committee of trade union unity," said the resolution.*

In 1937 the Red Trade Union International, which had done a great deal towards uniting the revolutionary forces into an international trade union movement, ceased its activities, inasmuch as the great majority of its sections had united with the mass reformist unions or had joined these unions. The Profintern apparatus was dissolved in December 1937.** The Comintern and Profintern thus made big concessions to the Amsterdam International in a sincere effort to pave the way towards unity of the world trade union movement.

With the Profintern no longer functioning, the Soviet trade unions, which were its largest organisation, raised the question of affiliation to the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions, laying down only one condition, namely: the International was to conduct a consistent fight against fascism and war. Under pressure of the masses, who were seized with an urge towards unity, the leaders of the reformist trade unions began to maneuver. In the autumn of 1937 they sent a delegation to Moscow for talks about the Soviet Union's joining the Amsterdam International. A corresponding agreement was reached, but it never came into force, because Citrine, Schevenels and other reformist leaders torpedoed the plans for unity of the international trade union movement.

After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern the Sixth Congress of the Young Communist International (September-October 1935) came to important conclusions to the effect that the struggle against fascism and war called for a change in the character of the young communist leagues. These were to be turned into mass organisations of labour youth, uniting not only convinced "ready-made Communists", but all who sympathised with

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1095/66.
** Ibid., 495/18/1230/89.

communism or wished to master it. At the meeting of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. in March 1936 the aims of the Young Communist International in this field were defined as follows: "these young communist organisations to be turned into mass organisations of labour youth, into non-party, but essentially revolutionary organisations."* This central core was capable of rapidly forming around itself a united front of all anti-fascist youth leagues. This general guideline was reinforced with organisational changes, which opened the door wider to membership of the youth leagues. The ground was prepared for achieving unity among the anti-fascist youth. In Spain the Communist and Socialist Youth leagues united, and in April 1936 there arose a United Young Socialist League, which eventually became an important force of resistance to fascism. In July 1936 the Young Communist and Socialist leagues united in Latvia. Agreements were reached in a number of countries for unity of action by the youth organisations of an anti-fascist trend (France, Belgium, Bulgaria and several other countries). In many countries the Y.C.L. established contact and co-operation with the farm-labour and Catholic youth organisations, using these ties to develop the struggle of youth against fascism and war. Despite the rejection of united action on an international scale with the Young Communist International on the part of the leaders of the Young Socialist International, the new policy of the Y.C.I. drew increasing masses of young people into the struggle against fascism and war.

The Comintern concentrated the attention of the Sport International, the International Red Aid, the International Revolutionary Theatre Organisation, the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union and others on the tasks of drawing the broad masses into the anti-fascist struggle. The reorganisation of these international bodies pursued the sole purpose of facilitating mass work, helping to rally against fascism and war all that was best in every nation.

The Soviet Union's Enhanced Role as a Bulwark of the World Revolutionary Process

The policy of the Communist International had a strong support in the person of the Soviet Union. The role of this support

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1079/586.

became particularly important at a time when imperialist reaction and fascism were heading full-tilt towards a world war, while the anti-fascist and anti-war struggle was not yet strong enough to avert this fearful menace of a war of extermination and fascist enslavement. The fate of the world revolutionary process now more than ever depended on the all-round strengthening of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet people were aware of this great historical responsibility. They spared no effort to build up a socialist society. The year 1937 saw the successful completion of the Second Five-Year Plan. Socialist relations of production became absolutely preponderant in industry, agriculture and trade. The country made a new gigantic stride in industrial development. The newly created industries, especially those branches which were of primary importance for defence, rapidly expanded. The military and economic power of the socialist homeland was a guarantee that the cause of socialism in the world could never be drowned in blood by the imperialist aggressors. The Party of Lenin, the Soviet people carried out their international duty by turning the U.S.S.R. into a mighty bulwark of socialism and peace.

A constitution was adopted at the end of 1936 which reflected the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and consecrated by law the great gains and rights of the Soviet people.

In 1938 the Soviet people started on their Third Five-Year Plan, the fulfilment of which made the Soviet Union a still more powerful material force of the world revolutionary process.

By this time a new generation of people had arisen in the U.S.S.R., educated by the Communist Party in the spirit of devotion to the ideas of socialism, internationalism and fraternity among the nations. This generation was prepared to staunchly defend the gains of Soviet rule and of the whole world liberation movement.

The consolidation of socialism in the U.S.S.R., the industrialisation of the country, the build-up of its military power, the collectivisation of agriculture, the achievement of moral and political unity of the Soviet population—that is, the internal consolidation of the world's first socialist country—all this formed the great contribution which the C.P.S.U. made to the cause of the international communist movement, to the future victories of the revolutionary and democratic forces throughout the world.

The Soviet Union also came out upon the international scene as a factor making for unity of the revolutionary and democratic

forces against fascism and war. The U.S.S.R. worked for a system of collective security in Europe and for strengthening the League of Nations as an obstruction in the way of the aggressors.

Difficulties in the Communist Parties' Struggle Against Fascism and War

Considerable difficulties stood in the way of the Comintern's policy. From 1938 onward it began to grow clear that imperialist reaction, fascism and the forces of war, which had been put on the defensive and forced to retreat in a number of countries during two or three years, had again begun to beset the workers and the democratic movement. An acute struggle was on between two camps maneuvering for positions of vantage on the eve of the approaching general world collision. In this struggle the workers of the capitalist countries, for many reasons, experienced serious difficulties.

Right-wing Social-Democracy, which considered it impossible to break off collaboration with the bourgeoisie, attacked the policy of the united workers' and popular front more and more. It destroyed this unity where it had been achieved. This is what happened in France. Under pressure of economic diversions organised by the big bourgeoisie, the immense flowing off of capital, and political blackmail by reaction, the leaders of the Radical and Socialist parties, frightened, moreover, by the prospect of a growing popular front, took to the path of capitulation to the monopolies. The "respite" in the application of the popular front programme was followed by undermining activities within it. Blown up from within and attacked by the reactionary bourgeoisie from without, the popular front in France was wrecked in 1938.

The Right leaders of Social-Democracy everywhere renounced the struggle for the new democracy. They were busy with plans for strengthening state regulation of economic and social life, hoping by this means to dodge the real issues and escape social upheavals.

A strong obstacle to unity of the anti-fascist and anti-war forces was the international anti-Soviet compact among the imperialists, which tended to consolidate their actions. By this time pro-fascist feeling, a striving to make a deal with Hitler at the

expense of the Soviet Union's destruction, became more and more manifest among the circles of the imperialist bourgeoisie in many countries.

Fear of the Soviet Union's growing might, of the popular front in various countries, of the mounting revolutionary movement, fear at the prospect of a victory of the popular government in Spain—all this threw the bourgeoisie into the arms of Hitler. In face of the approaching world conflict the imperialist bourgeoisie were anxious to be on the side of the nazis against the U.S.S.R., against the world revolutionary and democratic movement.

The new onset of imperialist reaction and fascism was manifest in many events—in the stepping up of Italo-German intervention in Spain, in the failure of a number of actions by the workers in France and other countries, and in the further fascistisation of the regimes in some of the small countries. In Rumania, for example, the establishment of a royal dictatorship in 1938 meant a decisive step towards the country's fascistisation and conversion into a satellite of nazi Germany.

The policy of an anti-Soviet imperialist deal reached its culminating point in the Munich Pact, concluded in September 1938 between the governments of the four powers—Germany, Britain, France and Italy. It gave Czechoslovakia up to the tender mercies of the nazi aggressors and encouraged them to attack the U.S.S.R. The communist parties of ten European countries, the U.S.A. and Canada immediately issued a joint appeal declaring to the nations of the world that "the Munich betrayal has not saved peace, but has only endangered it by dealing a blow at the union of peace forces in all countries and encouraging the fascists...".*

The Munich Pact created a grave situation for the Spanish Republic. The German and Italian fascists received not only complete freedom of action to crush the Republic, but direct support from the ruling circles of Britain, France and the U.S.A. The so-called democratic governments of various countries and the Right leaders of Social-Democracy preferred the role of indifferent spectators to the scene of the Republic's strangulation.

Munich was a heavy blow to the international labour movement and to the anti-war movement in particular. It not only gave the green light to fascist aggression, but whipped up all the reactionary forces in their struggle against the proletariat and the forces of democracy.

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* *L'Humanité*, October 9, 1938.

It became clear that on the eve of the decisive clash with fascism a situation unfavourable to and difficult for the working class and all the working people was developing in the capitalist countries.

The Comintern, during this anxious time, constantly exposed the imperialist deal directed against the U.S.S.R. It orientated the communist parties towards building up the movement of resistance to the fascist aggressors. In its directives of June 14, 1939 headed "The New Situation in Czechoslovakia and the Tasks of the Party" the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. pointed out that the nazis were pursuing in the annexed territories of Czechoslovakia a policy of genocide and that it was now the task of the Communist Party to "organise the people's resistance",* that the Communists had to come out as champions of the national cause, choosing the most suitable and expedient forms of resistance. This task of resistance to Hitlerite fascism, the directives stated, "calls for the broadest union of the people's forces into united national fronts, from the workers and peasants and the petty-bourgeois strata in the towns to those bourgeois elements who, under pressure of German violence, are inclined to abandon their capitulatory stand and their line at unification and are prepared, together with the people, to take the line of resistance to the German fascist aggressors".**

The tasks of resistance to Hitlerite fascism were formulated in the directives of the E.C.C.I. to the communist parties of various countries of Central Europe, the Balkans and Scandinavia.

The deal among the imperialists confronted the U.S.S.R. towards the end of the summer of 1939 with the alternative of either the isolation of the country in the face of the world front of imperialism, which threatened war from both the east and west, or a temporary respite by accepting the proposal of the German Government for a non-aggression pact. Such a pact was concluded. The reasons and motives which prompted this foreign policy move on the part of the Soviet Government were not generally and fully appreciated at the time, even in the ranks of the communist parties. In some cases it created certain difficulties for the Communists in their struggle against German fascism. The conclusion of this pact, however, averted the establishment of a united anti-Soviet front of the imperialist powers and staved off for a time Hitler's attack upon the U.S.S.R. and enabled the Soviet

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1282/99.
** Ibid., 495/18/1282/101-102.

people to make use of this breathing space to further strengthen the country. At the same time this pact dealt a crushing blow to the Munich deal and prevented what could have been a most unfavourable course of events, namely, a joint war by all the imperialist powers against the Soviet Union.

Definite difficulties existed within the communist movement itself. Many of the decisions of the Presidium and Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. adopted during 1936-1939, while giving correct warnings against the danger of Trotskyism and hostile activities within the ranks of the communist parties, contained erroneous appraisals of various non-communist political forces. Some organisations with which the communist parties had formerly collaborated were listed as hostile. This encouraged sectarian tendencies and led to the curtailment or narrowing of the policy of broad anti-fascist alliances which the Comintern had pursued with such vigor. Matters were complicated by the fact that the leadership of Social-Democracy in many countries more and more openly resorted to stalling tactics to wreck the policy of the united workers' and popular front. This attitude could not but evoke sharper criticism and appraisals of Social-Democratic policy on the part of the Comintern.

A number of difficulties arose during this period in the communist movement in connection with the cult of Stalin's personality and its attendant adverse effects both within the U.S.S.R. and the Comintern.

Stalin had great services to his credit for his part in the struggle for socialism and in the strengthening of the unity of the communist movement. The cult of Stalin's personality, however, leading as it did to the violation of Lenin's principles of collective leadership and of socialist legality, and to repressions against people who were dedicated to the cause of the Party and the people, caused damage to Soviet society. Obviously, the plottings of international imperialism, the existence of a hostile capitalist encirclement and the counter-revolutionary attacks of the Trotskyites created within the country an atmosphere of tension which called for greater cohesion within the Party. Under such conditions many honest party, administrative and military workers were unjustly accused of crimes against the state.

The adverse effects of the cult of the Stalin personality told also on the Communist International, on its personnel and on various aspects of its policy. Prominent leaders of the international communist movement, communist party leaders in a number of countries were accused in 1937 and 1938 of Trotskyism, of plotting

and spying for the imperialist powers, and were subjected to repressions.

All these negative features were used by the enemies of socialism in all countries for attacks upon the socialist system of society and upon the communist parties; the Right-wing socialists stepped up their splitting activities in the labour movement.

Under the complex conditions prevailing at the time the Communist Party of Poland was unjustly accused of letting its leadership pass into the hands of the class enemies. On the basis of this accusation the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in August 1938 passed a decision to dissolve the Communist Party of Poland.* The decision claimed that reactionary forces were causing fictitious splits in the labour, national-democratic and petty-bourgeois organisations, and under the guise of elements going over to the side of the Communist Party was planting its agents in it. It is no secret that the forces of reaction in a number of countries were trying to make use of such a method of infiltrating its agents. However, the tendency to regard many groups that had aligned themselves with the communist parties as disguised enemies narrowed the field for the communist policy. The dissolution of the Polish Communist Party, notwithstanding the fact that the E.C.C.I. shortly afterwards set up a promotion group for its rehabilitation and then a provisional guiding centre, dealt a heavy blow to the labour movement in that country. Prior to this the leadership of the Communist Party of Latvia had been virtually disbanded too.

The negative aspects of Comintern history at that period cannot, however, overshadow the great historical role of this organisation, which stood at the centre of the struggle of the labour masses against fascism and war, rallied them to this struggle, and pointed the way to crush their dire enemy—fascism, the way to socialist progress.

* * *

* A statement signed by the Central Committees of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Italian Communist Party, the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Communist Party of Finland was issued in February 1956 explaining that the dissolution of the Communist Party of Poland was unjustified. The statement paid tribute to the revolutionary past of the Polish Communist Party. "Even after the dissolution of the Party," the statement said, "the Polish Communists conducted an active struggle against the fascist dictatorship of the Polish capitalists and landowners, against the imminent threat of nazi aggression, using all existing organisational forms of the mass workers' and peasants' movement" (*Pravda*, February 21, 1956).

The activities of the Communist International during 1934-1939 and especially the practice of its policy of the united workers' and popular front, form one of the most important periods of its history. Its policy at this period was embodied in mighty class battles, in a powerful anti-fascist movement.

The united workers' and popular front dealt serious blows to fascism, thereby creating conditions for the further consolidation of all the forces of the world revolutionary movement.

The struggle of the Comintern and the communist parties for a united workers' and popular front not only confirmed the correctness of the Comintern's strategic and tactical line worked out at the Seventh Congress, but enriched it by opening up to the working people of the capitalist countries the prospect of a movement towards socialism through a struggle for democracy. The understanding of this prospect armed the communist and labour movement in the course of a whole historical period.

The struggle for a united workers' and popular front during 1934-1939 in large measure enhanced the role of the working class and the communist parties in the socio-political arena, and established the working class as the leading force in the struggle for general democratic demands, for the national interests of their peoples. The communist parties in a number of countries at that time became important political factors in the life of their countries and won the wide support of the masses. With minor exceptions, the Communists all over the world were rapidly gaining strength.

The policy of the united anti-imperialist front worked out by Lenin and the Comintern and applied by the communist parties of the colonial and dependent countries, was the only right road towards uniting all the anti-imperialist forces of the oppressed nations. This policy helped to widen and strengthen the fighting front against the colonialists and laid the foundations for the future victory of the national liberation revolutions.

The line of the Comintern and the communist parties aimed at uniting all revolutionary and democratic movements against fascism and war was of tremendous significance not only for the fate of the class battles during the period of 1934-1939. It provided a thorough training for the international working class and the oppressed peoples in preparation for the armed clash with fascism and imperialism, for the co-operation of the peoples with the Soviet Union in this historical battle.

Chapter Six

THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN THE VAN OF THE PEOPLES' ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLE. THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMINTERN

The Second World War, started on September 1, 1939 by Hitler's attack on Poland, changed the international situation and the conditions of the world revolutionary process. There began one of the most difficult and complex periods in human history.

Fascist Germany, having subjugated most of the countries of Europe, established in them its predatory "new order". The subjugated peoples were faced with the task of fighting for their national liberty. Widening its aggression, Hitler Germany treacherously attacked the Soviet Union with the aim of destroying this bulwark of peace and socialism, the main obstacle to the establishment of the world supremacy of German imperialism.

In this hour of mortal danger threatening all the revolutionary, democratic and progressive gains of the peoples, threatening their national independence and their very life, the Soviet Union, led by the Communist Party, took the field as the main force which held the centre of the battle of the anti-fascist forces against the Hitlerite coalition and brought about its defeat. The Soviet Union made a decisive contribution to the cause of liberation of the fascist-enslaved peoples. Its victory in the war created favourable preconditions for the success of the popular democratic revolutions in a number of countries and the emergence of a world socialist system, for the upsurge of the liberation movement in the countries oppressed by imperialism. This afforded striking proof of the historical correctness of the Leninist policy pursued by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which, in a short space of time, had turned the country into an impregnable bulwark of the international revolutionary movement, of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism.

The anti-fascist struggle during the years of war forcefully demonstrated the heightened role of the popular masses, the great role of the working class in all the progressive popular movements. The international proletariat was the leading class in the anti-fascist struggle, which rallied behind it various sections and groups who took an anti-fascist, democratic and patriotic stand. The working class was prepared for this role by the whole course of the preceding struggle for democracy and socialism, of which the Communists were the organisers.

During the war, which was a severe test for all the peace-

loving peoples of the world, the international communist movement showed itself to be the most consistent and most resolute anti-fascist force. The communist parties headed the Resistance Movement against the fascist invaders. They were its organisers and inspirers. In the fight with fascism the Communists acted as the true champions of the peoples' rights and freedoms, as staunch patriots and courageous fighters for the cause of progress. This, to a tremendous degree, enhanced their prestige among the broad masses. Towards the end of the war the communist movement advanced to a new stage, became an important political factor in the world arena.

The communist movement was able to play the great part it did in the anti-fascist struggle of the peoples because it was prepared for this role by the entire experience accumulated under the leadership of the Communist International. The four-million-strong army of Communists, the main detachment of which were the Soviet Communists, met the war a mature fighting-fit force. The Communist International had behind it rich experience in the struggle for a united workers' and anti-fascist popular front. In the difficult, often rapidly changing conditions of the war, surmounting obstacles of an objective and subjective nature, the communist movement went forward and in the course of the struggle came to the head of all the anti-fascist forces.

THE COMINTERN AND COMMUNIST PARTIES DURING THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE WORLD WAR (SEPTEMBER 1939-JUNE 1941)

The Nature of the War and the Communist Parties' Attitude Towards It

The outbreak and development of the Second World War confronted the world communist movement with the task of defining the nature of the war and the attitude towards it. "For a Marxist," Lenin said, "clarifying the nature of the war is a necessary preliminary for deciding the question of his attitude to it. But for such a clarification it is essential, first and foremost, to establish the objective conditions and concrete circumstances of the war in question. It is necessary to consider the war in the historical environment in which it is taking place, only then can one determine one's attitude to it."* In order to define the nature of a war it was necessary, Lenin emphasised, to consider it in "its bearing on the preceding policy of the given state, of the given system of states, the given classes".** The policies of both groups of belligerent powers had to be studied over a long period, Lenin urged, in order to avoid accidentals, in order not to pick out isolated examples. He warned against a simplified approach in the matter of defining the nature of a war. He wrote: "Wars are a supremely varied, diverse, complex thing. One cannot approach them with a general pattern."***

The Second World War, like the First, derived from the action of the law of uneven development of the capitalist countries under imperialism. It was a result of the sharp aggravation of antagonisms among the imperialist powers, the struggle for markets and sources of raw materials, for spheres of capital investment. Responsibility for its outbreak rests with the ruling classes of the great capitalist powers.

However, despite the common causes which gave rise to both the First and Second World wars, the latter started in a situa-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 297.
** Ibid., Vol. 24, p. 402.
*** Ibid., Vol. 35, p. 273.

tion that differed radically from the one that existed a quarter of a century before. The Second World War broke out under conditions in which capitalism was no longer a universal system, and there existed and steadily gained strength the world's first socialist state—the Soviet Union. The world was split into two opposed social systems and this led to a new, fundamental, decisive antagonism of the century—the antagonism between growing socialism and moribund capitalism. Imperialist antagonisms had ceased to be the sole factor in world politics. They developed in interaction with the profound antagonism between the two opposed social systems. The result of this antagonism was that both belligerent capitalist groups, while fighting each other, strove at the same time to destroy the Soviet Union and restore the one-time integrity of the capitalist world. The existence of the Soviet Union, its development and growing might, struck fear in the hearts of the world's capitalist bosses in view of its tremendous impact upon the workers of the whole world. The desire of the imperialists to put an end to the world's first socialist state united them on anti-Soviet ground. But this desire and the existence of antagonistic contradictions between the two opposed systems did not remove the antagonism that existed within the capitalist system.

Another feature of the Second World War was that it was not simply a question here of a redivision of the world as was the case in 1914-1918. The fascist group headed by nazi Germany was out to gain world supremacy, to subjugate and even exterminate whole nations. The fascists planned to reverse the whole pattern of nations' destinies and social progress. This testified to a sharp aggravation of the general crisis of the whole capitalist system. This was a menace to which the Communist International had constantly drawn the attention of the masses. In the resolutions of its Seventh Congress it had pointed out the "towering menace of fascism to the working class and all the gains it had made, to all the labouring masses and their elementary rights, to the peace and liberty of the peoples".*

The peculiar alignment of the world's political forces and the nature of the aims and tasks which the fascist aggressors had set themselves accounted for the fact that from the very outset there existed the objective possibilities of a just war of liberation of the nations against fascism.

This objective tendency, however, was counterbalanced by another tendency reflected in the policy of the ruling circles of

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 574.

the Western powers. They were out to resolve their imperialist antagonisms at the expense of the U.S.S.R. They did not conduct an active struggle against nazi Germany and did everything they could to egg her on to aggression against the Soviet Union. This found expression in the Munich policy of appeasement, which encouraged the aggressor and hampered the struggle of the peoples against fascism. Thus, two tendencies were at work, which influenced the character of the impending war in different ways.

Unlike the First, the Second World War broke out, not suddenly, but gradually. Beginning with the thirties, the world slowly but steadily slipped into another world war. Fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, intervention by the fascist powers in Spain, Japan's attack on China, nazi Germany's seizure of Austria, then Czechoslovakia—such were the stages by which the fascist aggressors acted in fanning the flame of another world war.

The peoples responded to these aggressive actions by a national liberation struggle. The peoples' struggle against German and Italian fascism and Japanese imperialism was a just struggle against national enslavement, for national independence and democracy.

Hitler's attack on Poland completed the process which plunged the world into its second war. For Poland, which had become the victim of fascist aggression, this war from the very start was a just, liberative, anti-fascist war. The Polish Communists appraised this correctly and took an active part in defending their country against the nazi invasion. The governments of France and Britain declared war on Germany, giving as their reasons the need for rendering assistance to Poland in accordance with former obligations. The ruling circles of these countries, however, had no desire whatever to conduct this war as an anti-fascist war. They hoped that Hitler, having crushed Poland, would move East, and not West. Anglo-French ruling circles were for making a deal with Hitler and turning the Second World War into a war against the U.S.S.R. This policy was cleverly cloaked by government statements about it being a war against nazi aggression, and therefore the true nature of the policy pursued by the imperialist bourgeoisie of Britain and France was not clear at the time to the broad masses.

The attitude to the war on the part of the Communist Parties of France and Britain was based on the fact that the war had been unleashed by nazi Germany, who was out to subjugate many countries and nations, and therefore one had to do everything possible to make that war a really anti-fascist, national liberation war. The communist parties tried to mobilise the masses, to bring pressure to

bear on the ruling circles of their countries, and make them conduct the war not by word but by deed as an anti-fascist war. The Communists of France and Britain counted on the pressure of the masses leading to the removal of the reactionary governments of their countries and to anti-fascist liberative tendencies gaining the ascendancy in the war.

On August 25, 1939, before the outbreak of the war, the French Communist Party had defined its attitude towards the impending fascist aggression in a statement which said that "in a genuine struggle against the fascist aggressor the Communist Party claimed its right to be in the front ranks".* The Party appealed for unity of the French nation against the nazi aggressors and urged the government to take all necessary steps to defend the country. The Communists said that the French Government had to be made to conduct a real anti-Hitler war with the backing of the people. "A government that fears the people is heading for defeat."**

A similar line was taken by the Communist Party of Great Britain. It declared that the war had to be turned into a real war against fascism without relaxing the fight against the reactionary policies of Chamberlain. In a statement issued at the beginning of September 1939 concerning the declaration of war against Germany, the Communist Party of Great Britain called for a struggle on two fronts, "that is, simultaneously against Hitler and against the policies of Chamberlain, and demanded the removal of the Chamberlain Government".***

This position, which other communist parties, too, had adhered to at the beginning of the war, pointed to the fact that they realised how dangerous fascist aggression was for the national independence of their countries, for the whole of humanity. In demanding a real war against nazi Germany and assistance to Poland, the victim of aggression, the communist parties were fulfilling their international as well as national duty.

Although the communist parties had drawn attention to the imperialist aspirations of the ruling circles of Britain and France in the war, they underestimated the powers of resistance of the reactionary groups of the bourgeoisie, who refused to impart to the war a truly anti-fascist character.

The facts showed more and more that the ruling circles in Britain and France had no intention of conducting a real war against

* *L'Humanité*, August 25, 1939.
** *La Vie Ouvrière*, September 21, 1939.
*** R. Palme Dutt, *The Internationale*, London, 1964, p. 269.

fascism. Towards the end of September 1939 this became abundantly clear.

The ruling circles of the Western powers gave nazi Germany to understand that they were expecting her to break off the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and set up a common front against the land of socialism. On the one hand, virtual refusal to assist Poland, the almost complete cessation of hostilities at the front against nazi Germany (the "phoney war"), on the other hand, the attacks of reaction upon the rights of the people, repressions against the democratic forces, first and foremost against the communist parties who were striving to have the war turned into a truly anti-fascist war—all this was a reflection of the imperialist tendency, which was temporarily in the ascendance. It could not, however, prevent the gradual build-up of the elements of a just anti-fascist struggle which had manifested themselves at the beginning of the war in the national liberation struggle of the peoples of Poland and Czechoslovakia against fascist oppression.

Weighing up the situation in their statements issued at the beginning of October 1939, the communist parties defined the war as an imperialist war on both sides and condemned the reactionary anti-Soviet policy of their governments.

At the same time the communist parties of the countries who stood opposed to nazi Germany were alive to the menace which fascist aggression represented for the whole of humanity. That is why the Communist Parties of France and Great Britain did not put forward the slogan of their governments' defeat in the war.

For the Communist Party of Germany the chief task was to fight against the fascist war and for the liberation of their country from nazi tyranny. The struggle of the German Communists was closely bound up with the struggle of the oppressed peoples for their freedom and independence. In a joint statement issued by the Communist Parties of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia on November 2, 1939, it was emphasised that "the Communists are doing everything in their power to link the liberation struggle of the German working class with the national liberation struggle of the Czechs, Slovaks, Austrians and Poles and to set up a strong united front against German imperialism".*

An appeal was issued by the Executive of the Comintern at the beginning of November 1939 evaluating the international situation and defining the tasks of the communist parties in connection with

* W. Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Bd. 1, 1. Halbband Brl. 1955, S. 335.

the war. The appeal described the war as an imperialist war on both sides, as an unjust reactionary war, the blame for which "falls on all the capitalist governments, and primarily the ruling classes of the belligerent states".* This definition, though stressing the imperialist aspirations of the ruling circles of the capitalist countries in the war, left out the national liberation tendencies that were present in this war.

The leadership of the Comintern believed that with the outbreak of the war the distinction between the two capitalist groups had disappeared. Such a view was founded, first of all, on the anti-Soviet policy of ruling circles in Britain and France, who were out to make a deal with nazi Germany in order to play her off against the U.S.S.R.

These tendencies were most noticeable during the period of the Soviet-Finnish war. The governments of Britain and France not only pushed Finnish reaction into a war with the U.S.S.R., but generously supplied that country with arms. The general staffs of these countries were preparing to send their troops to Finland and were devising plans for attacking the Soviet Union from the south. These perfidious designs were frustrated by the victories of the Red Army, the correct foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of a peace treaty between the U.S.S.R. and Finland.

Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway in the spring of 1940, followed by that of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg, and the increased threat to France showed the disastrous nature of the policy which the ruling circles of France and Britain were pursuing.

The expansion of nazi aggression, Germany's occupation of a number of countries of Western Europe and the establishment there of a regime of brute force and plunder—all this caused increased popular resentment and a desire on the part of all anti-fascists to put up a determined and ruthless fight against the enslavers. This had an influence also on the ruling classes and led the way to a regrouping of forces amongst them in favour of anti-Hitler tendencies. The liberative motives in the war gained ground and the nature of the war itself underwent a steady change.

Lenin pointed out in 1916 that "even in Europe national wars in the imperialist epoch cannot be regarded as impossible",** that wars were always an extremely complex phenomenon, and that "a national war *might* be transformed into an imperialist war *and vice versa*".***

* *World News and Views*, Vol. 19, No. 58, November 11, 1939, p. 1074.
** V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 311.
*** Ibid., p. 309.

The events of 1940, further nazi seizures in Europe, called forth a national anti-fascist movement in the subjugated countries. In these circumstances the world communist movement continued the policy of uniting all anti-fascist forces which was framed at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.

In its directives to the nazi-occupied countries (Holland, Denmark, Norway) the leadership of the Comintern advised them to head the struggle for the restoration of national independence in defence of the workers' vital interests. Characterising the changed situation, the leadership of the Comintern pointed out at the end of June 1940 that German imperialism "intends, together with Italy, to subjugate many European nations and deprive them of their national independence".*

In face of the growing threat of France's defeat the French Communist Party put forward a programme for organising the country's effective defence, for turning the imperialist war into a popular, national war, a just war of the people for their independence. This programme, published in the underground *Humanité*, provided for a removal of the ban on the Communist Party and the trade unions; it spoke of the need for rendering harmless the agents of fascism, by whom the whole machinery of state was honeycombed, and drawing on the initiative of the people in order to stem the nazi invasion.** The implementation of this programme could save France from national and political enslavement.

The situation in connection with Hitler's offensive against France became more and more tense. At the beginning of June a direct threat to Paris was created. On June 6, 1940 proposals for the defence of Paris were submitted to the government on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. These proposals stated: "The Communist Party will regard the surrender of Paris to the fascist invaders as treason. It will consider the organisation of the defence of Paris as a primary national duty. For this purpose it is necessary:

"(1) To change the character of the war by turning it into a national war for liberty and independence;

"(2) To release the communist deputies and militants as well as the thousands of imprisoned and interned workers;

"(3) To immediately arrest the agents of the enemy, with whom parliament, the ministries and even the General Staff are honeycombed, and to punish them severely;

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1322/5.
** *Le Parti communiste français dans la Résistance*, Paris, 1964, p. 48.

"(4) These initial measures will arouse the nation's enthusiasm and make it possible to carry out a national levy, which should be decreed immediately;

"(5) To arm the people and turn Paris into an impregnable citadel."*

Only by arming the people and organising a national levy could a disaster be avoided and France saved. Fear of the people, however, the narrow class interests of the French bourgeoisie and its anti-communism, weighed more with it than the interests of the nation. Instead of arming the people the government preferred to capitulate, to give the country over to the control of the nazis.

After the defeat of France the primary task of the Communist Party was to rally the patriotic forces of the nation. This was impressed upon the Communist Party by the directives of the Comintern dated June 22, 1940, which stated that "it is necessary to rally the forces of the people in the form of various aid committees...". This had in view various forms of aid to the unemployed, refugees, the wounded, demobilised, and so on. The directives contained important advice to organise resistance to the invaders' measures, acting with the greatest caution. "Avoiding provocation and premature actions, it is nevertheless essential to support and organise the resistance of the masses to measures of violence, robbery and arbitrary rule on the part of the invaders.... Under all conditions the Communists must remain with the people and always be in the front rank of its liberative struggle."**

In this vein the C.C. of the French Communist Party drew up its appeal to the French people. The members of the C.C. of the F.C.P., who were in Moscow, and the leaders of the Comintern had a hand in its drafting. The "Appeal to the People of France" over the signatures of Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos was published on July 10, 1940 in the underground *Humanité* and afterwards promulgated throughout France in hundreds of thousands of copies. The Communist Party proclaimed the aim of creating unity of the whole people, as unity of all the patriotic forces of France was an essential condition of success in restoring the country's national independence. Only the working class, headed by the Communist Party, could form the core of such unity. "It is with the people that the great hope for national and social liberation rests," said the Appeal. "And it is only around the working class, ardent and generous, full of confidence and courage, since to it belongs the future, only around the working class guided by the Communist Party, a party of clear conscience, honour and heroism, can there be created a front of France's liberty, independence and renaissance."*

* M. Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Moscow, 1951, pp. 140-41.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1321/190-191.

This Appeal poured strength into the hearts of French patriots, strengthened their belief in the possibility of struggle and pointed the way to achieve national and social liberation. The Appeal "opened up a clear perspective of struggle for the country's liberation, which depended on the French people themselves in alliance with the democratic and anti-fascist forces throughout the world".**

The autumn of 1940 already saw the first results of the French Communists' activities in organising the Resistance Movement. November 11, 1940 saw the first communist-sponsored mass demonstration of students in occupied Paris. The Communist Party succeeded in forming armed groups known as Special Combat Organisation, which became the embryo of "a military organisation adapted to the conditions of underground struggle against fascist terror".***

Resistance to the fascist invaders grew also in other subjugated countries. In response to the Appeal of the Communist Party the Belgian workers went on strike against the invaders. In June 1940 the workers of Liege, and in September thousands of miners in Borinage went on strike. In the autumn of 1940 the Communist Party of Norway organised anti-fascist demonstrations and meetings in various towns. In Poland the Communists began to set up anti-fascist organisations to fight the invaders.

The Resistance Movement showed that the peoples, in the front ranks of which marched the Communists, had no intention of putting up with the fascist terrorist "new order" and were determined to fight it. It was a natural reaction of the masses to the predatory plans of the fascist obscurantists, who tried to turn whole nations into their obedient slaves. The Resistance was a reflection and manifestation of the objectively just nature of the war against the fascist invaders.

The communist parties quickly occupied a prominent place in the Resistance as the most consistent anti-fascist patriotic political force. Unlike the bourgeois circles, of whom some displayed cowardice and vacillation in the fight against the nazi invaders, while others shamefully grovelled before them, the Communists acted as

* M. Thorez, *Oeuvres*, Livre V, T. XIV, Paris, 1959, p. 58.
** *Histoire de Parti communiste français (manuel)*, Paris, 1964, p. 389.
*** M. Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Moscow, 1951, p. 147.

fearless and devoted champions of national liberty. They rejected the wait-and-see tactics which some political groups attempted to apply.

The Communists drew strength from the support of the patriotic masses who spontaneously began to offer resistance to the fascist enslavers, to their military requisitions and punitive measures, by organising sabotage at the war factories, and so on. The communist parties developed intense activities in rallying the anti-fascist patriotic forces of the nation and organising the militant Resistance Movement.

The New Tasks of the Communist Parties and Their Reorganisation

With the war now in full blast, the communist parties were faced with the task of rallying the popular masses and leading them in the fight for national and social liberation against fascism. To perform this role the Communists had to preserve and strengthen their fighting efficiency and maneuverability, and adjust themselves flexibly to the rapidly changing conditions of the struggle. For this purpose the Communists had to carry out a drastic reorganisation of their parties.

The theses formulated by Lenin and the Comintern concerning the flexibility of the party's organisational forms in keeping with the conditions of the struggle and the proper combination of legal and illegal methods proved once more a powerful weapon in the hands of Communists working underground. Acting on these theses, the Communists sought the most expedient forms of organisation in keeping with the changed conditions and with the aim of preserving their fighting fitness.

In countries where the communist parties were working legally the reactionaries tried to use the war situation as an excuse for banning their activities by every possible means. In the countries of the fascist coalition, where the communist parties had long been driven underground, they found their work still harder. In countries occupied by nazi Germany the terror practised by the invaders compelled the communist parties to create such an organisation as would enable them to provide effective leadership of the struggle of the masses while at the same time protecting the apparatus and personnel of the party against the blows of the fascist military authorities. In the occupied countries the situation called for a

reorganisation of the party's structure on a strictly underground basis, for a separation of the party's various organisations in the interests of secrecy, and of reducing the possibility of detection and arrest to a minimum.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was the first to start this reorganisation. Owing to the specific conditions prevailing in Slovakia, a Communist Party of Slovakia was formed in May 1939 with an underground leadership. Unity of political line and general leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia were retained. A tremendous job was done to create an underground network and redistribute the party personnel.

The French Communist Party, too, worked out a new system for the Party's reorganisation. A three-man group became the primary form of organisation. In this group the leader alone knew who the other two were and kept in touch with the next party link. This principle formed the foundation of the party's structure. All activities were directed by the members of the Central Committee. The country being divided in two, the Central Committee, located in the Northern (occupied) zone, set up its agency in the Southern (unoccupied) zone in July 1940. This made it possible to maintain the unity of the Party and reduce the risk of exposure to a minimum. At the same time this created certain difficulties in establishing contact with the broad masses. In view of this, the Comintern, in its proposals to the C.C. of the French Communist Party, stressed that the Party should create "a sympathising and promotive mass environment, strengthen its influence politically and organisationally among the masses in the struggle for their everyday demands".* The French Communists tried to skilfully combine illegal work with legal forms of activity. They took part in legal organisations, such as, for instance, the official trade unions sponsored by the Vichi Government, and directed illegal organisations, such as the People's Committees in house blocks or factories, groups of the French Women's Union and the Young Communist League. While avoiding adventurist actions that were likely to lead to exposure, the Communists were opposed to passive forms of resistance to the invaders. In consolidating and extending their ties with the masses the Communists created the preconditions for the realisation of their leading role in the national liberation struggle of the people.

Of special importance for the work of the communist parties was the creation of stable, regularly functioning party headquarters.

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* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1326.

This applied in the first instance to the German, Italian and Hungarian Communist Parties. The "Political platform of the Communist Party of Germany" formulated by the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.G. with the co-operation of the E.C.C.I. and endorsed by the latter stated the necessity for securing the Party's leading role in all fields of the anti-fascist struggle, and in this connection to set up a day-to-day leadership of the Party on the territory of Germany itself subordinated to the Central Committee of the C.P.G. This was a very difficult job. The C.C. of the C.P.G. sent its authorised agents—experienced party functionaries—to Germany to establish contact with the existing party organisations at the factories, in the local areas and regions, and to set up new governing bodies where there were none, thereby paving the way for a centralised day-by-day guidance of the Party within the country. Special attention was given to the organisation of the Berlin Area Committee which would unite the underground organisations of the Party and co-ordinate their activities. The Berlin Area Committee could be used as a basis on which to build up a leading centre for the whole of Germany. In 1940 the Berlin underground party organisations were placed under a single leadership headed by Robert Uhrig. It carried out a big organising job, got in touch with the communist groups of other cities and started to effect guidance of the communist groups in various districts. Owing to the very difficult conditions of underground work, however, a day-to-day leadership of the C.P.G. was not set up in Germany until November 1943.*

No less acute was the question of creating a leading centre of the Italian Communist Party within the country. A decision to this effect was adopted at the Conference of the I.C.P. which was held in Paris in August 1939. The war and the events of 1939-1940 in France, where the foreign-based leadership of the Party resided, prevented this decision from being carried out. Contacts with the country were cut off and the foreign-based leadership itself was subject to repressions by the French authorities. Examining the situation in the Italian Communist Party, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. in August 1940 set up in Moscow a provisional Foreign Bureau of the Party headed by Togliatti. It started work on organising a strong illegal organisation and a leading party centre within the country. Umberto Massola was sent to Italy where he succeeded in the summer of 1941 in re-establishing contact with the underground organisations of Milan and Turin. On August 1, 1941 the Internal Leading Centre of the Party resumed its activities in Milan.*

* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 5, Berlin, 1966, S. 253, 256, 258, 280, 282, 398.

Similar tasks confronted the Communist Party of Hungary. The outbreak of the war found the Party considerably weakened by police terror. The various communist groups were out of touch with one another. In discussing the situation in the Hungarian Communist Party, the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. in January 1940 pointed out that the major task of the Party was to form a party leadership within the country and to strengthen the Party, which was to consist of strong organisations connected with the masses, in other words, to build up a united centralised Party. In August 1940 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. summed up some of the results of the Party's reorganisation and noted a number of successes; a party leadership had been set up within the country, but it still had no contact with a number of districts; regional and district party centres were functioning in various parts of the country; publication of the Party's central organ had been resumed. The absence of an integrated party organisation in Budapest, however, pointed to the fact that a centralised party did not yet exist in Hungary.** Wholesale arrests of Communists in the spring and summer of 1940 made the work of expanding the Party very difficult. Nevertheless the work of building up a network of communist organisations and a central leadership continued. In January 1941 the Central Committee of the Party started to work within the country. A network of territorial and industrial organisations of the Party came into being, among them the Budapest Party Committee. Communist groups and committees were formed within the legal workers' organisations; this gave the groups legal cover and better fitted the conditions of underground work. The restoration within the country of a centralised Communist Party and leadership enabled the Hungarian Communists to strengthen their ties with the masses and launch a campaign for a united anti-fascist front.

With the outbreak of the war in Europe conditions became more difficult also for the activities of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. The authorities increased their persecution of the Party. Several of its prominent leaders were arrested. In October 1940 the Congress of the United States passed a law which virtually deprived the Communist Party of the right to membership

* *Trenta anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, pp. 164, 257.
** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1323.

of an international organisation. An extraordinary congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. was held in New York in November 1940 to consider the situation. The congress confirmed the Party's unshakeable devotion to the principles of proletarian internationalism and adopted a resolution to fight unremittingly for the repeal of this law, while declaring that the Communist Party of the U.S.A. broke off organisational contact with the Comintern. At the beginning of December 1940 the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. declared that "it considers the decision of the extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. politically expedient and correct". It expressed the conviction that "despite the efforts of the reactionary American bourgeoisie to destroy the revolutionary class party of the workers of the United States, the American Communists will be able to step up their propaganda and activities in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. . .".*

On the other hand the Party's withdrawal from the international organisation gave new food to opportunist and revisionist tendencies, of which Browder was the mouthpiece.

The reorganisation of the communist parties necessitated by the war and carried out with the aid of the Comintern, made the parties more fighting-fit. Compelled to act in an extremely difficult situation, they strengthened their organisation and moved into leading positions in the peoples' struggle for national and social liberation.

The Comintern's Aid to the Communist Party of China

Although, owing to the war in Europe, the activities of the communist parties of the European countries claimed the chief attention of the Comintern, it did not lose sight of the activities of the communist parties of Asia. This applied in the first instance to the Communist Party of China, which headed the struggle of the people against the Japanese invaders, and by employing the new tactic developed in accordance with the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, succeeded in establishing within the country a united national anti-Japanese front.

The activities of the Chinese Communist Party were examined at meetings of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. held in January and March 1940.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/276/3-4.

The Presidium pointed out in its resolutions that the C.C.P. had accomplished a great task in mobilising the forces of the people against the Japanese aggressors and was persistently carrying out the tactic of a united national anti-Japanese front. The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. stressed that the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party to organise effective resistance to Japanese aggression and achieve victory of the people in the national liberation war were of tremendous significance not only for the destinies of the Chinese people itself, but for all the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries. The Presidium called on all communist parties to launch a broad campaign of solidarity with and aid for the Chinese people in its struggle against the Japanese invaders. Simultaneously the resolution drew the attention of the C.C.P. leadership "to the inconsistent application of the Bolshevik principles of democratic centralism and inner-party democracy (although this is largely due to the exceptional difficulties under which the Chinese Communist Party conducted its struggle). At a time when the Party had not held a congress for eleven years, there has not been a single party conference either, as a result of which 80 per cent of the C.C.'s members and alternate members were co-opted; the decision of the Sixth Congress calling for proletarian elements to be recruited into the Party's governing bodies (there are altogether 11 per cent of workers in the present membership of the C.C. of the C.C.P.) has not been carried out."*

The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. approved the basic political guidelines of the C.C. of the C.C.P. outlined for the forthcoming congress.** These were worked out jointly by the leadership of the C.C.P. and a commission appointed by the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. The central task to be tackled was that of mobilising the Chinese people to overcome the danger of capitulation to the Japanese aggressors on the part of the reactionary elements of the Kuomintang. The tactic of the united national anti-Japanese front and the readiness of the Communist Party to do everything to preserve and strengthen it were approved.

For the Communist Party to be able to effectively guide the national liberation struggle of the Chinese people it had to become a national party and win strong influence in the ranks of the working class. For this purpose, the E.C.C.I. pointed out, the Party had first of all to overcome its isolation "from the broad masses of the Chinese working class, especially in the industrial

* Ibid., 495/2/275/15.

** The Seventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was not held until April-June 1945.

areas occupied by the Japanese; to start work on a broad scale among the workers both in the occupied districts and on the rest of Chinese territories; to strongly step up the work of enrolling workers into the ranks of the Communist Party and increase the share of proletarian cadres in the Party's governing bodies."*

These decisions put the activities of the Chinese Communist Party on the right course.

For the Unity of All Anti-Fascist Forces

The task of uniting all the patriotic forces of the nation in the occupied countries in the fight against fascist enslavement demanded of the communist parties that they readdress themselves to the positive experience of the policy of the anti-fascist popular front.

The line of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern aimed at the establishment of a broad anti-fascist popular front on the basis of the proletarian united front and its effective application in a number of countries had laid the foundations for unity of all the healthy forces of the peoples against fascism. On the eve of the war, however, imperialist reaction in a number of European countries had dealt severe blows to the popular front. Right-wing Social-Democracy, by its splitting tactics, virtually helped the reactionaries to tip the scale in their favour. Most disgraceful of all was the support which Right Social-Democracy in most countries gave to the Munich policy. All this, during the early period of the war, made the road towards unity of action by the anti-fascists difficult.

The fascist "new order", to which thousands of Social-Democrats and many progressive intellectuals as well as Communists fell victim, bred passionate hatred among all patriots and stirred them to action. The communist parties persistently and tirelessly forged the unity of the working class and the whole nation. The idea of the popular front, formulated by the Seventh Congress, brilliantly proved its worth in the hard conditions of war. The anti-fascist national fronts sponsored by the communist parties were one of the chief instruments for achieving victory over fascism.

The leadership of the Comintern orientated the communist parties towards uniting all the healthy forces of the nation for the struggle against the occupationists. It stressed the need for securing for the working class, headed by the communist parties, the leading role in the anti-fascist national liberation movement. In its proposals to the C.C. of the Czechoslovak Communist Party at the end of 1940 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. pointed out the connection that existed between national and social liberation and the need for the working class headed by the Communist Party to become the major force of the liberative struggle.

To build up the unity of the anti-fascist workers backed by a broad anti-fascist front and to head the struggle of the masses against fascism—this was the task which the communist parties of the European countries set before themselves.

The declaration of the Italian Communist Party, approved by the Comintern and published in June 1940, after Italy had entered the war on the side of fascist Germany, stated that "In Italy there is a force capable of uniting the whole people into a single solid block and leading them in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship, against the imperialist war, for liberty.... This force is our heroic working class.... Only by uniting its detachments can the working class rally behind it the rest of the nation irrespective of political or religious convictions, unite all the forces of the nation hostile to the war and to fascist tyranny."* The Communist Party declared its readiness to collaborate with all parties and groups who pursued similar aims.

However, in order that the idea of the united anti-fascist front be understood and supported by the masses, tremendous efforts on the part of the Communists and the experience of the masses themselves were needed. In May 1941 the Italian Communist Party again appealed to "all Italians who love their country and are concerned in its future to unite their forces and fight resolutely for the speedy ending of the war, for the liberty, well-being and independence of the Italian people".** In October 1941 a Committee of Action for the Union of the Italian People was set up by Italian political emigrants in France consisting of members of the Communist and Socialist parties and the Justice and Liberty group.

The Executive of the Comintern rendered constant assistance to the communist parties in formulating their programmes for uniting the anti-fascist forces and organisations. In August 1940 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. advised the Communist Party of Rumania to work out a programme of struggle for a united front. Its aim was to fight "against Rumania's involvement in the war,

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/2/275/13.

* *Trenta anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, p. 192.
** Ibid., p. 194.

against the country being turned into an appendage of German imperialism, for peace, for close friendship with the Soviet Union". It had, the E.C.C.I. pointed out, to embody important democratic principles, namely: settlement of all disputes with neighbouring peoples by peaceful means, elimination of every kind of national oppression, the demand for a general amnesty, the fight for the democratic rights of the workers (freedom of assembly, of the press and organisation), and for a considerable improvement in the condition of the working people. Finally, the programme was to record that "the Communist Party will work together with all political groups and persons who are ready to fight for these demands".* On the basis of this draft the Communist Party of Rumania drew up and published in January 1941 a document entitled "For Peace and the National Independence of the Rumanian People", which represented a programme for uniting the anti-fascist forces. It listed the above-mentioned demands and contained a declaration of the Communist Party's readiness to co-operate with all patriots in order to achieve any one of these demands on the sole condition that the national independence of the Rumanian people be defended. Although the Communist Party at the time failed to rally the anti-fascist forces into a united front, owing mainly to the opposition of the Right-wing socialist leaders and the leadership of the bourgeois-landowner parties, its initiative laid the first stone in the foundations of the future anti-fascist front within the country.

Considerable success in uniting the anti-fascist forces was achieved during the early period of the war by the French Communist Party. Under the slogan of a struggle for "a front of liberty, independence and renascence of France", the Party helped to set up various aid committees, which played an important role in uniting the anti-fascists. In the autumn of 1940 the Party published in a hundred thousand copies "A Letter to the Socialist Worker" stressing that unity of the working class had to be achieved, as this was an essential condition of the struggle to save the nation. The Party worked for a stable alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the intellectuals and the middle strata of the cities. At the end of 1940 "A Letter to the Radical Worker" was issued. The Party also published an appeal to the peasants and the intellectuals.

On May 15, 1941 the Central Committee of the French Communist Party issued a declaration addressed to the people, which

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1323.

said: "Guided by the sole aim of achieving unity of the nation in the fight for the sacred cause of national independence, the French Communist Party, placing the interests of the country above everything else, solemnly declares that in order to create a broad front of national liberation it is prepared to support any French government, any organisation and any people whose efforts will be directed towards a real struggle against the national oppression from which France is suffering, and against the traitors who are in the service of the invaders."*

This appeal evoked a lively response among French patriots. A National Front was shortly created, uniting members of the working class, the peasants, artisans, tradesmen, intellectuals and the clergy. The guiding force of the National Front was the Communist Party. Gradually it became the broadest and most effective organisation of the French Resistance.

A line at establishing a united anti-fascist front was pursued by the Communist Parties of Norway, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. They laid the foundations for a unity that was destined to play a great role in the liberation struggle of the peoples.

The need for such unity, for mobilising the peoples for the struggle was all the more urgent since fascist aggression continued to increase. Having occupied a number of countries of Western Europe, the fascist aggressors started on their plans of seizure in the Balkans. The Balkan peoples were threatened with fascist enslavement, with having their states turned into vassals of German and Italian fascism.

In response to fascist Italy's attack upon Greece in October 1940 the Greek people rose to the struggle against the imperialist invaders. The Communist Party of Greece called upon the people to repel the aggressors. "Mussolini fascism has made a shameful, dastardly attack upon Greece in order to crush and enslave her," said the appeal. "We Greeks are now fighting for our liberty, honour and independence."** Discussing the situation in Greece early in January 1941 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. pointed out that the military attack by Italian imperialism on Greece pursued the aim of conquering Greek territory and subjugating the Greek people to foreign rule, and that the country's independence was in grave peril. The Comintern approved the actions of the Com-

* M. Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Moscow, 1951, p. 147.

** Quoted from the book: G. D. Kiryakidis, *Gretsiya vo vtoroi mirovoi voine* (Greece in the Second World War), Moscow, 1967, p. 65.

munist Party directed at uniting the people for the struggle against the imperialist invaders.

The bringing of German troops into Rumania and Bulgaria created a threat to the national sovereignty of these countries, showed that fascist Germany intended to use these countries as a springboard for their attack upon the Soviet Union. The sending of German troops to Bulgaria was made an object of special discussion by the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. in January 1941. The decision adopted on this question stated that the Bulgarian Communist Party should come out strongly against this troop movement, as this threatened to involve the Bulgarian people in the war, to turn its territory into a theatre of war and endangered the country's independent existence. The Communist Party was recommended to launch a mass movement against the establishment of an occupational regime in the country and the seizure of its economic and food resources. The Seventh Plenum of the Party's Central Committee held in January 1941 discussed the question of the country's threatened involvement in the war and adopted a decision to launch a broad mass struggle against this threat, for the conclusion of a friendship and mutual aid pact as offered by the Soviet Union.*

The tasks of fighting for national independence confronted also the Communist Party of Rumania. The Executive of the Comintern drew attention to this in its letter to the C.C. of the Rumanian Communist Party dated April 20, 1941. The letter stated that the Party's chief task at the moment was "to head the movement of the masses against Rumania being used as a base and an instrument for the imperialist aims of her enslavers, against having the Rumanian people drawn into a war in the Balkans, and in favour of friendly relations with her great neighbour—the Soviet Union. . . . The Party's main efforts and mass work at this moment should be concentrated on this basic task."**

Despite the consistent fight conducted by the communist parties of the Balkan countries against having their countries drawn into the orbit of German fascism, they failed to avert a national tragedy.

In the spring of 1941 a large part of Europe found itself under the heel of the fascist invaders. The bestial face of fascism and its cannibalistic plans for the wholesale extermination of nations

* Cf. *Istoriya Bolgarskoi kommunisticheskoi partii* (History of the Bulgarian Communist Party), Moscow, 1960, pp. 352-53.

** C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/74/451/123.

stood more and more clearly revealed. The great threat which fascism presented to the existence of mankind as a whole, strengthened the peoples' resolve to check this brown-uniformed scourge. The peoples in all the occupied countries swung into action against the invaders. The objective, just, anti-fascist tendencies of the war came more and more into prominence. The war more and more assumed the character of a national liberation war.

Germany's invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia called forth these peoples' resistance to the nazi aggressors. The C.C. of the Yugoslav Communist Party set up military committees all over the country whose job was to build up a supply of arms, and form and train sabotage squads of anti-fascists. These squads were gradually formed into partisan detachments. On April 15, 1941 the C.C. of the Yugoslav Communist Party appealed to the peoples of the country to rally their ranks for the struggle for their country's independence. "The Communists and the whole working class," said the appeal, "will stand their ground until final victory in the front ranks of the struggle against the invaders."*

An appeal to the people was issued on May 31, 1941 by the C.C. of the Greek Communist Party. In accordance with the general line of the Comintern the C.C. called upon all Greek patriots, first and foremost Communists, to launch a nation-wide struggle for national liberation. The signal for the launching of a wide Resistance Movement in the country was provided by the heroic deed performed by the Greek patriots Manolis Glezos and Apostolos Santos, who, on the night of May 31, 1941, tore the fascist flag from the Acropolis. This deed was taken by the people as a call to fight the enemy.

The struggle against the fascist invaders gathered momentum also in the countries which they had formerly occupied. In France the units of the Special Combat Organisation redoubled their activities. At the end of May 1941, under the leadership of the French Communist Party, a strike of a hundred thousand miners started in the north. In Holland at the end of February 1941 Europe's first general strike against the invaders swept through the country. In Poland various partisan units were waging an armed struggle against the nazi invaders. In Belgium, with the participation of the Communists, a wave of strikes started, the biggest of which was the hundred-thousand-strong strike of the workers of the Liege district in May 1941. A big anti-fascist demonstration

* *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o narodnooslobodilačkom ratu jugoslovenskih naroda.* T. V, kn. I, Beograd, 1952, str. 7.

of the workers sponsored by the Communists was held on May 1, 1941 in Norway's capital—Oslo.

These actions by the workers against the oppression and tyranny of the occupationists were a serious school of anti-fascist struggle for the Communists. The communist parties came to the fore as organisers and leaders of the masses, and acquired valuable experience in leadership. Summing up some of the results of the communist parties' activities during the first years of the war, the journal *The Communist International* wrote: "In defending their people, upholding their interests against the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie, fighting at the same time against the enslavement of their people by foreign imperialism, and in other countries coming out resolutely against imperialist seizures and enslavement by their bourgeoisie of foreign nations, the Communists are serving the cause of true proletarian internationalism, for in this way they are rendering the most effective assistance both to their own people and to the workers of other countries."*

The successes of the communist parties in rallying the masses for a stronger rebuff of the fascist invaders showed that the line of the Seventh Congress—that of a union of all the healthy forces of the nation for waging the anti-fascist struggle—was a true compass pointing the way to liberation of the peoples from the fascist yoke.

By the spring of 1941 the communist parties had taken the first important steps towards uniting the peoples for the anti-fascist struggle, and had laid the foundation for its future successes. At the same time the complex situation prevailing in Europe and throughout the world, and the existence of militant anti-communist and anti-Soviet tendencies in the policies of the ruling classes in the chief capitalist countries made it difficult for the Comintern and the communist parties to clarify all the aspects of the war's character and the possibilities of creating a really broad front of anti-Hitler forces.

* Cf. Russian edition, 1941, No. 4, p. 12.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMINTERN AND THE COMMUNIST PARTIES FOLLOWING GERMANY'S ATTACK ON THE U.S.S.R.

The Political Line of the World Communist Movement in the New Phase of the Second World War

The aggression of nazi Germany against the U.S.S.R. started a new phase of the Second World War. The nazis, as we know, were out to destroy the Soviet state, seize its territories and exterminate part of the population in order to win "lebensraum" for the German "master race", while the remaining Soviet people were to be turned into slaves. The war against the U.S.S.R. was regarded by the German imperialists as the decisive phase in their bid for world supremacy and subjugation of all the nations of the world. In the person of the Soviet Union they had an obstacle to their far-reaching imperialist plans.

By the summer of 1941 Germany had occupied and subjugated most of the European countries. Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, France, Albania, Yugoslavia and Greece were under the heel of the fascist invaders, who had established there a brutal terrorist regime. Countries like Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, drawn by their bourgeois and landowning rulers into an alliance with fascist Germany, were virtually deprived of their independence and were turned into satellites of Germany.

Practically the whole of Europe with its vast manpower and material resources was in the power of nazi Germany. The independence of such big capitalist states as Britain and the U.S.A. hung in the balance.

The beginning of the Soviet people's Great Patriotic War saw the completion of the process by which the world war evolved into a just war of liberation on the part of the powers opposed to the aggressive fascist bloc. The character of the Second World War underwent a drastic change. The Soviet Union now marched in the van of the nations' armed struggle against fascism with a clear programme for the defeat and destruction of the fascist aggressor and the liberation of the peoples from fascist barbarism. All the

world's democratic forces rallied behind the Soviet people. Britain and the U.S.A. fought in alliance with the U.S.S.R. For the first time in history an international front was formed, made up of the most diverse political forces: the anti-nazi coalition of states and peoples included not only the Soviet Union and the peoples of the occupied countries, but such big capitalist states as Britain and the U.S.A.

During the years of civil war and intervention, Lenin pointed out that the land of the proletarian dictatorship could, for reasons of political and military expediency, conclude agreements with a group of capitalist powers. Communists, he said, did not by any means "in general reject military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other in those cases in which such an agreement could, without undermining the basis of Soviet power, strengthen its position and paralyse the attacks of any imperialist power...".* This thesis of Lenin's orientated the Communists of the Soviet Union towards a policy of utilising the antagonisms among the imperialists in the interests of consolidating world socialism. An agreement with other countries in the war against the fascist bloc was all the more necessary to the U.S.S.R. because the aggressive aims of nazi Germany and her allies were the greatest threat to socialism and social progress throughout the world, to the destinies of the whole of mankind.

Although the threat to their national interests compelled the governments of the U.S.A. and Britain to co-operate with the Soviet Union, the most reactionary circles in these countries continued to adhere to their anti-Soviet attitudes, stood for a deal with the nazis and were against participation in an anti-fascist coalition. During the whole course of the war they carried on a vicious anti-Soviet propaganda, and went out of their way to scotch the war efforts against the fascist aggressive bloc in an attempt to bleed white the Soviet Union. A large section of the ruling circles in Britain and the U.S.A. counted on the exhaustion of both the U.S.S.R. and Germany as a means of securing a dominant position for them in the world after the war. This course was most forcefully demonstrated in the policy of dragging out the opening of a second front in Europe pursued by the governments of Britain and the U.S.A.

Despite the restricted nature of the war efforts on the part of Britain and the U.S.A., the creation of the anti-nazi coalition was an event of great international significance, demonstrating that co-

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 361.

operation between states with different social systems in the struggle against the common enemy was possible.

The Soviet Union, which bore the brunt of the war against nazi Germany and her allies in Europe, became the leading force in this anti-Hitler coalition. The Soviet-German front was the main front of the Second World War, where the question of the nations' historical development and the destinies of civilisation was being decided.

The Soviet Union's war of liberation against the bloc of aggressive states had a tremendous impact upon the development of the Resistance Movement in the fascist-occupied countries. From the beginning of the Great Patriotic War the Resistance was closely bound up with the course of events on the Soviet-German front.

In the difficult situation created after Germany's attack upon the Soviet Union, the world communist movement found itself squarely confronted by the problem of stepping up the struggle against fascism, which was mankind's most bitter enemy. Unity of all the progressive forces for the struggle against the states of the fascist bloc headed by nazi Germany was a primary and vital need if the peoples were to be saved from enslavement and extermination and ensured their liberty and independence. The question of uniting the democratic and patriotic forces came into sharp focus when the war entered its new phase. In working out the strategy and tactics of the communist movement the Executive of the Comintern was guided by the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

A meeting of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. was held on June 22* at which the tasks of the communist parties in connection with Germany's attack upon the U.S.S.R. were discussed. The decision of the Secretariat called for an urgent reorganisation of the entire work of the E.C.C.I. apparatus. A group was formed, consisting of Dimitrov, Manuilsky and Togliatti, for day-to-day management of all the Executive's work.

In view of the situation created in the international arena as a result of nazi Germany's aggression against the U.S.S.R. the E.C.C.I. sent letters to the communist parties pointing out that Germany's treacherous attack against the U.S.S.R. was a blow not only against the land of socialism, but against the liberty and independence of all the nations of the world. The defence of the Soviet people, therefore, was also a defence of the enslaved

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1335/1-3.

peoples under the nazi heel, a defence of all the other nations who were threatened by fascism.

The E.C.C.I. pointed out that the Communist Party of Great Britain and the communist parties of other countries which were co-operating with the U.S.S.R. in the struggle against nazi Germany were confronted with the tasks of defending their peoples against the threat of German fascism, securing support from without for the Soviet people in their just war, exposing the pro-Hitlerite elements of the bourgeoisie, and conducting a struggle against all who, under the guise of pacifism and isolationism, were helping German fascism. It was necessary to foil all anti-Soviet plans of the reactionary circles for making a deal with the nazis.

The E.C.C.I. advised the Communists of the countries that were fighting fascism to launch a mass movement under the slogan of a united international front against the German and Italian fascist aggressors, in defence of the peoples oppressed by fascism, in defence of the Soviet people.

The communist parties of the countries that were fighting fascist Germany were recommended to support all the war efforts of their governments, as these were in the national interests of their peoples and a real aid to the Soviet Union. In pursuing such a policy the communist parties were to preserve their independence with respect to their governments.

This guideline on the part of the Comintern Executive was based on Lenin's teaching about the defence of the socialist fatherland and the possibility of progressive wars in the epoch of imperialism. While strongly opposed to the slogan of defence of the bourgeois fatherland in an imperialist war, Lenin pointed out that the Bolsheviks never stood for renunciation of defence of the fatherland on general principles. "We are not at all against 'defence of the fatherland' *in general*," he wrote, "not against 'defensive wars' *in general*. You will *never* find that nonsense in a single resolution (or any of my articles). We are against defence of the fatherland and a defensive position in the *imperialist war* of 1914-1916 and in other imperialist wars, typical of the imperialist *epoch*. But in the imperialist *epoch* there *may* be also 'just', 'defensive', revolutionary wars [namely (1) national, (2) civil, (3) socialist *and suchlike*]."*

Lenin stressed that defence of the fatherland "is a lie in an imperialist war, but not in a democratic and revolutionary war".**

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 229.
** Ibid., Vol. 23, p. 23.

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union merged with the liberation movement of the nazi-subjugated peoples, with the struggle of all democratic and anti-fascist forces.

The chief task of the communist parties in the countries occupied by nazi Germany, the E.C.C.I. pointed out, was to launch a liberation struggle against the invaders. The communist parties were recommended to work for the creation in each country of a broad national front capable of uniting all anti-fascist forces irrespective of their political orientation and character, under the general motto of defence of democracy and national independence against the fascist invaders. Only such a front could organise energetic action against nazi slavery among all sections of the population. The Communists of the occupied countries had to combine the mass political struggle with direct action for disrupting the rear of the nazi troops, making army supply and troop transportation impossible, and for developing the partisan movement.

The communist parties of the fascist countries worked for the defeat of nazi Germany and her allies, for the overthrow of the fascist regimes. This was not only in the interests of the peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition, but in the vital interests of the peoples of Germany and other fascist-bloc countries. In its letters to the communist parties of these countries the E.C.C.I. urged them to step up the fight against the fascist regimes.

In its advice to the Bulgarian Workers' Party, for instance, the E.C.C.I. pointed out that defence of the Soviet Union was also defence of the Bulgarian people, whom the ruling circles were trying to draw into an anti-Soviet adventure. The E.C.C.I. advised the Bulgarian Communists to oppose the anti-Soviet plans of Bulgarian reaction, to strengthen the united popular front against German fascism and launch a campaign for a united international front of the peoples against the German and Italian fascist robbers who were out to enslave the Balkan peoples. The E.C.C.I. pointed out that the independence and future of the Balkan peoples depended on the victory of the U.S.S.R.

A somewhat different task was set before the communist parties of the neutral countries. In its recommendations to the Communist Party of Sweden, for instance, the E.C.C.I. pointed out that defence of the Soviet Union was not only defence of all the peoples of the countries occupied by Germany, but defence of the Swedish people, who were threatened with enslavement by nazi Germany. In view of the looseness of the slogan of "Swedish neutrality towards all states" which the Communist Party of Sweden had put forward in its declaration concerning Germany's war

against the U.S.S.R., the E.C.C.I. pointed out that the Communist Party of Sweden was not obliged to call for its country's participation in the war on the side of the Soviet Union. What the Party had to do was to show that "Sweden's independence is threatened by nazi Germany, that the only country who is defending the liberty and independence of the small nations, including Sweden, is the U.S.S.R. It has to be shown that it is in the vital interests of the Swedish people to want the victory of the Soviet people."*

Nazi Germany's attack upon the first land of socialism meant for the Communists of the whole world that they had to increase their efforts tenfold in the fight against fascism.

The communist parties came out with declarations condemning fascist aggression against the Soviet Union, calling on the peoples to demonstrate their solidarity with the Soviet Union and wage an active struggle against the bloc of fascist powers for their liberty and independence.

The "Appeal of the Communist Party of Germany in Defence of the U.S.S.R." of June 24, 1941 stated: "The dastardly attack of the German army on the Soviet Union is a piece of abominable treachery, a stain upon the noblest sentiments and traditions of our people, a deadly blow aimed at our country's vital interests.

"Our enemy is in our own country. The fascist slaveowners—these are our enemy. The victory of the Red Army and of the oppressed peoples who are fighting for their national liberty will also be the victory of the German people."** The Communist Party called upon the German workers to fight for the overthrow of the nazi gang, for the liberty and happy future of the German people.

The French Communist Party, in its appeal dated June 22, 1941, stated that Hitlerism was bound to be defeated, that "everyone worthy of the name of Frenchman has to consider himself from now on an ally of the U.S.S.R. Hitler's victory over the U.S.S.R. would be our defeat, and every victory of the U.S.S.R. over Hitler would be our own victory." The French Communist Party called for "a national front of struggle for France's independence" to be set up within the country.***

The Central Committee of the British Communist Party appealed to the workers to "build a mighty common front of the people in unity with the people of the First Socialist State in the world".****

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1335/14.
** *The Communist International* (Russian edition), 1941, No. 6-7, pp. 123-24.
*** *L'Humanité* (underground edition), June 22, 1941.
**** *Daily Worker*, New York, June 23, 1941.

The Communist Party of the United States, in a declaration published on June 23, 1941, stated that everyone who hated fascism and oppression, who valued peace and liberty, everyone who considered the cause of the Soviet Union and its peoples to be the cause of all progressive mankind, should strive towards active friendship and fraternal solidarity with the peoples of the Soviet Union: "Down with the criminal war of German fascism against the Soviet Union! For full support and co-operation with the Soviet Union in its struggle against Hitlerism! Against all those reactionaries of every stripe who seek in any manner to aid Hitler's attack against the Soviet Union."*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia appealed to the peoples of the country on June 22, 1941 to launch an armed struggle against the fascist invaders. "The crucial hour has struck," said the appeal. "The decisive battle has begun against the direct enemies of the working class, a battle which the fascist criminals have themselves precipitated by their treacherous attack upon the U.S.S.R.—the hope of the workers of all the world. The precious blood of the heroic Soviet people is being shed not only in defence of the land of socialism, but for the ultimate social and national liberation of the whole labour world. Therefore, this is also our struggle, and we must wage it with all our might, even if we have to give our lives for it."**

The C.C. of the Yugoslav Communist Party called upon all patriots to launch a broad partisan struggle against the invaders. The masses responded warmly to the Party's appeal. At the end of June 1941 a headquarters of the liberation partisan detachments of Yugoslavia was formed. On July 4 the C.C. of the Party adopted a decision for an armed uprising, which shortly spread to an extensive area within the country. The national liberation movement in Yugoslavia began to assume a mass character.

On June 23, 1941 the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party adopted a resolution "For a United Anti-Fascist Front Throughout the World" in which Germany's attack against the U.S.S.R. was described as "aggression not only against the Soviet Union, but against democracy, liberty and independence all over the world". The resolution pointed out that "the holy war against the fascist aggressors is not only a war of the Soviet people in defence of

* Ibid.
** *Zbornik dokumenata...*, op. cit., T. I, kn. I, Beograd, 1949, str. 16.

their country. It is also a war of all states and nations against fascist enslavement."*

Statements exposing the criminal character of Hitler's war against the U.S.S.R. and calling for solidarity with the Soviet people were issued by the communist parties of the Latin American countries. On the day after Germany's attack against the U.S.S.R. the C.C. of the Communist Party of Argentina, in a telegram to the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.(B.), declared its complete solidarity with the struggle of the Soviet people. In an appeal to the people of Argentina the Communist Party called upon the workers and all democrats to give active support to the Soviet Union. "The highest law of the day is defence of the U.S.S.R. against fascist aggression!..."**

The communist parties everywhere started to organise a wide campaign of solidarity with the Soviet Union, gave practical assistance to the war efforts of the Soviet Union and other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, mobilised the masses for armed struggle against the fascist aggressors and launched an active propaganda campaign exposing the criminal aims of fascism and explaining to the masses the great liberative mission of the Soviet people.

The Comintern and the Communist Parties— Organisers of the Struggle of All Anti-Fascist Forces Against Nazi Germany

The tasks of the communist parties, the forms and methods of their work among the masses, were enormously complicated and diversified as a result of the war. The parties' day-to-day contacts with each other and with the Comintern were rendered extremely difficult and at times impossible. The maturity of the communist parties, trained by the Comintern, revealed itself most strikingly, however. Working under the most adverse conditions,

* *Mezhdunarodnaya solidarnost trudyashchikhsya v borbe za mir i natsionalnoye osvobozhdeniye protiv fashistskoi agressii, za polnoye unichtozheniye fashizma v Yevrope i Azii* (International Solidarity of the Working People in the Fight for Peace and National Liberation Against Fascist Aggression, for the Complete Extermination of Fascism in Europe and Asia) (1938-1945), Moscow, 1962, p. 805.

** *Kommunisticheski Internatsional*, 1941, No. 6-7, pp. 126-27.

constantly exposed to the threat of physical extermination by the fascist invaders, the Communists were the most consistent and active fighters for the liberty and independence of the peoples against the fascist yoke. The war became a school in which the Communists, all progressive and democratic forces, went through a severe test. Educated by the Comintern in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, the Communists everywhere acquitted themselves as true patriots, who were able to link the struggle for their people's liberty and independence with the anti-fascist liberation movement all over the world. The Communists marched in the van of the peoples' struggle to defend civilisation against fascist barbarism.

The communist parties of the countries of the anti-nazi coalition (Britain, the U.S.A. and others) from the very outset of Germany's war against the U.S.S.R. developed energetic activities aimed at uniting the broadest sections of their peoples on a platform of active participation in the war against fascism, for liberty and independence of the peoples, for support of the Soviet Union. Considering that no aim was more important than that of defeating German fascism, the Communists supported all the war efforts of their governments, and this was a real help to the U.S.S.R. and the Resistance Movement. The Communists directed their fire against the pro-Hitler elements of the bourgeoisie in their own countries and worked for a united national front under the slogan of defence of democracy and national independence.

Realising that the fate of their own countries as well as that of the Soviet Union was being decided on the Soviet-German front, the workers of Britain and the U.S.A., at the very beginning of Germany's war against the U.S.S.R., launched a movement for rendering aid to the Soviet Union. Mass demonstrations, meetings, conferences and rallies were held in the big cities of Britain and the U.S.A. in the summer of 1941 demanding that their governments render immediate assistance to the Soviet Union and expressing the workers' desire immediately to swing into action against the fascist aggressors. Many letters were received by the Soviet embassies in London and Washington in which citizens of Britain and the U.S.A. expressed their desire to join the ranks of the Red Army to help it defeat the fascist invaders.

William Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party of the United States, speaking at a special National Committee Meeting at the end of June 1941, said: "Our crucial task is to develop all possible aid ... for the Soviet Union, to insure the annihilation of Hitler and his nazi barbarism.... Our Party's central demand is that the

United States Government give all aid to the Soviet and British peoples now fighting against Hitler."*

Welcoming the statement of the Roosevelt Government about rendering aid to the Soviet Union as expressing "the will of the vast majority of the American people", the Communist Party of the U.S.A. immediately launched a campaign for exposing the reactionary circles who were opposed to such aid and who stood for a deal with the nazis. The realisation of the Government's promise to render aid to the U.S.S.R., the Communist Party pointed out, "is seriously endangered. It is endangered by the great influence and pressure of the most reactionary circles of the American bourgeoisie which seek to come to terms with Hitler at the expense of the most vital national interests of the American people."**

While trying to rally all the national forces against the fascist aggressors, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. at the same time upheld its class positions and fought the revisionist elements who lauded American capitalism, which was said to have taken a stand of sincere and constant co-operation with the U.S.S.R. Such a revisionist attitude was adopted by E. Browder, who was General Secretary of the Communist Party at the time.

The Communist Parties of Britain and the U.S.A. sponsored the campaign for increased production, especially by the war industries, in order to step up their countries' war efforts. The working class of Britain and the U.S.A. took an active part in "the fight for increased production" and by their labour helped to considerably increase military production notably tanks for the U.S.S.R., which was a definite contribution to the defeat of the fascist bloc. Collections in aid of the U.S.S.R. were made in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The campaign of solidarity of the peoples of the U.S.A. and Britain with the Soviet Union was an important factor which contributed to the signing of the Anglo-Soviet treaty of alliance in the war against fascist Germany and the Soviet-American agreement reached in 1942.

By arrangement between the governments of the anti-Hitler coalition countries, Britain and the U.S.A. started deliveries to the U.S.S.R. of food supplies, armaments and various military equipment. The ruling circles of those two countries, however, were in no hurry to render more effective aid to the Soviet Union by way of military operations in Europe.

* *Daily Worker*, New York, July 1, 1941.
** Ibid., June 30, 1941.

The Communists and other progressive forces in Britain and the U.S.A. launched a campaign for the opening of a second front, bringing home to the masses the difficulties and great significance of the Soviet people's struggle against Hitlerism. Addressing a meeting in Trafalgar Square in May 1942 on the occasion of the opening of the Communist Party Conference, William Gallacher said: "Surely we are capable of invading the continent. The time to act is now."* Powerful demonstrations of workers were held in Britain and the U.S.A. demanding the immediate opening of a second front in Europe. Inseparably bound up with this campaign was the demand for strengthening co-operation and the alliance with the U.S.S.R. The workers demanded that their governments fulfil their obligations. Factory workers and trade unions sent their spokesmen to ministries, to Parliament and to Congress to voice the workers' discontent at the delay in opening a second front. A resolution submitted to the Churchill Government by a delegation representing 105,000 London workers stated: "Hitler can be defeated quicker on two fronts, and we are prepared to make any sacrifice the second front will demand. We can no longer allow the Soviet Union to make the sacrifices alone. . . . We demand action."**

In the autumn of 1942, at the height of the fierce battle of Stalingrad, the majority of the U.S. labour unions at their national congresses adopted resolutions calling on the government to open a second front in Europe. Similar resolutions were adopted even at the national congresses of the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. which were controlled by conservative elements.

The Communists of Britain and the U.S.A. organised a campaign for the removal from the government of advocates of surrender to Germany and for the greatest possible mobilisation of all their countries' military resources for the defeat of nazi Germany.

A good deal was done to mobilise the population for active participation in the war by the Communist Party of Canada, which was working illegally. From the outset of the war the Communist Party put forward the slogan of "A National Front for Victory", and called upon members of the Party "to strain every nerve in the fight for labor unity to win the war".***

The Communist Party came out in support of the government's war efforts aimed at securing the defeat of nazi Germany and her

* Ibid., May 25, 1942.
** *Pravda*, August 8, 1942.
*** Tim Buck, *30 Years 1922-1952. The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada*, Toronto, 1952, p. 168.

allies. To enable them to act legally, the Communists set up a network of "Tim Buck Plebiscite Committees" with the national slogan of "Vote 'YES' for Victory!"* These Committees subsequently gathered at a national congress and formed a legal political organisation. After a long hard struggle conditions were created in the summer of 1943 for a legalised Communist Party under the name of the Labor-Progressive Party. This was a great success for the Communists of Canada.

The Communist Party of India actively fulfilled its international duty by identifying the interests of the Indian people with the international anti-fascist struggle and calling for a united national front in India on the common platform of resistance to fascism.

The question arose of the attitude of the workers in the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition to strikes, which, under wartime conditions, were liable to impede the build-up of war efforts against the fascist aggressors. The Communist Parties of Britain, the U.S.A. and other capitalist states engaged in the war against Germany and her allies stood for labour conflicts being settled by negotiations between workers and employers. The trade unions urged the workers to temporarily refrain from strikes provided the employers fulfilled their obligations. This position was in accord with the interests of the struggle against the fascist aggressive bloc. The movement for stepping up the national effort in the war, launched in Britain, the U.S.A. and other countries who were allies of the U.S.S.R., did not, however, signify a suspension of the class struggle. Gross violation by the employers of their agreements with the trade unions compelled the workers to resort to self-defence, including strikes. In standing for labour conflicts being settled by negotiations, the Communists acted in the interests of strengthening the potential of the anti-Hitler coalition. At the same time the communist parties continued to uphold the class interests of the workers and expose the predatory policy of the monopolies.

An outstanding feature of the Second World War was the liberation struggle of the peoples of the occupied countries. This struggle was part and parcel of the common war of the countries and peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition against the fascist aggressors in defence of their liberty and independence. The patriots of the occupied countries made an important contribution to the defeat of nazi Germany and her allies.

The situation created in the occupied countries made it possible to form broad anti-fascist alliances. Different sections of the population took part in the liberation movement—workers, peasants, the middle strata of the cities, and part of the national bourgeoisie. The leading role in this national struggle against fascism was played by the working class headed by the communist and labour parties. Practically speaking, all social strata, with the exception of a small group of financial tycoons, landowners and other anti-national elements, were concerned in driving out and defeating the fascist invaders. Working as they did to unite all anti-fascists and patriots, the communist parties played a decisive part in establishing national fronts in the occupied countries (a United People's Liberation Front was formed in Yugoslavia, a National Front of Struggle for Independence in France, a National Liberation Front in Greece, and so on).

The communist parties began to put into effect on a wide scale the strategic and tactical guidelines framed at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. The Communists' consistent efforts in this direction helped to rally the masses, to step up the Resistance Movement, which assumed immense scope, and to expand the influence of the Communists.

The Comintern gave constant aid to the communist parties of the occupied countries in developing the Resistance Movement. It consisted in the framing of basic guidelines, and assistance with personnel, propaganda materials, etc.

The Comintern devoted great attention to the organisation of the anti-fascist struggle in Yugoslavia. The letter of the E.C.C.I. to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia dated June 22, 1941 orientated it towards the creation within the country of a united national front and the organisation of a mass struggle against the invaders.

The Communists of Yugoslavia formed partisan groups and detachments and explained to the masses that the participation of the Soviet Union in the war against fascist Germany and her satellites opened up to the peoples of Yugoslavia the prospect of victory over fascism and the winning of liberty and independence. Numerous partisan detachments sprang up in the country, which were later reorganised into the regular National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia under the leadership of the Communists. At the end of 1942 this army numbered 150,000 men and officers.

In the course of the liberation struggle a United National Liberation Front was created embracing workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals, patriotic officers and other anti-fascist and

* Tim Buck, *30 Years 1922-1952...*, op. cit., p. 171.

patriotic forces. The guiding force of the national front was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

A hostile attitude to the national liberation forces was adopted not only by the local fascist units, but by the supporters of the émigré monarchist government. They organised armed detachments, known as Chetniks, who presently started to fight the partisan movement. As a result of the successful struggle of the Yugoslav patriots, part of the country's territory was liberated towards the end of 1942, and National Liberation Committees functioned there as organs of revolutionary power.

In the autumn of 1942 the C.C. of the Yugoslav Communist Party took steps to set up a National Committee of Liberation of Yugoslavia, which was regarded as "something in the nature of a government". The E.C.C.I. approved in principle the proposal to set up such a committee, which it defined as "a very necessary and extremely important" step. In a telegram dated November 20, 1942, the E.C.C.I. proposed that this committee be given "a national Yugoslav character and general party character both as regards its membership and its programme of action". The E.C.C.I. advised that this committee be regarded as a political organ of the national liberation struggle, that the slogan of a republic should not be put forward prematurely, and the struggle in Yugoslavia be approached not only from a national angle, but from the standpoint of the general aims of the struggle against the fascist bloc. The E.C.C.I. advised that "everything possible be done to strengthen your positions in the national liberation struggle, while displaying greater political flexibility and maneuverability".*

The recommendations of the E.C.C.I. were directed towards the creation in Yugoslavia of the widest possible front against the fascist invaders.

At the end of November 1942 an inaugural meeting of representatives of anti-fascist groups was held in the liberated Bosnia town of Bihač, at which an All-Yugoslav political body was set up—the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia—the first revolutionary parliament of the Yugoslav peoples. An Executive Committee of the Anti-Fascist Assembly was elected comprising, alongside the Communists, prominent representatives of all the anti-fascist groups. The Executive Committee of the AFANLY took over the political leadership of the liberation struggle in Yugoslavia.

The experience of the Y.C.P. in rallying the country's patriotic

* C.P.A., I.M.L., Collection of 1942 documents.

forces for an armed struggle against the German and Italian fascist invaders was highly evaluated by the Executive of the Comintern and widely popularised in the communist press of other countries.

Great assistance was rendered by the Comintern to the Communists of Poland, particularly in the rebuilding of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Polish working class.

Ever since Germany's attack against the U.S.S.R. the Polish Communists had stepped up their efforts to unite their scattered groups and all the anti-fascist forces. By the end of 1941 the illegal organisations controlled by the Communists had a membership of about five to six thousand.*

The biggest anti-fascist organisation controlled by the Communists was the Union of Liberation Struggle, which comprised also Left-wing socialists and non-party trade union activists. Other anti-fascist organisations in the country were the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Councils, the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union, the Worker-Peasant Organisation, and the Front of Struggle for Your and Our Liberty.

In July-August 1941 the E.C.C.I. formed a promotion group of Polish Communists staying in the U.S.S.R. which was to be smuggled into Poland with the aim of preparing the ground for the rebuilding of the Marxist-Leninist Party. The Promotion Group drew up a programmatic declaration of the new party, which put forward the task of creating a broad national front against the nazis.

The members of the Group arrived in Poland at the end of December 1941 and beginning of January 1942 and established contact with the illegal anti-fascist organisations controlled by the Communists.** The amalgamated illegal organisations served as the base on which the Polish Workers' Party—a Marxist-Leninist Party of the Polish workers—was built up.

At the inaugural meeting of the P.W.P. early in January 1942 a provisional governing body was elected with Nowotko acting as Secretary.

On January 10, 1942 an appeal was issued "To the Workers, Peasants and Intellectuals. To All Polish Patriots". This document announced the formation of the Polish Workers' Party and

* *Polskoye rabocheye dvizheniye v gody voiny i gitlerovskoi okkupatsii* (The Polish Labour Movement During the War and Hitler Occupation), September 1939-January 1945, Moscow, 1968, p. 135.

** Ibid., p. 141.

proclaimed its basic principles. The Party called on the whole Polish nation to wage a relentless struggle against the nazi invaders and set up a united National Anti-Fascist Front embracing all sections of the population with the exception of traitors and capitulationists.

The formation of the P.W.P. ushered in a new phase of the liberation struggle of the Polish people. The Communists promptly swung into the struggle against the invaders. A military organisation was set up known as the Gwardia Ludowa (the People's Guard). The first units of the Guard started operations in May-June 1942 with attacks against the enemy. In the course of a grim struggle against a strong and ruthless enemy in the person of the nazi occupationists and reactionary circles within the country, the P.W.P. steadily built up its ranks and became the most active force of the anti-fascist resistance.

The Executive of the Comintern tried to maintain close contact with all the communist parties of the occupied countries and helped to strengthen and widen the Resistance Movement.

In France, after Germany's attack against the Soviet Union, this movement rose to a higher stage. "After June 22," wrote Thorez, "patriots started thinking differently: 'We are not alone. With such an ally as the Soviet people we can achieve liberation, we can win.' "* Beginning with the summer of 1941 detachments of Francs-tireurs and guerillas were formed. The Communists acted as their organisers.

The Communists started to work for the consolidation of the National Front. Numerous workers' and peasants' organisations, the Union of French Women, the Youth Front, etc., began to join it.

The nazi authorities and their allies in the person of the Vichi authorities launched savage repressions against the French patriots. The heaviest to suffer was the French Communist Party, which became known as "le Parti des fusillés". As many as seventy-five thousand Communists gave their lives in the fight to defend their country's liberty and independence against the nazi invaders. Among those killed were 8 members of the Party's Central Committee, including Pierre Sémard, Secretary of the C.C. and leader of the Railwaymen's Trade Union, and Gabriel Peri, editor of the newspaper *Humanité*. The Communists proved themselves real heroes of the Resistance.

* M. Thorez, *Fils du Peuple*, Moscow, 1951, p. 147.

The Resistance Movement in Czechoslovakia became more active after Germany's attack upon the Soviet Union.

In September 1941, on the initiative of the C.C. of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, a Central National-Revolutionary Committee of Czechoslovakia was set up consisting of representatives of the principal groups of the Resistance Movement. Local committees were set up in towns and villages, which acted as organs of the people's struggle against the invaders.

In Slovakia, which after the seizure of the Czech regions by the nazis was turned into a puppet state completely dependent on Germany, the Communists carried on extensive work in the army; they formed illegal communist organisations in the military units and distributed leaflets calling upon the soldiers not to fight against the Red Army. Under the influence of revolutionary propaganda entire units of the army sent to the Soviet-German front by the Slovak government went over to the side of the Red Army and the Soviet partisans.

At the end of 1941 the formation of partisan detachments was started in Slovakia, followed by Bohemia and Moravia. The Communists launched a campaign for the creation of a National Front.

Serious attention was devoted by the E.C.C.I. to the Communist Party of Spain. The question of its tasks was discussed several times in the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. Franco Spain, though officially taking no part in the war, was giving increasing assistance to nazi Germany. Spain was supplying strategic raw materials to Germany in large quantities. Franco sent his Blue Division to the Soviet-German front, where it formed part of the German army. The ruling circles of fascist Spain were planning to draw the country into the war on the side of nazi Germany. Such a policy was a threat to the vital interests of the Spanish people.

The Communist Party of Spain exposed this adventurist course of the Franco regime and called upon all anti-fascists, all who held dear the national interests, to unite in order "to prevent Spain from joining the war and to fight against the assistance which the dictatorship is rendering the fascist powers".* The policy of national unity pursued by the Spanish Communist Party was based on the fact that the neutrality of Spain was a matter of concern not only to the Left forces, but to the majority of the country's population, including the conservative and Catholic circles, part of the servicemen and considerable groups of Spanish capitalists who were connected with Anglo-American capital.

* *Historia del Partido Communista de España.* P. Ed. Soc. 1960, p. 219.

The S.C.P. was the only party in the country which roused the people on their native soil to fight the Franco regime and its attempts to draw Spain into the war.

In its manifesto of September 1942 the Party proclaimed the slogan of a government of national unity, which, immediately after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and the restoration of political freedoms, was to carry through elections enabling the people, in conditions of freedom and democracy, to decide the future political structure of the state.

Considerable attention was given by the E.C.C.I. to the question of the activities of the Chinese Communist Party, which was taking an active part in organising the Chinese people's armed resistance to the Japanese invaders.

The course of events in Europe and Asia required that the anti-Japanese war be stepped up in order to prevent the possibility of Japan entering the war against the U.S.S.R. This was in the interests of both the Soviet Union and the other freedom-loving peoples, especially those of China.

The establishment of a united national front was of important significance for the development of the national liberation war of the Chinese people. The reactionary line of the Chiang Kai-shek group, however, created serious difficulties for the Communist Party of China. Armed clashes provoked by the Chiang Kai-shek clique repeatedly took place between the Kuomintang troops and the National Liberation armies.

To ensure effective action by the Chinese people against the Japanese invaders, the E.C.C.I. repeatedly advised the C.C.P. to take steps towards strengthening the national front and improving relations with the Kuomintang. Thus, in its letter to the C.C. of the C.C.P. dated June 16, 1942 the E.C.C.I. pointed out "that the present situation compellingly demands that the Chinese Communist Party do everything in its power to improve relations with the Kuomintang and strengthen the united front of China in the struggle against the Japanese". Pointing out the provocative nature of the tactics employed by Chiang Kai-shek and other Kuomintang leaders, who tried to discredit the Communist Party and isolate it from the masses, the E.C.C.I. stressed that "it cannot be considered by us a correct policy for our people to yield to these provocations instead of reacting intelligently to them".*

Considerable opportunities for developing a mass partisan war under the leadership of the Communist Party presented themselves in the rear of the Japanese invaders, especially in the rural areas of China. Owing to the fact that the Japanese imperialists had concentrated a million-strong army on the frontiers of the U.S.S.R. and then started a war in the Pacific, they had only limited forces to spare for the war in China. Favourable conditions existed for spurring on the liberation struggle of the Chinese people.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., Collection of 1942 documents.

The C.C.P. took advantage of these conditions to expand the liberated districts and strengthen the armed forces. Within the Party, however, the leadership, headed by Mao Tse-tung, gave its chief attention to the campaign for "improving the style" of work of the party organisations which was launched as far back as the summer of 1941 and continued up to the autumn of 1945. The Mao Tse-tung group turned this campaign into a regular crusade against party workers who were not to the liking of Mao Tse-tung and his supporters. Many of them were subjected to unwarranted repressions.

The campaign for "improving the style" was used as an excuse to laud Mao Tse-tung, strengthen the positions of his group in the party leadership and popularise Maoism, which was presented as "Marxism in the specific conditions of China". In the course of the inner-party struggle there were gradually created the ideological and organisational preconditions for turning the doctrinal postulates of Mao Tse-tung into the dominant ideology of the Party and building up his reputation of an "infallible leader".

Despite these negative aspects of the Party's development it succeeded, under the influence of the broad patriotic movement of the masses and with the assistance of the Comintern, in effecting the leadership of the people's struggle under national slogans for the country's liberation from the yoke of the Japanese imperialists.

The peoples' struggle against the Japanese imperialists started in Malaya, the Philippines, Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia and Korea. In seizing the countries of South-East Asia, the Japanese militarists acted under the guise of "liberators" from the yoke of "Anglo-Saxon imperialism".

The hypocritical policy of the Japanese colonialists, who set up puppet administrations in the occupied countries with the cooperation of venal elements of the local bourgeoisie, landowners and officials, combined with the illusions among a section of the population, who believed in the possibility of winning independence with the help of Japan, was an obstacle to the achievement of unity of the anti-imperialist forces. The ruthless plunder of the

seized countries by the Japanese imperialists, however, and the regime of brutal terror and violence roused hatred against the new colonialists among the people, which began to develop into a Resistance Movement.

The people of Malaya fought actively against the Japanese colonialists. An anti-Japanese army was created under the leadership of the Communist Party, which waged war against the invaders.

The Japanese met with resolute resistance in the Philippines. In the spring of 1942, on the initiative of the Communist Party, a united anti-Japanese front was established, made up of workers', peasants', students' and religious organisations. The guerilla detachments united in the spring of 1942 into a National Anti-Japanese Army. Backed by the masses, its armed units liberated several districts in the central and southern provinces of the country.

In Burma the Communists worked to unite all the patriotic forces, formed guerilla detachments and joined other patriots in a struggle against the invaders and the local military administrations in the service of the Japanese.

In Vietnam, on the initiative of the Communist Party, a united front—the Viet Minh (Vietnam Independence League)—had been established in 1941. In its ranks were united workers, peasants, petty-bourgeois of the towns, progressive intellectuals and the middle bourgeoisie. The League's leader was Ho Chi Minh. The Viet Minh led the resistance to the Japanese invaders and subsequently the struggle for the country's liberation from all colonial oppression.

In Indonesia the anti-Japanese movement was participated in by the workers, who organised acts of sabotage at the factories and on the railways, by peasants, intellectuals, students and youth. In a number of places there were outbreaks of peasant revolts and mutinies among the troops.

The Resistance Movement against the Japanese colonialists spread in Korea. Prior to the war a Society of National Rebirth had been founded there under the leadership of the Communists. The Society was backed by guerilla detachments of Koreans operating in Manchuria and in districts adjoining the Korean frontier.

In the movement for uniting the patriotic forces of the countries of South-East Asia against the Japanese invaders and in the armed struggle against them, the Communists marched in the front ranks, acting as organisers of a united anti-Japanese front.

The Organisation of Radio Propaganda to States of the Fascist Bloc and Occupied Countries

Anti-fascist propaganda, including radio propaganda, was a powerful instrument for rallying the masses to the struggle. Under the conditions of the war, when most of the European countries were occupied by German troops, day-to-day communication with the anti-fascist underground was carried out mainly by radio. Radio broadcasts from the Soviet Union and illegal transmissions to some nazi-occupied territories were an important means of conveying truthful information about the international situation, the position at the fronts, and the internal situation in the occupied and fascist countries. The radio transmissions from Moscow denounced the policy of the nazi aggressors, revealed the propaganda stunts of the nazis and gave advice on concrete questions of the anti-fascist Resistance.

Radio broadcasts were an important means of sustaining the people's implacable hatred of the fascist invaders, their confidence in the inevitable defeat of the fascist robbers and in the victory of the just cause of the people's freedom.

Distinguished representatives of the world communist movement, people like Gottwald, Ibárruri, Kolarov, Pieck, Togliatti, Thorez and Ulbricht, to mention only a few, took part in these radio broadcasts. Special editorial staffs were set up for broadcasts to individual countries on which high-level members of the communist parties of the countries concerned were represented. General guidance was effected by a Central Editorial Board appointed by the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I.

In 1943 the national radio broadcasts were on the air almost all round the clock, day and night, in eighteen different languages: German, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, French, Italian, Hungarian and other languages. Truthful radio information penetrated to the peoples of the occupied countries, enheartened them in the fight for liberty and independence, against the fascist occupationists. Anti-fascist propaganda reached the Communists and advanced workers in the Hitler-bloc countries, and this led to a growth of the anti-fascist forces there.

The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. repeatedly heard reports concerning the progress of these radio broadcasts and the part they

played in developing the Resistance Movement. In its decision of February 27, 1942 the Secretariat noted that there was an absence of criticism in the national broadcasts of the passive conduct of some of the anti-fascists, who were waiting for "a more favourable situation for launching combat activities" and who placed all their hopes in the victory of the Red Army. The E.C.C.I. demanded that the radio propaganda should not exaggerate the successes of the anti-fascist movement and should do everything to stimulate militant action by anti-fascist fighting groups and demonstrations by the broad masses against the enemy. The E.C.C.I. objected to the view that the time was not yet ripe for big mass actions and more resolute militant action against the fascist invaders.

The Secretariat drew up concrete proposals for improving radio propaganda. "While continuing unremittingly to expose the enemy," ran the decision, "it is necessary to direct the national broadcasts at frustrating the spring offensive which Hitler is planning." All the editorial staffs of the national broadcasts were to step up propaganda for immediate actions by the masses against the nazis and those traitorous governments which were in the service of the ruling clique of nazi Germany. The E.C.C.I. further urged the necessity of propagandising the immediate establishment of national bases of the movement in the form of various national committees and clarifying their role, significance and tasks. The common aim of these committees was to fight for the immediate cessation of the war, to assist in the defeat of Hitler by every possible means, to give every possible help to the Red Army, which was bringing liberation to the peoples, to work for the overthrow of Hitler in Germany and of the governments of national betrayal in the countries allied to Germany, and to fight for the establishment of genuinely national governments, governments of peace, liberty and public welfare. "Propaganda of all these aims should be based on the national interests of each country."*

The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. recommended that anti-fascists (especially in Germany and Italy) be called upon to strengthen their illegal organisations and create them where none existed, and to step up their activities without waiting for directives from above, by displaying the greatest possible initiative from below.

The E.C.C.I. reacted to important events at the front and gave corresponding advice to the communist parties. When the German armies began their summer offensive in 1942 the E.C.C.I., in

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1336/85-86.

a special decision, urged the need "to react more strongly and shrewdly to enemy propaganda in connection with the temporary successes of the foe". "It should be made clear that the question of a second front is becoming more urgent and its realisation more real in view of the fact that the main forces of Hitler's army are tied up at the Soviet-German front. This provides favourable conditions for the struggle of the peoples of the occupied countries, and especially for the partisan movement...." At the same time the E.C.C.I. warned the anti-fascists against the danger of passively marking time in expectation of a second front being opened. "The fight against the invaders," said the E.C.C.I., "must be launched right now without waiting for the opening of the second front."*

The E.C.C.I. discussed the question of propaganda among the youth. In its resolution of July 28, 1942 the Secretariat pointed out that the speedy defeat of Hitler was the primary concern of the youth, that there was only one way to win liberty under present conditions, and that was by way of an armed struggle. Therefore the young people in each occupied country had to consider it their sacred duty to be the striking force of the people's struggle. It was recommended that youth broadcasts be carried out under the slogan: "My country's happiness is dearer to me than my own life."** Considerable attention in the national radio broadcasts was devoted to propaganda of the partisan movement. In its messages to the communist parties the E.C.C.I. urged them to develop the partisan movement wherever the conditions for it were available. At the end of September 1942 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. adopted a special resolution directing the editorial staffs of the national radio broadcasts to carry on daily propaganda for the partisan movement, arguing the justice of partisan warfare, subversive acts and sabotage against fascism.

The Comintern and Political Work Among Prisoners-of-War

An important problem that rose before the Communist International in the course of the war was that of carrying on political work among the prisoners-of-war. The rulers of the fascist coun-

* Ibid., 495/18/1338/6-7, 9-10.
** Ibid., 495/18/1338/36-37.

tries devoted great attention to the business of indoctrinating the soldiers and the population in the spirit of racialism, chauvinism and militarism. The overwhelming majority of the prisoners-of-war—former soldiers and officers of the German Wehrmacht, and the Italian, Hungarian, Rumanian and other armies—were strongly influenced by anti-communist propaganda. In view of this there arose a task of tremendous importance—that of re-educating the prisoners-of-war in an anti-fascist spirit and making out of them fighters against fascism, fighters for a democratic social system in their own countries. This task was no easy one.

By arrangement with the proper Soviet authorities the E.C.C.I., already in the summer of 1941, sent its representatives into the POW camps to carry on systematic work among the prisoners-of-war. A big part in this work was taken by prominent leaders of the international communist movement, well-known German writers (Johannes Becher, Willi Bredel, and Erich Weinert) and many German Communists. Soviet Communists also took an active part in the political work among the prisoners-of-war.

On August 21, 1941 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. heard a report by Ulbricht, Draganov and Šverma concerning the German and Rumanian prisoners-of-war and recommended that special courses be organised for anti-Hitler-minded soldiers and officers.

A first meeting of German prisoners-of-war with representatives of the German Communist Party was held in a POW camp in October 1941. The meeting adopted an "Appeal to the German People", stating that "the overthrow of Hitler is the German people's salvation". For the first time a large group of German soldiers openly appealed to the German people to put an end to the war, overthrow Hitler and start building up a free and independent Germany. This appeal was of great political significance, starting off as it did an anti-fascist movement in the POW camps of the Soviet Union.*

The E.C.C.I. continued to make a systematic study of the way work among the prisoners-of-war was organised and of its results. The co-operation of prominent leaders of the world communist movement was enlisted for this purpose. At the end of January 1942 the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. discussed the question of political work among the prisoners-of-war. The decision adopted on this question stated that "the appeal of the first conference of prisoners-of-war, and the corresponding appeals adopted for other countries should serve as a basis for further work among the prisoners-of-war...".* The Secretariat approved a proposal to organise a school for prisoners-of-war with a three-month course of tuition. Prisoners-of-war who had taken a course at this school were recommended for political work at the camps.

A commission for directing political work among the prisoners-of-war was set up consisting of Ulbricht, Koplenig and Szanto.

Following the victories of the Soviet Army at the end of 1942 and beginning of 1943 and the capture of a large number of soldiers and officers of the fascist armies the E.C.C.I. decided to launch a mass anti-fascist movement among the prisoners-of-war. The Secretariat recommended that the anti-fascist school be enlarged and short-term courses organised for the training of activists. Special seminars were to be conducted for the officers.**

On the recommendation of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. delegate conferences of German, Italian, Hungarian and Rumanian prisoners-of-war were held to discuss the political tasks of the prisoners in the struggle against Hitler and his confederates.

As a result of painstaking political work among the prisoners-of-war, many soldiers and officers of the German army and the armies of other countries of the fascist bloc became active fighters against fascism. The formation in 1943 of a Free Germany National Committee was an important event in the struggle of the Communist Party of Germany to create a united front of all opponents of Hitler. The Free Germany movement was in effect a militant alliance of anti-fascists, including the national forces of the army from among the prisoners-of-war, guided by the working class under the leadership of the German Communist Party. The Free Germany movement helped to train cadres which eventually took an active part in building up a new, democratic Germany.

The Comintern and the Turning Point in the War

The outcome of all the peoples' struggle against fascist enslavement was decided, first and foremost, at the Soviet-German front—the main front of the Second World War. Here, since Germany's attack upon the U.S.S.R. and up to the middle of

* *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Bd. 5, Berlin, 1966, S. 317-18.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1336/22.
** Ibid., 495/18/1340/22.

1943, two-thirds of all the troops of the Hitler-bloc countries were concentrated.

Despite a number of serious setbacks during the early period of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Army stood its ground in fierce, sanguinary battles, and then turned the scale of the war. The great battles which raged between the Volga and the Don during the second half of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 ended in a crushing defeat for the fascist troops, which shook the whole nazi war machine to its foundations and changed the entire course of the war. The ejection of the fascist invaders from Soviet soil began.

The victory at Stalingrad opened up real prospects for the liberation of the nations of Europe from nazi enslavement. Hope in the speedy hour of liberation was strengthened in the hearts of millions suffering under the bloody yoke of fascism. Under the impact of the Soviet Army's victories the Resistance gained scope and momentum. The prestige of the Soviet Union, guided by the Communist Party, the prestige of Communists throughout the world, rose immeasurably.

But there was still a hard fight ahead, a fight that called for the most active operations by all anti-fascist forces on all fronts and sectors of the war.

In this new situation the Executive of the Comintern set new tasks in the sphere of anti-fascist propaganda and agitation. The resolution of the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. dated February 10, 1943 stated: "The crucial turning point in the course of the war and the possibility of Hitler's speedy defeat calls for a complete change in our propaganda, which must now be based on the new conditions of the struggle against Hitlerism. Our propaganda must pass over onto the offensive, must be as militant and resolute as possible and must bring home to the masses that we have entered the decisive phase of the war."*

With the start of this turning point in the war the Executive of the Comintern took a line aimed at stepping up still further the business of rallying all anti-fascists and patriots, intensifying the struggle of the peoples against the fascist aggressors.

The Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. paid special attention during this period to the tasks of the Communists in France and Italy in view of the change in the international situation.

The proposals concerning the immediate tasks of the Communist Party of France drafted by Thorez, Marty and Togliatti and

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1340/47-48.

endorsed by a commission of the E.C.C.I. with the co-operation of Manuilsky and Dimitrov on December 1, 1942 stated that the offensive of the Soviet troops at Stalingrad, the American and British landing in North Africa, and the nazi occupation of the unoccupied zone in France created a new situation in that country. It enabled the base of the national front of liberation to be extended. The proposals stressed that the first thing to do was to strengthen the national front by drawing into it all Frenchmen who wished to fight Hitler regardless of previous political differences. The Communist Party was set the task of achieving unity of all the nation's forces.

In the interests of this unity the Communists considered it necessary to collaborate with the movement headed by de Gaulle, and also with all other patriotic elements in France and North Africa who had joined the anti-Hitler struggle in earnest.

The commission called for the creation in North Africa of a leadership capable of immediately organising military operations together with the allies. The Communist Party was to support all efforts to use North Africa as a base for forming a real national French army dedicated to the cause of French liberation.

Conspicuous among the commission's proposals were the demands for restoring democratic freedoms in North Africa, releasing imprisoned patriots and anti-fascists, purging the army, police and administrative bodies of the remnants of the fifth column and arresting its leaders.

The Communists were to work for the greatest possible expansion of the Resistance Movement in France, especially the partisan movement against the invaders. For this it was necessary to widen the organisation of Francs-tireurs and partisans, to form new units, which would serve as the core of the future national army. All this would make for the greater fighting efficiency of the masses and speed up the preparations for a general popular uprising against the invaders for the liberation of France.*

At the end of 1942 the French Communists concluded with de Gaulle an agreement for collaboration in the fight against the nazi occupationists, which was of great importance in the matter of uniting the patriotic forces of France.

Under the slogan of national liberation the Communists of France fought heroically in the front ranks of the Resistance.

By the spring of 1943 a large number of new Francs-tireurs and partisan units were formed in the country. In many of these

* Ibid., 495/18/1338/160-62.

units Spanish, Polish, Czechoslovak, German and Italian anti-fascists fought side by side with the French patriots. The ranks of the French partisans contained a considerable number of Soviet prisoners-of-war who had escaped from German concentration camps in France.

In the spring of 1943 a National Resistance Council was set up consisting of representatives of the communist-sponsored National Front and bourgeois organisations of the Resistance. This marked a further consolidation of the country's patriotic forces. The influence of the Communist Party and other Left forces in the Resistance Movement increased. The National Resistance Council supported the Communists' proposal that preparations be made for an armed uprising against the invaders and the mercenary Vichi regime. This opened up new prospects for the liberation struggle of the French people.

An important field of communist activity in France at that time was the fight to prevent the occupationists from sending French workers to the war factories in Germany. Masses of workers and peasants took to the woods to escape the nazi "total mobilisation". The Communists organised the military training of workers and peasants who evaded mobilisation, and drew them into the ranks of the partisans. The struggle of France's patriotic forces against "total mobilisation" assumed such dimensions that the government of Vichi was unable to fulfil its obligations in this respect.

With the defeat of the Italian troops on the Soviet front and in North Africa, the fascist regime in Italy towards the end of 1942 found its positions undermined.

In these circumstances, the task of securing the overthrow of the fascist regime and Italy's speedy withdrawal from the war became an urgent one. The proposals drafted by Togliatti, Thorez and Marty and approved by the Commission of the E.C.C.I. Secretariat on December 1, 1942 pointed out that the obstacle to Italy's withdrawal from the war was the government of Mussolini, which had turned the country into a vassal of nazi Germany and a bastion of Hitler's defences in the south of Europe. The overthrow of Mussolini's government was the concrete and immediate task not only of the anti-fascist forces, but of all who renounced the fascist policy of war. The E.C.C.I. and the Communist Party of Italy put forward the slogan of establishing a government of peace, which would have the backing of the people and would be able to take the necessary urgent steps to halt hostilities and conclude peace, thereby saving the country from disaster. The overthrow of Mussolini's government and establishment of a government of peace could only be effected by an armed uprising for freedom and peace against fascist tyranny.*

Beginning with the autumn of 1942 a mounting wave of strikes swept the country and assumed a more and more stubborn nature; the movement for uniting all progressive forces to fight fascism kept widening. Committees of the National Front sprang up in Turin and other cities of Northern Italy on which the Christian Democrats and petty-bourgeois party of action in addition to the Communists and socialists were represented. A great strike broke out in Northern Italy in the spring of 1943 involving the country's big industrial centres. The number of strikers amounted to three hundred thousand. Starting for economic motives, the strike developed into a mass political demonstration. The workers denounced fascism and demanded an end to the war and the establishment of peace. Simultaneously with the strikes a wave of public meetings and street demonstrations under anti-fascist and anti-war slogans swept through the country. For the first time during the period of fascist rule the Mussolini government was compelled to make concessions to the workers.

The March actions struck a heavy blow at fascism in Italy. The intense military and political crisis of Italian fascism, which had plunged the country into a disastrous war, was now unmistakably revealed. The influence of the Communists began to increase rapidly and the movement for uniting all the progressive forces of Italy gained momentum.

A conference of the Committee of Action for the Union of the Italian People was convened. The conference delegates stated in their declaration that they took upon themselves the obligation of jointly waging the fight for Italy's salvation and "by way of a national uprising, putting an end to the disastrous fascist policy of war, overthrowing the government of Mussolini and concluding a separate peace".** It went on to state that the members of the Committee of Action intended to pursue a firm course towards the democratic restoration of the Italian state, and to eliminate together with fascism the economic, political and social forces that had brought it into being, and also ensure the establishment of a democracy the key role in which would belong to labour.

A National Front of Action was in the making in Italy, in the process of which more and more new forces of the people kept joining the anti-fascist struggle. Prospects were thus opened for a

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1338/163-65.
** *Trenta anni di vita e lotte del P.C.I.*, p. 195.

powerful upswing of the anti-fascist movement, which shortly swept away the fascist regime of Mussolini.

In Yugoslavia the regular People's Liberation Army dealt more and more telling blows to the occupationists and liberated more and more districts. The national liberation war against the fascist invaders and their servants from among the local bourgeoisie and landowners rose on a mounting wave.

In Greece a National Liberation Front (EAM) was set up under communist leadership uniting all the country's patriotic forces. The numerous armed detachments of insurgents united into the Greek National Liberation Army (ELAS). In the course of the armed struggle with the enemy this army liberated important districts, especially in the north of the country. By their dedicated struggle in the interests of the people the Communists won growing influence among the masses.

The influence of the young Communist Party of Albania, founded in the autumn of 1941, steadily broadened. With the co-operation of the Communists a National Liberation Front of Albania was created and partisan units were formed, which were united in the spring of 1943 in a National Liberation Army. The operations of this army assumed wider scope in 1943, spreading to extensive areas.

Great changes in the alignment of political forces took place in Poland. The influence of the internal reactionary and conservative forces connected with Polish emigrant circles in London and Washington were a serious obstacle to the development of the mass liberation struggle against the occupationists. The members of these organisations took an extremely passive part in the resistance to the invaders, but were very active in fighting the genuinely patriotic forces headed by the Polish Workers' Party. Even under these difficult conditions, however, the Polish Workers' Party and the patriotic organisations which it controlled, despite heavy sacrifices and losses, stepped up their attacks against the fascist occupationists. By the spring of 1943 the influence of the Polish Workers' Party had broadened and the network of its organisations covered practically the whole country. The partisan detachments of the Polish Workers' Party operated in many districts. A strong impetus was given to the Resistance Movement in Poland by the formation on the territory of the U.S.S.R. of a Union of Polish Patriots and a Polish Division named after Thaddeus Kościuszko.

In co-operation with Gottwald and Šverma the Comintern drew up proposals for a political line and immediate tasks of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. These proposals, which were adopted on January 5, 1943, stated: "In view of the approaching decisive battles with nazi Germany the chief attention should be concentrated on developing and stepping up the liberation struggle within the country."* It was recommended that the struggle in the Bohemian lands should be waged under the main slogan of driving the occupationists out of the country, and in Slovakia under the slogan of putting an end to the war on the side of nazi Germany.

It was recognised as a major task of the national liberation movement in Czechoslovakia to form armed fighting groups in the towns and partisan units in the countryside and to spread the partisan movement throughout the country. With the aim of consolidating national unity the resolution recommended that National Committees representing the unity of the people in the struggle against fascism be set up. The leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. considered it necessary to call upon the Slovak people to organise a national rebellion against the German oppressors. "Stress should be laid on the close militant and historical connection between the destinies of the Slovaks and Czechs," stated the resolution. "It should be pointed out that the joint struggle of these peoples is in the vital interests of the Slovak people's national liberation, and that liberty for the Slovaks cannot be achieved without liberty for the Czechs, and vice versa."**

By the spring of 1943 the Resistance Movement in Czechoslovakia had gained strength. Partisan detachments sprang up in different places and acts of sabotage assumed a mass character. The workers undeviatingly followed the slogan of "work to rule" and reduced labour efficiency in every way. In 1942 a Czechoslovak military unit was formed in the Soviet Union under the command of Ludvik Svoboda. This put a definite impulse behind the Resistance Movement at home. In view of the upspring in the national liberation movement, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia put forward in 1943 the task of turning the partisan movement into the main link of the national liberation struggle.

In an attempt to crush the struggle of the masses the enemy resorted to harsh repressions against the Czechoslovak patriots, especially the Communists. By the spring of 1943 two Central Committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and three

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* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1340/9.
** Ibid., 495/18/1340/12.

of the C.P. of Slovakia were smashed up. Thousands of Communists, among them the heroic Julius Fučík, were killed and tortured to death by the fascist butchers. The Resistance Movement nevertheless steadily grew wider and the Communists' influence within it increased.

By the spring of 1943 the Resistance had gained ground in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Luxemburg and Norway, and communist influence in these countries had increased. In Belgium, on the initiative of the Communist Party, units of the patriotic militia were formed in many towns which gave active support to the partisans. In Holland in the spring of 1943 a wave of strikes swept the whole country under the slogan of protest against total mobilisation. In Norway the Communists called upon the population to put up a determined resistance to "total labour mobilisation" proclaimed by the Quislings in February 1943. Owing to the resistance of the Norwegian people the "total mobilisation" plan was a fiasco.

The turning point in the war precipitated a military and political crisis in the fascist-bloc countries. The hopes which their rulers had entertained for the defeat of the Soviet Union and the seizure of its territories were shattered. The shadow of defeat hung over the countries of the fascist bloc.

The illegal anti-fascist organisations, which were largely under communist leadership, considerably widened their activities in Germany during 1942-1944. The anti-fascist group of Robert Uhrig operated in Berlin and maintained contact with anti-fascists in many cities. In Saxony there was an anti-fascist group organised by Georg Schumann, in Thuringia an organisation directed by Theodor Neubauer. An influential anti-fascist organisation operating in Berlin and other cities in 1942 was the Schulze-Boysen and Arvid von Harnack organisation. Anti-fascist organisations operated also in Hamburg, Leipzig, Düsseldorf, Manheim and other cities. During 1943-1944 the biggest underground organisation of the Communists was formed under the leadership of Anton Saefkow, Franz Jacob and Bernhard Bästlein and had contacts with many anti-fascist groups in different German cities. The German Communists waged a valiant fight against Hitlerism for the unity of all the opponents of nazism in a united anti-fascist front, exposed the adventurist policy of the nazis and tried to make the German people realise that the nazis were heading the country for a military catastrophe. To crush the resistance of the anti-fascists the nazis let loose upon them a brutal terror. Out of the 300,000 Communists which the Party had in 1933 150,000 were

subjected to persecutions and thrown into prisons and concentration camps, where they died by the thousand. Among them was that prominent leader of the international labour movement, the leader of the German proletariat Ernst Thälmann.

There was a strengthening of the anti-fascist struggle and the influence of the Communist Parties in Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland. These parties took the lead of all the forces who worked for a break with nazi Germany, for an armed struggle against the nazis, for the overthrow of the fascist regimes in their own countries and the establishment of democratic rule. A communist-sponsored Patriotic Front was set up in Rumania at the beginning of 1943 which united various democratic organisations for joint struggle against fascism, among them the Communist Party of Rumania, the Farmers' Front—a mass peasant organisation—the Union of Patriots, and the Democratic Union of Transylvanian Hungarians. The programme of the Patriotic Front demanded that Rumania withdraw immediately from the war and join the anti-fascist coalition, eject the German invaders from Rumania, overthrow the government of Antonescu, form a genuinely national government, and restore democratic freedoms. This programme met with growing support among the working people.

After the defeat of the Hungarian army on the Soviet-German front the anti-fascist movement in Hungary grew noticeably more active. The public at large demanded an end to the war. The Hungarian Communist Party campaigned for the country's withdrawal from the aggressive bloc and adherence to the anti-Hitler coalition. The Communists worked for the unification of all supporters of the country's independence in the National Front.

In Bulgaria the Resistance Movement steadily assumed a more mass and organised character. Already in 1941 the C.C. of the Bulgarian Workers' Party had formed a Central Military Commission which subsequently became the headquarters of the national liberation forces.

The B.W.P. organised a movement for rallying all the anti-fascist forces into the United Patriotic Front, which was set up in the middle of 1942. This front was joined by the Communists, the Social-Democratic Party, the Bulgarian Farmers' Union, the Zveno Party and other organisations. The motive force in this front was the Bulgarian Workers' Party (the Communists).

The partisan movement was mounting within the country. During March-April 1942 the C.C. of the B.W.P. united the partisan detachments into a National Liberation Insurgent Army. The armed struggle steadily assumed broader scope.

The Communist Party of Finland worked under difficult conditions. Despite the brutal terror, the Communists tried to bring home to the masses that the war on Finland's part was not a defensive war, as the country's reactionary rulers tried to make out, but a predatory war against the Soviet Union. The Communists called for the overthrow of the fascist government, for ending the war and liberating Finland from the yoke of fascist Germany. After the defeat of the German army at Stalingrad anti-war feeling within the country rose into active resistance.

The Resistance in the countries of the fascist bloc was of important significance for the destinies of those countries. The best forces of the people rallied behind the Communist Party of Germany and the communist parties of the other fascist countries and fought courageously against the criminal policy of the nazi adventurists, for frustrating the plans of the Hitlerites, for overthrowing the fascist regimes, for a better future. The anti-fascist movement in Germany, Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland was part and parcel of the struggle of the world's peoples against fascism during the years of the Second World War.

The Dissolution of the Communist International

The policy of the communist movement aimed at uniting all anti-fascist and patriotic forces during the Second World War was fully justified by events and ensured the mobilisation of the masses for the decisive struggle against fascism, the dire enemy of all the peace-loving nations. Thanks to the policy of the Communists an international front against fascism was created. The line mapped out by the Seventh Congress of the Communist International thus became the general strategic line which led the nations to victory over fascism.

The Soviet people, by their heroic fight, turned the tide of war in favour of the states and peoples of the anti-fascist coalition. It became more and more clear that the attempt of fascist Germany and her satellites to destroy the Soviet Union, enslave the peoples of Europe, and crush the revolutionary and democratic forces had failed. The flame of the popular struggle against the fascist invaders and their partners blazed up more and more brightly in the subjugated countries. Determination to kill the roots of fascism and prevent a repetition of the horrors of fascist slavery ripened

among the peoples. The communist parties, standing in the front ranks of the fight against fascism, by their selfless dedication and their blood won the profound respect and sympathy of the masses. The soil was prepared for a new upsurge of the world communist movement.

The growth of the communist parties, the need for dealing promptly with concrete problems of anti-fascist activities and the heightened role of the communist parties in the fight for the national interests demanded of them a greater degree of independence and initiative than ever before, demanded the abandonment of those forms of leadership from a single centre which had become an obstacle to the activisation of the parties' work.

When the Communist International came into being, the communist parties outside the Soviet Union were weak both in ideology and organisation; they still lacked experienced leaders and their membership was comparatively small. Such communist parties could deal with the problems of leadership of the revolutionary movement in their countries and work out the strategy and tactics of the class struggle only by the joint efforts of all the parties in the person of their collective centralised body—the Comintern. During the period of the Comintern's activities the communist parties developed ideologically and organisationally, accumulated great experience in leadership of the class struggle, and produced experienced cadres of leaders trained in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. Another important factor was that the communist parties had grown numerically and some of them were becoming mass parties of the working class.

The activities of these parties became more and more diverse, embracing a variety of fields, and this required that the concrete national conditions and traditions should be taken more thoroughly into account.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, considering the steadily growing role and responsibilities of the communist parties in the struggle for leadership of the labour masses, had pointed out the need for concentrating the day-to-day leadership in the sections themselves. It was recommended that the E.C.C.I.'s own activities be focussed on the framing of the basic political and tactical guidelines of the world labour movement, that the concrete and specific conditions of each country be taken into consideration when dealing with all questions and that, as a rule, direct interference in the inner organisational affairs of the parties be avoided. The Seventh Congress charged the E.C.C.I. "to ensure closer contact between the leading bodies of the Com-

munist International and the various sections of the Communist International by still more active participation on the part of the authoritative representatives of the most important sections of the Communist International in the day-to-day work of the Executive Committee of the Communist International".*

The conditions created by the war, the great differences in the position of the various communist parties, and the diversity of the concrete problems facing the Communists demanded more urgently than did during the pre-war period that the communist parties retain their independence and utmost maneuverability. The course of events had shown that "the organisational form for uniting the workers chosen by the First Congress of the Communist International and which corresponded to the needs of the initial period of the rebirth of the working-class movement, has more and more become outgrown by the movement's development and by the increasing complexity of its problems in the separate countries, and has even become a hindrance to the further strengthening of the national working-class parties".**

Especially important was the autonomy of the communist parties as a means of ensuring the best conditions for the mobilisation of all patriotic forces against fascism. Some sections of the population who were ready to collaborate in the anti-fascist struggle adopted a guarded attitude to the communist parties' international commitments and connections and had qualms about joining in united action with the Communists. In the interests of achieving victory over fascism it was essential to remove all barriers that stood in the way of unification of the anti-fascist and patriotic forces.

Events made it increasingly plain "that the national upsurge and mobilisation of the masses for speediest victory over the enemy can best and most fruitfully be realised by the vanguard of the working-class movement of each country within the framework of its own state".***

Under the conditions of the war the existence of the Communist International was used by the reactionaries to slander the Soviet Union and the communist parties of the different countries. Nazi propaganda made the most of this by frightening the bourgeoisie of the anti-fascist coalition with the "threat of communism". It

* *Seventh Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1939, p. 567.
** *Daily Worker*, London, May 24, 1943. "The Resolution of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. on the question of dissolving the Comintern."
*** Ibid.

was an attempt to create a split within the anti-Hitler coalition and smash the Resistance fronts in the occupied countries. Reactionary propaganda persistently spread lies alleging that Moscow was out "to interfere in other countries' affairs", that the communist parties in the different countries were acting on orders from outside, that they represented "foreign interests" and were "parties of foreigners". By aid of slanderous inventions the opponents of communism tried to undermine the influence of the communist parties and isolate them from the masses.

Taking into consideration all these circumstances, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in the spring of 1943 raised the question of dissolving the Communist International.

On May 13, 1943 a meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. was held, which was attended by Presidium members Dimitrov, Manuilsky, Pieck, Thorez, Marty, Koplenig and Kolarov; by members and alternate members of the E.C.C.I. Ibárruri, Rakosi, Ulbricht, Šverma, Wolf (Farkas); and by representatives of the parties Anna Pauker (Rumanian C.P.), Vlasov (Vlahović) (Yugoslav C.P.), and Lehtinen (Finnish C.P.).

The meeting discussed the proposal to dissolve the Communist International and the draft resolution on this question. The chairman, Dimitrov, gave the gist of the draft proposal and stressed that a free exchange of opinions should be held on it. This, he said, was not a question of the formal, but of the actual dissolution of the Communist International as the guiding centre of the international communist movement. Dimitrov called upon the members of the E.C.C.I. Presidium to seriously and thoroughly consider and weigh all arguments for and against and give their sober opinion whether they considered this measure politically expedient and timely.

Manuilsky proposed that the question be discussed on the following plan: (a) is the dissolution of the Comintern politically expedient; (b) has the right moment for applying this measure been chosen; (c) has the case for dissolution been sufficiently established in the draft resolution; (d) what amendments does the draft stand in need of.

Thorez, seconding the motion for the dissolution of the Communist International, stated: "The old form of international association of the workers has outlived itself; already before the war the French Communist Party owed its growth to the application of the policy of the popular front. Today, after France's occupation by the nazis, a base has been created there for the broadest 'national front'." Thorez pointed out that the moment for

dissolution had been well chosen and that this step "would help to widen the national anti-Hitler front in France".*

Pieck agreed with the proposal for the dissolution of the Comintern and said that, in his opinion, some form of ideological assistance to the Communist Party of Germany on the part of the more experienced Soviet friends was desirable.

The need for dissolving the Comintern was expressed by Kolarov, Ibárruri, Šverma and the remaining members attending the Presidium meeting.

On the basis of a thorough analysis of the political situation and the state of affairs in the world communist movement, the Executive of the Communist International, prevented under wartime conditions from calling a congress of the International, submitted a proposal to the communist parties on May 15, 1943 for the dissolution of the Comintern. The Presidium of the E.C.C.I. called upon all adherents of the Communist International to concentrate all their efforts on fullest support of and active participation in the liberation struggle of the peoples and states of the anti-Hitler coalition for the speediest defeat of the workers' deadly enemy—German fascism and its allies and vassals.

The proposal of the E.C.C.I. Presidium was supported by 31 sections. Not a single communist party objected to it. The overwhelming majority of the parties emphasised in their statements that the dissolution of the Comintern did not signify any weakening of the general ideological ties of the world communist movement and proletarian solidarity. The only exception was the C.C. of the Chinese Communist Party, which gave prominence in its statement, not to the idea of ideological and political unity of the international communist movement, but to the fact that the Chinese Communist Party considered itself free from obligations towards the world communist movement.**

After perusal of the texts of the communist parties' decisions, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. announced on June 8, 1943 that the existing sections of the Comintern which were able to communicate their decisions unanimously approved the proposal for the dissolution of the Communist International. In accordance with this a decision was adopted to abolish, as from June 10, 1943, the Communist International, the Presidium and Secretariat of the E.C.C.I. and the International Control Commission.

* C.P.A., I.M.L., 495/18/1340/78-82.

** *The Communist International* (Russian edition), 1943, No. 5-6, p. 23.

Simultaneously, by a decision of its Executive Committee, the Young Communist International ceased its activities.

The subsequent course of events confirmed the correctness and timeliness of the decision to dissolve the Communist International.

The reactionaries who had counted on the world communist movement going into decline after the dissolution of the Comintern found their hopes defeated. The communist parties, true to the international teachings of Marxism-Leninism, threw themselves into the struggle for the unity of the anti-fascist and patriotic national forces and for the defeat of fascism with redoubled energy and greater flexibility than ever. The activities of the communist parties and their dedicated struggle for the interests of the peoples contributed to the speedier defeat of nazi Germany and the whole fascist bloc.

The policy of the communist parties won recognition more and more among the peoples. The ranks of the communist parties were quickly reinforced with the best fighters against fascism. On the eve of the war the world had 4,200,000 Communists, at the end of the war this figure had risen to 20,000,000.

The great victories of the Soviet people over the fascist invaders, which changed the whole international situation, the struggle of the communist parties in the van of the anti-fascist forces, the growing prestige of the Communists, and the development of the Resistance involving the broad masses created the necessary conditions for an upswing in the labour and communist movement, for the successful realisation of popular democratic revolutions in a number of countries, for a further consolidation of the positions of socialism, peace and democracy.

The struggle of the world's labour masses, at the centre of which, for close on a quarter of a century, stood the Communist International, opened a new chapter in human history, which began with the victory over fascism, the emergence of the countries of the people's democracy and the formation of a world socialist system. It ushered in a period of destruction of the colonial system of imperialism and the further strengthening of the labour movement in the capitalist countries.

Chapter Seven

TRADITIONS OF THE COMINTERN AND THE PRESENT-DAY COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

THE HERITAGE OF THE COMINTERN AND THE GROWTH OF THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The world communist movement and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard in the course of half a century have travelled a difficult but glorious road rich with successes. The movement has accumulated multiform experience in the struggle under the most diverse conditions.

The communist parties guided the revolutionary struggle of the masses both in the developed and semi-developed countries, in the semi-colonial and dependent countries, and in the colonies, where sometimes there was not even a more or less organised proletariat. They acted both in conditions of martial law, emergency laws and open cruel dictatorships, when illegal work was the order of the day, and in conditions of bourgeois democracy, when they had to fight the bourgeois machinery of "lawful" violence and the social and political demagogy of the ruling classes. During half a century they successfully repelled the barrage of frenzied anti-communist propaganda, which at times was openly slanderous or insidiously masked. The communist parties worked courageously both in conditions of peaceful development and in conditions of bitter wars—from imperialist wars to civil wars, both in periods of economic crises and in years of relative stabilisation. The Communists were to be found in the van of the masses both when the tide of revolution was mounting and when it was ebbing.

In the socialist countries the communist parties are in power, successfully blazing new paths of historical development and directing the building of socialism.

The amazing diversity of the concrete historical internal and international conditions of the revolutionary struggle, the constructive activities of the working class and the swift changes in these conditions have made exceptionally high demands of the communist party leaderships in the matter of framing a political line most fully in keeping with the situation, in determining strategic conceptions in accordance with the swiftly changing historical situation, in advancing slogans defining the tactics of struggle and improving the forms and methods of the work. Guidance of the revolutionary transformative process is a great political art governed by the strict scientific laws of the class struggle, by definite rules and requirements.

An outstanding role in teaching the communist parties this

elaborate art of political leadership, in helping them to master the intricate laws of the class struggle and acquire the knack of making practical use of these laws was played by the Communist International. The high Leninist traditions and most important ideological guidelines of the Comintern have not receded into the past with the dissolution of the Comintern, but continue to influence the development of the world communist movement.

The Vital Power of the Comintern's Leninist Traditions

The theoretical, political and organisational principles of the revolutionary party, the principles of leadership of the class struggle are embodied in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The Comintern, built by Lenin, took over and developed these principles and enriched the revolutionary traditions of the world communist movement. It stood at the fountainhead of the processes which turned the communist movement into the greatest mass movement, the most authoritative and organised political force of the age.

Some politicians and theorists of the labour movement are willing to admit past services rendered by the Comintern, but declare that its activities are now a turned page of the world revolutionary movement and belong only to history. They usually cite the swift changes in all spheres of social life which supposedly call for entirely new theoretical and strategic conceptions of the class struggle.

Undoubtedly, tremendous changes have taken place in the world since the dissolution of the Comintern. The world today looks different from what it was during the years of the Comintern's fruitful activities. The objective and subjective conditions of the class struggle are changing substantially. A world system of socialism has been formed, which is strengthening its positions. The Marxist-Leninist socialist ideal has not only materialised, but has become a definite factor in the development of human society. World socialism is having its impact upon all social, economic, political and ideological processes in the world of capitalism, upon the behaviour of classes and the policies of parties. The colonial empires have collapsed, dozens of formerly oppressed countries have won political independence, and the anti-imperialist orientation of the internal and external policies of most of the developing

young states is deepening. Imperialism's positions are weakening and the balance of forces is changing in favour of democracy and socialism. Great changes have taken place in capitalism itself. A system of state-monopoly capitalism has taken final shape, which stands opposed to most of the nations as an alien and hostile force. The working class itself, that vehicle of revolutionary principles in modern society, has undergone serious changes. The revolutionary process has become deeper in content, wider in scope, richer in motive forces, and more many-sided in forms of struggle.

But, as the communist parties have stressed in numerous documents, no changes in the life of the nations can nullify the laws of development of society and of the class struggle which were discovered by Marx, Engels and Lenin, and on the foundations of which the Comintern had built its activities. Social dynamics itself can be understood and explained only by creatively applying the laws discovered by Marxism-Leninism, by taking into account the rich historical experience of the class struggle, the experience of the communist movement, including that of the Comintern. This experience is of tremendous world-wide significance, for the Comintern has bequeathed to the communist movement a heritage of ideological, political, strategic and tactical values accumulated under the leadership of Lenin and conforming with his ideas.

The creative application of Lenin's ideas enabled the Comintern to develop and enrich the existing revolutionary traditions, to fill them with a new content, give them a new message that reflected the conditions of the class struggle of the world proletariat, which arose after the victory of the October Revolution, enabled it to arrive at new important conclusions which enriched the communist movement. Many of these traditions have lost none of their significance for the present-day communist movement. The mistakes and subjective accretions which occurred periodically in the activities of the Comintern cannot overshadow the great role which it played in the liberation struggle of the peoples, cannot belittle the significance of its glorious traditions, enriched and developed by the communist movement in modern conditions.

Naturally, the ideological and political propositions and conclusions of the Comintern cannot be automatically copied and mechanically applied to present-day historical conditions. But it is very important to point out that a large number of the cardinal problems which the communist movement is now tackling were posed and dealt with by the Communist International in keeping with the conditions prevailing at the time.

Under the guidance of Lenin and in accordance with his ideas

the Comintern generalised the experience of all the communist parties, of the whole revolutionary movement of its time, and collectively worked out the most important principles of the class struggle in the epoch of imperialism, proletarian revolutions and the confrontation of the two systems—socialism and capitalism. The Comintern appreciably enriched the theory and tactics of the revolutionary struggle and evolved the political, strategic and tactical principles of the world communist movement for a lengthy historical period.

The Comintern embodied in its activities the continuity of the world revolutionary process, the ties between its various links on an international scale. It picked up the baton which the leaders of the Second International had thrown down and bore it proudly on, showing the way to the whole of humanity. It considerably enriched the theory and practice of the class struggle and handed on to the coming generation of fighters the banner of the world proletarian revolution.

The Comintern upheld and developed Marxist-Leninist theory, combined it with the labour movement on an international scale under the new conditions. The decisions of the Comintern show the role and significance of a creative, Marxist-Leninist analysis of the quickly changing realities in shaping a correct policy for the communist parties. The Comintern laid bare the social and ideological origins of all the trends of opportunism, of all the revisionist distortions of Marxism-Leninism; it came out against all vacillations and waverings in the field of theory. It taught the communist parties to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the class struggle.

The Comintern framed the principles of the communist parties' strategy and tactics in the post-October epoch. Its documents give the methodology for solving new problems of the revolutionary movement arising from changes in the historical situation; they clarify the basic principles of approach in shaping the policy and tactics of the communist parties at different stages. These principles include the unity of theory and practice, the posing of new tasks and slogans reflecting most fully the requirements of the moment, the timely change of slogans in keeping with the changes in the objective conditions, flexibility of tactics and the ability to choose forms and methods of struggle which are most effective in the given historical conditions, at the given stage of the struggle and in the given alignment of class forces.

The Comintern continued and deepened the traditions of proletarian internationalism, filled them with a new content, showed

that full support and defence of real socialism as then existent in the Soviet Union was the most important token of internationalism. It showed the vital need for adhering to the principles of proletarian solidarity, the need for ensuring organic unity of the national and international element in the theoretical, ideological and practical revolutionary activities of the parties, in all their inner-party work. The Comintern clearly demonstrated that consistent proletarian internationalism was a vital condition for the victory of socialism. The Comintern throughout its activities contributed to the ideological, political and organisational consolidation of the communist parties by aid of which the revolutionary proletariat could achieve its historical aims.

The Comintern in its fight against conciliation and petty-bourgeois adventurism developed and formulated the *principle of revolutionism* as applied to the epoch of imperialism, proletarian revolutions and struggle of the two systems, including absolute loyalty to the working class and all the working people, defence of their interests, irreconcilable struggle against the supreme rule of the monopolies and strong denunciation of any compromise with the monopolists and of any political combinations with them to the detriment of the cause of socialism. The Comintern taught to combine the movement towards the ultimate goal with a consistent and persistent struggle for the immediate and urgent demands of the proletariat and all the working people. The sum and substance of revolutionism was mobilisation of all forces and means to smash the capitalist system, build socialism and pass on to communism.

The Comintern defined the content, the motive forces and perspectives of the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonial countries, raised the national-colonial question to the level of world revolutionary strategy, and showed that the national liberation movement was part and parcel of the world revolutionary process, and that the peoples of the Soviet republics, the international working class and the oppressed peoples were the motive forces of this process. The Comintern worked to unite these forces into a single anti-imperialist stream under the slogan of "Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!"

The Comintern in its theoretical and practical activities showed the inseparable connection that existed between the fight for peace and the development of the world revolutionary process. It elevated the time-honoured traditions of the revolutionary proletarian movement, namely, the fight for peace and the security of the peoples against militarism and aggressive imperialist wars.

Among the most important conclusions on questions of national and world policy, strategy and tactics of the Communists arrived at by the Comintern under the guidance of Lenin and in accordance with his ideas are the following propositions, the observance of which is an essential condition for the victory of the proletariat:

winning the majority of the working class over to the revolution —an essential precondition for the decisive assault upon the pillars of capitalism;

overcoming the split in the labour movement and creating its unity in forms corresponding to the concrete historical conditions of the struggle in one or another country, at one or another stage (a united workers' front, united industrial, national and international trade union organisations, unity of action on general or concrete questions, etc.);

setting up in every capitalist country an alliance of the working class with the peasantry, the middle strata and all democratic forces in forms that are in keeping with the requirements of the concrete historical situation (the popular front, the anti-fascist front, the national front, the anti-monopoly front, etc.);

realisation of Lenin's teaching on the national-colonial question; defining the prospects and tasks of the patriotic forces in the fight against imperialism;

securing unity of all patriotic, anti-imperialist forces in countries fighting for national independence and social progress (the anti-imperialist united front);

securing unity of action by all component parts of the world revolution—the countries of the victorious proletariat, the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples; Lenin and the Comintern laid particular stress on the primary importance for the destinies of the world revolution of a close alliance between the international proletariat and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples;

integration of the active struggle in defence of democracy with the fight for socialism;

ideological, political and organisational consolidation of the revolutionary vanguard on the basis of creative Marxism-Leninism and a determined fight against all opportunist currents in the communist movement—against Right opportunism and petty-bourgeois Leftist adventurism and sectarianism; achievement of national and international unity of the Communists in forms determined by the historical conditions, which would secure for the communist parties a leading role in the revolutionary movement

and in the building of socialism and ensure their independence in all relations with other political forces of the working class.

These and other revolutionary traditions of the Comintern, its Marxist-Leninist conclusions and propositions, are alive and developing today. Such cardinal problems of the present day as

the struggle for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism;

unity of the three streams of the world revolutionary process;

unity of the working class on a national and international scale and winning it over to the revolution;

achievement of a proper correlation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism, between the realisation of democratic demands and the socialist revolution;

creation of a union of Left forces, of an anti-monopoly front in the developed capitalist countries;

creation of a united anti-imperialist front in the developing countries, achieving unity of the communist movement, creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory on the basis of a generalisation of continuously accumulating experience in combating both Leftist-adventurist and revisionist elements;

and other problems are solved by the Communists on the basis of the ideological, theoretical and political heritage of the Comintern, which provides a profound generalisation of nearly 25 years' experience of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist world and of socialist development in the U.S.S.R.

The communist parties emphasise that the experience and traditions of the Comintern cannot be mechanically applied to present-day conditions. Only by their creative application to the modern conditions of the revolutionary movement can they preserve their vital transformative power.

The establishment and activities of the Comintern are associated with that period in the development of the contemporary communist movement when the communist parties had just emerged, and were in the process of ideological and political formation and consolidation. It was during this period that the principles underlying the policy and tactics of world communism in the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism were worked out. The communist parties could solve these problems only by joint, collective efforts, and the best organisational form for this was "the international alliance of the parties",* as Lenin called the Communist International.

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 307.

The Communists of all countries conceived their parties' existence and successful activities only as *sections of an international communist organisation.* Only within the framework of such an organisation could they consolidate their position and develop into a strong national force capable of overcoming the resistance and attacks of the reformist, Centrist, anarcho-syndicalist and other opportunist currents in the labour movement, which possessed strong international ties. Collectively organised action by the communist parties under the auspices of the Comintern was the best means for repelling the attacks of national and international capital and preparing the ground for going over to an offensive and carrying out that offensive in the national sphere and on the world arena. The process of studying and generalising the experience of the world revolutionary movement was best carried on within the framework of the Comintern, as this enabled the parties to both creatively develop Marxism-Leninism in the new conditions and educate and harden the cadres of the young communist parties.

The principles of democratic centralism, which operated in the Comintern as an organisational and political form of proletarian internationalism, collective practice in the development of theory and in practical activities, and co-ordination of the struggle and of the parties within the framework of the communist movement did not infringe the rights of any party, did not efface its specific national character, but on the contrary, led ultimately to the flowering of these distinctive and specific national features, contributed to the ideological and political development and consolidation of the parties, strengthened and augmented the potential possibilities for their complete independence. History confirms this most explicitly.

As the scope and depth of the revolutionary struggle increased and its motive forces broadened, its forms and methods became more diversified; more and more peoples, more and more millions of workers were drawn into the revolutionary liberative movement, giving to the struggle its specific national character, making it nearer and more understandable to the masses and lending a stronger appeal to socialist ideas, it became clear that centralised leadership of the communist movement could only hold back its development. The dialectical essence of this historical process was that the Comintern, in working to stir the masses to greater activity, to rouse gigantic layers of the population and draw them into politics, was continually speeding up the process of creating the *objective* social preconditions for its own elimination.

On the other hand, in passing within the framework of the Comintern, through a great school of Marxist-Leninist education, in accumulating by collective efforts a varied political and revolutionary experience, which strengthened and hardened them, the communist parties matured for independent leadership of the class struggle in their countries, which considerably widened the parties' chances of becoming a decisive national political force. They matured also for implementing international ties in new forms, which is not only a sign of revolutionism, but an essential condition of success within the national framework. Finally, the communist parties had matured for an independent Marxist-Leninist analysis of the historical situation and the alignment of class forces, an analysis of the tendencies of the struggle, for determining the concrete paths and prospects of the revolution's development and its leadership. In such circumstances centralised leadership of the communist parties could fetter their initiative in posing, analysing and dealing with the cardinal problems of the class struggle in their countries, could restrict the scope of revolutionary creative activity and thereby weaken the leading role of the communist parties. The dialectics of the situation was that the Comintern, by its activities aimed at strengthening the communist parties, at the Marxist-Leninist education of their members, at the all-round ideological training of their cadres and at making the parties organisationally more fighting-fit, created the subjective conditions for and hastened the day of its own elimination.

Thus, whatever the overt and covert enemies of the Comintern may say, the fact remains that the present-day international communist movement, whose prestige, influence and strength is recognised by everybody, originated and developed within the framework of the Comintern. The communist parties are offshoots from the roots of the Comintern.

The Growth of the Communist Movement in Present-Day Conditions

After the Second World War, as a result of the defeat of the Hitler coalition and the Japanese militarists, in which the Soviet Union together with the world communist movement, with all freedom-loving peoples, played a decisive role; as a result of the Soviet people's stupendous successes in socialist development and

the acute sharpening of the contradictions peculiar to capitalism; on the basis of the vast political experience accumulated by the masses in the anti-fascist movement, in the fight against reaction —a powerful revolutionary liberative movement was launched in the capitalist countries, the colonies and semi-colonies and dependent states. This movement, in continuation of the traditions of the anti-fascist struggle, was headed by the Communists in alliance and co-operation with other revolutionary, democratic organisations and groups.

A new phase of the communist movement began. Important features of this phase were: the rapid development of the communist movement in width and breadth; the accession to power of a number of communist parties in alliance with other democratic forces; the great enhancement of the prestige of the communist movement as a whole; the increased influence of the communist parties in the political life of their countries; the emergence of the Communists onto the broad arena of national activity; the rapid growth of the communist ranks, which turned many parties into mass organisations; the active and broad participation of many communist parties in the work of parliaments and municipal bodies, governments and administrative institutions, which tended to strengthen the impact of the working class on the whole bourgeois-democratic machinery of state; the widening of the parties' organisational and political independence, the growth of their theoretical activity and autonomy in the framing of the national policy, strategy and tactics. There started the far-reaching process of the world communist movement's transformation into a decisive force of the age.

In this new phase the significance of the colossal work previously performed by the Comintern under the leadership of Lenin and in accordance with his ideas in shaping the policy and strategy of the world communist movement was in many ways revealed more clearly than ever.

The important historical events, which raised the communist movement to a new higher level, were the new breaks in the chain of capitalism, the collapse of the landowner-capitalist regimes in a number of countries in Europe and Asia, the establishment in these countries of a people's democracy. A whole family of communist parties, which until the defeat of fascism had been numerically small and obliged to work under illegal or semi-legal conditions, came to power together with their allies and became the ruling parties within the framework of the people's democracy.

In its general form, the idea of a people's democracy based on

Lenin's conception of the diversity of forms of proletarian power, on his theses concerning a united workers' front, a united anti-imperialist front, a workers' and peasants' government, sprang from the creative, Marxist-Leninist generalisation of the experience of the civil war in Spain by the collective efforts of the Comintern.

Eventually, especially during the war against the German fascist invaders, the Japanese militarists and the local reactionary and fascist forces, the idea of the people's democracy was concretised and amplified, assuming the character of a political conception of the national liberation anti-fascist struggle, of the democratic revolution and its development into a socialist revolution. The people's democracy became the state form of proletarian rule.

The fundamental component elements of the theory and practice of the people's democracy embodied Lenin's idea about winning the majority of the masses over to democracy and revolution, overcoming the split in the working class, ensuring its unity of action and subsequent political and organisational unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, creating a strong alliance of the working class, the peasantry and other sections of the working people and patriots in the form of broad anti-fascist patriotic national fronts, political blocs or similar organisational forms developing and concretising the ideas of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern on the popular front.

The people's democracy, born in the crucible of the anti-fascist, liberative, popular struggle, on the wave of the powerful patriotic, revolutionary upsurge, is not, either from the theoretical or practical point of view, something ready-made, complete and uniform. It has always been in development, systematically perfected and improved in coformity with the concrete historical conditions prevailing in this or that country, but its theoretical connection with Lenin's ideas about the diversity of the form of transition to socialism is beyond all question.

The successful socialist development of the countries of the people's democracy led to the formation in co-operation with the U.S.S.R. of a world system of socialism, which is the offspring of the world proletariat, a powerful material base for the further development of the socialist revolution.

The communist parties of the countries belonging to the socialist system have travelled a tremendous path of development and have grown strong ideologically, politically and organisationally. They have grown in numbers, have acquired immense experience

in leading the masses under the conditions of building a new life and have shown themselves admirably fit for creatively applying Marxist-Leninist theory and tackling the complex and diverse tasks of social reconstruction in the concrete historical conditions of their countries. The historical course of events has placed the communist parties of the socialist countries at the head of social and political life. They have become a leading national force enjoying prestige in the world arena.

The communist parties of the countries which have taken the path of socialism realise the vanguard role they are playing in the fight against imperialism and make it their aim to augment the strength and power of the world anti-imperialist front.

The formation of the world socialist system and its successes, the sharpening of the contradictions in the developed capitalist countries and the increased activity of the labour movement have greatly strengthened and widened the communist movement in the citadels of capitalism.

Communist parties exist and function in all the capitalist countries. The active part which Communists played in defence of the national interests and in the struggle against fascism considerably enhanced the prestige and influence of the communist parties; this found expression, first and foremost, in the growth of their ranks. In 1939 the communist parties of the capitalist countries numbered approximately 1,200,000 members. Today the army of Communists in the world of capitalism numbers within its ranks about four million members.

An important indication of the organisational and ideological consolidation of the communist parties in the capitalist countries, and the growth of their independence and revolutionary maturity is provided by their framing of new programmatic guidelines based on a creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the analysis of the changed historical situation and the concrete conditions of the struggle. The parties have become cohesive, united bodies with a stable leadership and considerably stronger ties with the masses.

In a number of capitalist countries the Communists hold a leading place in the number of votes polled by them in the elections. During the early post-war years Communists were members of the government in twelve countries and occupied important posts in many local self-governing bodies. Communists considerably strengthened their positions in the trade unions both on a national and international scale. Powerful trade union organisations have arisen whose members are in sympathy with the

Communists and support the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

The Communists used their consolidated political positions, their membership in the government and municipal bodies, their influence in the trade unions and other mass organisations to defend the interests of the working people, to broaden and deepen the basis of democracy and organise the struggle against the imperialist expansion of the U.S.A. It was during these years that the workers succeeded in winning important social gains and in some cases even getting them consecrated by law.

Shortly, however, international capital headed by the U.S. monopolists launched a concerted attack against the communist parties. The political activities of the communist parties in many countries were either restricted or banned, and Communists were expelled from the governments; the reactionaries, in contravention of all laws and guarantees, deprived the Communists and democrats of political rights and freedoms. For a number of years the Communists were compelled to wage the struggle in the complex conditions of the cold war and anti-communist hysteria.

In consistently defending peace, national independence and democracy and fighting for socialism, the communist parties of the capitalist countries base their policy on the Leninist idea of winning the masses and rallying all the revolutionary and democratic forces on the basis of working-class unity.

Along this road a number of communist parties have come to the forefront as an important national force. In other countries the Communists are working hard to turn their parties into mass political organisations of the working class and strengthen their positions among the broad strata of the working people. The communist parties everywhere are the militant vanguard of the revolutionary movement, a rising political force to whom the future belongs.

The Communists of the developing countries are working in difficult political and ideological conditions. The world communist movement, the core of which is the communist parties of the socialist countries, had exercised a decisive influence in creating conditions favourable to the successful struggle of the oppressed peoples against the colonialists, for national independence. The policy of alliance between the international labour movement and the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples advanced by Lenin and applied by the Comintern yielded at subsequent phases notable historical results. In a situation characterised by the rapid consolidation of the socialist system and the mounting labour

movement, colonial empires which had existed for ages collapsed beneath the blows of the insurgent people. The communist parties are to be found in the front ranks of the anti-imperialist national liberation struggle of the peoples. In the course of this struggle the communist movement has strengthened its position considerably. Over twenty new communist parties have come into being in the zone of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The rapid development of the national liberation struggle raised many new problems and questions before the communist parties in the zone of anti-imperialist struggle which called for an independent Marxist-Leninist solution. The communist parties were confronted with the tasks of making out a scientific case for the paths of progressive development which the countries that had broken with the colonial yoke were to follow; they had to determine their attitude to the revolutionary-democratic forces and parties, and to the democratic governments, and establish their place and role in the new pattern of the social, economic and political structure of the developing societies. Some parties have fallen into sectarian errors in this field, but by and large the communist parties and the world communist movement as a whole have taken a correct principled stand in conformity with Lenin's ideas, developed and creatively applied in the new historical conditions. The communist parties are consistently pursuing a policy of rallying all patriotic, anti-imperialist forces. Various forms of anti-imperialist, national fronts, patriotic alliances and blocs have sprung up in a number of countries. The communist parties have either joined these alliances or actively support them, contributing to the further development and deepening of the struggle for true national freedom, economic prosperity and social progress.

The growing political influence of the communist parties in the developing countries seriously frightened the imperialists and local reactionaries. In some countries, such as Indonesia, the Communists were subjected to relentless persecution. Hundreds of thousands of the nation's best sons were exterminated. But these setbacks, however painful, cannot alter the general picture of the communist movement's growth and consolidation.

The communist movement after the dissolution of the Comintern remained true to the revolutionary traditions, to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and the principles of internationalism, and strengthened and broadened its positions. The communist ship often met with rough weather. The bourgeoisie and Right Social-Democrats often ranted about the crisis of communism. But the communist movement emerged from all its trials still more strengthened and steeled; the Communists are scoring more and more successes and their ranks are growing. Today there are communist parties in 88 countries with a total membership of about 44,000,000. The communist parties reflect more and more deeply and fully the interests of the working class, of all progressive sections of the people, and in strengthening their ties with all the democratic, patriotic and anti-imperialist forces, are, by the very logic of historical development, chosen for the role of leader of the whole people.

A tremendous influence on the development of the world communist movement was exercised by the decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. "The historic decisions of the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. are not only of great importance for the C.P.S.U. and communist construction in the U.S.S.R., but have initiated a new stage in the world communist movement, and have promoted its development on the basis of Marxism-Leninism."*

The decisions of the Twentieth Congress on the key issues of internal and international policy, the measures taken to overcome the personality cult and its consequences, the restoration and further development of the Leninist norms of party life and collective methods of leadership and the further deepening and strengthening of inner-party and Soviet democracy—all this enhanced the revolutionising force of socialist ideas and the prestige of the communist movement. The development by the Congress of Lenin's theses concerning the diversity of the forms of transition from capitalism to socialism, the combining of peaceful and non-peaceful ways of the revolution, the essence, under present-day conditions, of the policy of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, the approach to the problems of strengthening the unity of the labour movement in the capitalist countries, the special features of the class struggle under the conditions of state-monopoly capitalism, the prospects of uniting the anti-monopoly forces, the significance of the struggle for democracy in dealing with the cardinal social problems of the age, the ways of the national liberation revolution—all these key issues have creatively developed the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution.

The activity of the communist parties in leadership of the national revolutionary movement and the elaboration of the political, strategic and tactical conceptions of the revolutionary struggle increased still more after the Twentieth Congress, and their contribution to the world treasure-house of Marxist theory and practice widened.

* *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, p. 80.

THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITIONS OF THE COMINTERN AND THE GENERAL LINE OF THE PRESENT-DAY COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The Appearance of New Forms of International Ties

After the dissolution of the Comintern the problem of the international ties between the communist parties, the forms of co-ordination of the revolutionary struggle against international capital assumed a new aspect and became more pressing and vitally important.

Two tendencies, outwardly opposite, but actually organically interrelated, are at work in the communist movement.

On the one hand, we have increasing *internationalisation* of the revolutionary movement. Every revolutionary action, in whatever country it may take place, is a component part of an integral world revolutionary process, depending on the general state of this process. The success of any one national revolutionary contingent is a gain for the liberative struggle of all the peoples; a failure at one point on the globe painfully affects the common front of the struggle. The national revolutionary detachment more and more often sees the necessity for taking into account the international as well as local conditions of the struggle.

On the other hand, the objective and subjective *conditions* of the revolutionary movement are becoming more and more *differentiated,* and the specific, concrete national features of the revolutionising activities of every people are acquiring greater significance.

In these conditions co-ordination of the theoretical and practical activities of the communist parties is essentially a question of the ways and forms of fulfilment by the working class of its world-historical role in the more complicated situation of the present day. After the dissolution of the Comintern a search has been going on for more effective forms of international contacts and co-ordinated action in the new conditions.

After the Second World War an Information Bureau was set up consisting of representatives of the Communist Parties of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, the Polish Workers' Party, the C.P.S.U., and the Communist Parties of France, Czechoslovakia and Italy. At a meeting of representatives of these parties held in Warsaw in 1947 a resolution was passed, stating:

"The meeting considers that the absence of contacts between the parties attending this meeting is, in the present situation, a serious shortcoming. Experience has shown that such dissociation among the communist parties is wrong and harmful. The need for an exchange of experience and voluntary co-ordination of the actions of the various parties is particularly urgent at the present time, when the post-war international situation has become more complicated and the dissociation of the communist parties may be detrimental to the working class."*

The development of the communist movement, the differentiation in the conditions of the struggle, the growth of the political and theoretical maturity of the communist parties showed the deficiencies of such a form of contact as the Information Bureau, and the latter was dissolved.

Such forms of contact as bilateral and multilateral ties, exchanges of delegations, pooling of experience, exchange of opinions, etc., have acquired great importance. Latterly, regional meetings and conferences at which questions of political activities and the anti-imperialist struggle are discussed by a number of parties are playing a greater part.

But these forms, however important and valuable, do not fully express the international essence of the communist movement.

The necessity has arisen for finding new, more adequate forms of international ties among the communist parties in keeping with the existing situation. These forms have to combine unity of the anti-imperialist policy of the communist detachments with the independence and equality of all the communist parties, and their independence in formulating their political and theoretical conception of the struggle on the basis of Marxism-Leninism with the collective working out of the principles of international revolutionary theory and practice. Such a form, born from the womb of the communist movement, has been found in international Meetings of the Communist and Workers' Parties. These Meetings, as experience has shown, are designed to examine from all sides the latest developments in the international situation, give them an agreed Marxist-Leninist appraisal, and collectively define the common aims and tasks, the forms and methods of struggle and mutual assistance.

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* *Informatsionnoye soveshchaniye predstavitelei nekotorykh Kompartii* (Conference of Representatives of Some Communist Parties), Moscow, 1948, p. 11.

After the dissolution of the Comintern two international Meetings of the Communist Parties were held in Moscow (1957 and 1960), at which important decisions of fundamental significance for the development of the communist movement were adopted. At the 1957 Meeting a "Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries" was drafted and adopted, and to which, subsequently, the communist parties of the capitalist countries subscribed. The Meeting issued a Peace Manifesto addressed to the workers and peasants of all countries, to men and women, to all people of good will. The 1960 Meeting, which was attended by representatives from 81 Marxist-Leninist parties, drew up and unanimously adopted a "Statement of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties" and "An Appeal to the Peoples of the World".

In the 1957 and 1960 documents the communist parties collectively framed and unanimously adopted the *general line of the world communist movement* in the present-day historical conditions.

The concept of the general line of the international communist movement, which originated during the Comintern period, was based on the theoretical works of Lenin dating from the time of the First World War, although this term itself was not yet used. "Giving effect to *united action* on an international scale calls for both clarity of fundamental ideological views and a precise definiteness in all practical methods of action,"* Lenin wrote in 1915.

The traditions of the Comintern show that the principles of international strategy and tactics should be worked out on the basis of an all-round assessment of world economy and world politics, while the tactics of each individual party should take into account the alignment of class forces not only within the given state, but on an international scale. The working class realises more and more clearly that victory is possible only if internationally interknitted capital is opposed by solidarity and real international unity of action in all spheres of the struggle, political, economic and ideological.

Another reason why the principles of strategy and tactics have to be worked out collectively is that revolutionary theory "*grows out* of the sum total of the revolutionary experience and the revolutionary thinking in all countries in the world".** The Communist

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 372.
** Ibid., p. 354.

International, Lenin said, "must work out its tactics internationally. . .".* This is necessary both for reasons of the objective unity of interests of the international working class in the fight against capital, and because it is only by taking into account all world experience of the liberation struggle that the movement can be guaranteed from the danger of lapsing into national insularity and one-sidedness.

The international Meetings, in keeping with the contemporary epoch, collectively worked out the principles of international strategy and tactics. A feature of the documents adopted at the 1957 and 1960 Meetings was their creative spirit, their Leninist approach to the key problems of the revolutionary movement.

In working out the new general line of the world communist movement both the historical experience accumulated by the movement and the experience of each fraternal party were taken into account. The documents adopted at the Meetings *represent a Marxist-Leninist theoretical generalisation of recent revolutionary practice, the pooled experience of the communist parties of all countries, a step forward in the development of the theory of transition from capitalism to socialism; they determined the general trend of the world communist movement.*

These documents elaborated the ideas concerning the objective laws of socialist construction, the characteristic features of the world revolutionary process, the struggle to win the masses and the prospects for an alliance of the working class with the broad sections of the working people, and the strategy and tactics of the communist parties in the fight for peace, democracy and socialism. These ideas at the new stage of the class struggle were further developed on the basis of the pooled experience of the revolutionary struggle under the conditions of the existence of two world systems and the independent activities of the communist parties.

The documents of the Meetings are a model of collective constructive work by the Marxist-Leninist parties. The collective working out of fundamental problems dealing with the policy, strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle started in Lenin's time within the framework of the Comintern. Lenin persistently urged that all questions before the Comintern should be exhaustively discussed, that all scientifically substantiated remarks, every particle of the communist parties' experience should be taken into consideration. At the 1957 and 1960 Meetings this Leninist tradi-

* Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 60.

tion received confirmation in application to the modern conditions of the communist movement.

In a complex situation, overcoming serious difficulties, including manifestations of incohesion and differences of opinion in the movement, the communist parties developed collective forms for enriching revolutionary theory.

The Epoch and the Modern Revolutionary Process Defined

The documents of the Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties also gave an all-round characterisation of the modern epoch and examined the historical conditions of the revolutionary struggle in the post-war period.

"The main content of our epoch," says the Declaration, "is the transition from capitalism to socialism which was begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia."*

This idea was developed and concretised in the Statement, which said: "Today it is the world socialist system and the forces fighting against imperialism, for a socialist transformation of society, that determine the main content, main trend and main features of the historical development of society."**

The communist parties developed Lenin's ideas concerning imperialism, gave a scientific analysis of the present-day condition of state-monopoly capitalism and showed the sharpening of the contradictions of modern capitalism, which was most forcefully manifested in the chief imperialist country—the United States of America.

As a result of the reactionary, aggressive policy of American imperialism and its allies there was created a real threat of another world war, which would be waged with nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass extermination. The communist parties concretised Lenin's idea of peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems as applied to the modern epoch.

The Meetings worked out the strategy of the struggle for peace as a component element of the fight for social progress. The Meeting of 1960 formulated the important programmatic thesis to the

* *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism,* Moscow, pp. 6-7.
** Ibid., p. 89.

effect that "War is not inevitable, war can be prevented, peace can be preserved and made secure."* On the basis of this fundamental guideline the communist parties stepped up their activities aimed at uniting all the forces that stood for peace. They appealed to the workers and peasants, to men of science and art, to teachers and office workers, to young people, artisans, tradesmen, industrialists, to all people of good will irrespective of their political or religious beliefs to step up the fight for peace and the security of the peoples, for disarmament, for an immediate stop to atomic and hydrogen bomb tests and a ban on their production and employment.

In developing the ideas of Lenin, the Meetings noted that the struggle of the forces of democracy and socialism against the forces of reaction and capitalism formed three equal, interrelated revolutionary streams:

the revolutionising activity of the peoples of the socialist countries marching in the van of mankind's progressive development;

the revolutionary movement of the working class in the capitalist countries;

the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the developing countries against neocolonialism and the survivals of colonialism.

The world system of socialism is the leading revolutionary force of modern times, which exercises a steadily increasing influence on the course of the struggle for progress, against reaction, on the line-up and correlation of class forces not only on an international, but on a national scale. The entire constructive, revolutionising activity of the peoples of the socialist countries forms part of the world revolutionary process.

Historically speaking, the system of socialism is a social, economic, political and ideological challenge to capitalist society. The fundamental advantages of socialism, which has done away with the exploitation of man by man and all forms of oppression, and which stands for a high rate of planned, crisis-free economic development, and the progressive humanistic character of Marxist-Leninist ideology are proof of socialism's historical superiority over capitalism. The future belongs to socialism. All this makes for socialism's greater appeal to the masses, stimulates the socialist movement in the capitalist countries.

The build-up of the socialist system's might is steadily changing the alignment of forces in its favour and weakening and impairing the positions of capitalism.

The Soviet Union's possession of nuclear missile weapons is an

* Ibid., p. 85.

important guarantee of the world's peace, a grim warning to all aggressors and an antidote for any military adventurism on their part. As a result of the growing economic and military might of the socialist system and its attractive power, the field for reactionary maneuvers by the monopoly bourgeoisie is narrowing, the possibilities of armed export of counter-revolution are diminishing and the imperialists are finding it more difficult to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Under these conditions wider opportunities are opened up for the progressive development of the peoples, for the struggle against the colonialists and oppressors, for launching armed action against them.

The increased economic potential of the socialist countries enables them to render wider and more effective assistance to the peoples of the young national states in their striving to achieve genuine national liberty and social progress.

An important factor of the class struggle in the world arena is the foreign policy activities of the socialist countries directed towards defence of their socialist gains, towards curbing the reactionary activities of the imperialist states and supporting the peoples who are fighting for peace, democracy and social progress.

The Meetings revealed the role and significance of the labour movement in the capitalist countries in the present-day revolutionary process. In putting the case for the historical role of the proletariat as builder of the socialist society, Lenin, as we know, called this the main tenet of Marxism. The Communist International, true to Marxist-Leninist theory, devoted its chief attention throughout its activities to the historical elevation, political education and organisational unity of the working class. All its activities were directed towards helping the working class fulfil its historical mission within the shortest space of time.

The general socio-historical conception about increasing the revolutionising role of the working class elaborated in the decisions of the Comintern and its sections has lost none of its significance to this day; with every sharp turn in history it not only changes the forms of its expression, but acquires new features, new characteristic traits.

At the present time the question of the working class's place in the system of social relations, its historical role and revolutionary possibilities, has become an object of still sharper political and ideological struggle. Bourgeois ideologists, reformists and revisionists deny the socio-historical prospects of the working class and expound sundry variants of the idea of deproletarianisation of the working class. Simultaneously the monopoly bourgeoisie, backed by

the Right Social-Democrats, are steadily improving their methods and technique for demoralising the working class. They are more and more often combining methods of crude suppression with an extremely flexible system of corruption.

At the same time wide use is made of the latest achievements in technology to wean the workers away from politics. Increased technicalisation of life and the spread of ersatz-culture are designed to serve the far-reaching aims of deideologisation of the workers' life.

The Right-wing leaders of the Socialist International and the reactionary leaders of the trade unions are working harder than ever to maintain and deepen the split in the working class.

The anti-Leninist thesis about the proletariat of the capitalist countries having lost its revolutionary spirit is receiving support from some people who call themselves Communists. These anti-Marxists believe that the working class in the capitalist countries has departed from the revolutionary path, is preoccupied with its narrow class, social and economic problems and is incapable of carrying on the fight for the overthrow of capitalism. This task, they say, is the mission of other classes, notably that of the "world countryside" dwellers, i.e., the peasantry.

The documents of the Meetings and the decisions of the communist parties reveal the determining and growing significance of the labour movement in the capitalist countries for the struggle against the monopolies.

The working class in the capitalist countries is growing numerically together with its role in contemporary political movements. The communist parties stress the fact that today's proletariat is a multi-strata class, which is growing quantitatively, and changing qualitatively. The working class is exercising a steadily increasing influence on social life in the capitalist countries and on the development of the class struggle.

Full of faith in the working class, continuing, developing and deepening the traditions of the Comintern, the communist parties are working tirelessly to unite the working class and raise the level of its class consciousness, its trade union and political organisation.

The history of the whole post-war period demonstrates that the working class is the key factor in the anti-monopoly struggle, the chief motive force of major social change. The class activity and political militancy of the working class have risen considerably in the last few years. The struggle between the working class and the monopolies is gaining intensity rather than relaxing. Even though not in power, the working class is able to impose on the

bourgeoisie certain decisions which reflect its current interests and may help to achieve its long-range aims. Under pressure of the working class of the capitalist countries the bourgeoisie is compelled to accede to many concessions in the social and political fields.

The communist parties also take into account the fact that the powerful development of the democratic movement involving all sections of the working people—the intellectuals, students, peasantry and middle strata—is a growing social and political factor in the life of the capitalist countries. On the basis of an analysis of these new circumstances the communist parties develop Lenin's ideas and the decisions of the Comintern by working out their guidelines on the question of broad alliances, their prospects and forms. The communist parties under the new conditions work for a close alliance of the working class with the peasantry, the intellectuals, students and middle strata and aim at setting up a broad anti-monopoly front as a prerequisite for curbing the monopolies and deepening the revolutionary process.

The present-day revolutionary process has the following distinguishing features:

(a) Further expansion of the motive forces of the revolution in view of the extremely sharpened antagonisms between the bulk of the population and the monopoly bourgeoisie. More and more new social forces are joining the fight against the monopolies on the key issues of the day (democracy, socialism, national independence, etc.).

(b) Widening of the forms of development of the revolutionary process, with forms of revolutionary action, both peaceful and non-peaceful, becoming more diversified.

(c) Increasingly varied methods and means of introducing the masses to the idea of revolution, proving the correctness of Lenin's ideas underlying the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in this field and the groundlessness of both the revisionist conception of the revolution and the adventurist Left-sectarian methods of preparing it. The materials of the Meetings and documents of the communist parties stress the fact that the masses are introduced to the revolution through their practical experience, through the correct political slogans of the communist parties, their flexible and effective policy.

From this follows a very important demand on the tactics of the communist parties, namely: historical militancy, flexibility, maneuverability and initiative.

The documents of the communist parties demonstrate the interdependence between the democratic struggle and the socialist

aims of the movement. The programmatic documents advance to the fore at the present time the following democratic aims as part of the strategic tasks: the fight against supreme monopoly rule, defence and deepening of democracy, preservation of peace, and satisfaction of the workers' urgent interests in the social, economic, political and cultural fields.

In keeping with these guidelines, the communist parties developed the idea of the popular front advanced by the Seventh Congress of the Comintern and made it their priority aim to work for the establishment of a democratic anti-monopoly government in the capitalist countries.

The documents of the Meetings and the decisions of the communist parties of the capitalist countries point out that in the course of the struggle for a democratic anti-monopoly government and during the period of its activities profound revolutionary, democratic reforms are to be carried out, which though not yet socialist, nevertheless come close to the implementation of socialist reforms.

The Meetings developed the ideas of the Comintern concerning the need for and prospects of overcoming the split in the labour movement.

The main obstacle to achieving the aims of the proletariat, says the Statement of the 1960 Meeting, remains, as before, the split within its ranks, a split which the bourgeoisie, the Right Social-Democrats and reactionary leaders of the trade unions are interested in preserving on both a national and international scale.

Some Right Social-Democratic leaders openly sided with the monopolies. In a number of countries the Right leadership got the Social-Democratic parties to adopt programmes which openly renounced Marxism, the class struggle and scientific socialist slogans. Resistance to this policy of the Right leaders, however, grew within the Social-Democratic parties, and the forces standing for unity of action by the working class and other working people in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress gained ground. The Communists consider co-operation with the Social-Democrats possible even in the fight for socialism.

The Statement of the 1960 Meeting lays special stress on the fact that the Communists strongly stand for overcoming the split in the labour movement. They regard the Social-Democratic workers as their class brothers, and fight hard together with them, together with the members of all trade unions and the unorganised workers, to achieve their common aims. The Communists do not waive criticism of the Social-Democratic ideology and opportunist

practices, but they consider that the existing differences of opinion between the parties on ideological questions should not prevent an exchange of opinions, a comradely discussion, and, most important of all, a joint struggle in defence of major demands, first and foremost against the menace of war.

The working class of the capitalist countries, by overcoming the split, could force the ruling circles to stop the war build-up, could repel the attacks of monopoly capital, secure satisfaction of the workers' vital needs and defend and deepen democracy.

The Meetings made a new contribution to the theory of the national liberation movement. The documents of the 1960 Meeting demonstrate the inevitability of the collapse of colonialism, reveal the ways of development of the national liberation movement and determine the strategy and tactics of the struggle for genuine national independence and social progress. The 1960 Meeting advanced the idea of a united national democratic front of all patriotic forces, and defined its possible composition and motive forces.

The national liberation movement has since made great headway. The fight for political national liberty is in the main completed. Cardinal social problems are now on the order of the day. A number of countries have achieved definite economic successes and made steps along the road of social progress with a socialist orientation.

The communist parties see in the forces of national liberation a natural participant in the anti-imperialist struggle and stand for the further greatest possible collaboration with the revolutionary democratic parties, with all the anti-imperialist forces.

The decisions jointly worked out and collectively adopted by the Meetings have armed the communist parties with the principles of a consistently revolutionary policy, strategy and tactics, helping them to raise the level of their fighting capacity.

Analysis by the Parties of the Objective Laws of Development of the Socialist System. The C.P.S.U. in the World Communist Movement

The Meetings of the Communist and Workers' Parties made an important contribution to the analysis of the objective laws governing the transition from capitalism to socialism.

These laws were formulated by Lenin, and elaborated by the Comintern and the C.P.S.U. on the basis of the experience gained in the establishment and development of socialist society in the Soviet Union. After the Second World War a group of countries with different levels of social and economic development, salient national features and specific historical and political traditions have taken the road of socialism. All this has considerably enriched the theory and practice of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The participants in the Meetings summarised the accumulated experience of socialist development in the most diverse conditions and collectively arrived at the conclusion that the creation of the new social system is based on a number of major objective laws common to all countries that have embarked on the socialist path. These common laws are:

(a) leadership of the masses by the working class, the kernel of which is the Marxist-Leninist party, and establishment in one or another form of the dictatorship of the proletariat;

(b) alliance of the working class with the bulk of the peasantry, the intellectuals and all the working people of town and country;

(c) liquidation of capitalist property and establishment of social ownership of the basic means of production;

(d) gradual socialist transformation of agriculture;

(e) planned development of the national economy aimed at building socialism and communism and raising the living standards of the working people;

(f) the carrying out of a socialist revolution in the sphere of ideology and culture, creation of a numerous intelligentsia devoted to the cause of socialism;

(g) elimination of national oppression and establishment of equality and fraternal friendship among the peoples;

(h) defence of the gains of socialism against the encroachments of internal and external enemies;

(i) consistent proletarian internationalism, i.e., solidarity of the working class of a given country with the working class of other countries, with all revolutionary forces.

The substantiation of these objective laws is an important achievement of Marxist-Leninist collective thinking, an important contribution to the theory of Marxism-Leninism.

At the same time the participants in the Meetings stressed the necessity for creatively applying these general laws to socialism and were opposed to a mechanical copying of the experience of the communist parties of other countries. They also pointed out

the danger of exaggerating the specific national peculiarities and ignoring the common laws on the plea of making allowance for the national peculiarities, which was fraught with the risk of weakening socialist principles and creating nationalistic self-isolation.

The whole subsequent history of the socialist countries' development has confirmed the correctness of the communist parties' conclusions concerning the objective laws governing the transition to socialism. Experience has shown that the violation of these laws always has painful consequences for the cause of socialism.

An important contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist theory is the demonstration of the objective laws governing the establishment and development of the world system of socialism contained in the materials of the Meetings and in the programmatic documents of the C.P.S.U. and other communist parties.

"The socialist countries," the Declaration says, "base their relations on principles of complete equality, respect for territorial integrity, state independence and sovereignty and non-interference in one another's affairs. These are vital principles. However, they do not exhaust the essence of relations between them. Fraternal mutual aid is part and parcel of these relations. This aid is a striking expression of socialist internationalism."*

The creative practical application of the Marxist-Leninist theses concerning the ways of transition to socialism and adherence to the principles of socialist internationalism are a pledge of the future successes of each socialist country taken separately and of the world system of socialism as a whole.

The Soviet Union, guided by the Communist Party, which is an active participant in the world communist movement, is a mighty force in the world system of socialism.

The real historical place which the Soviet Union occupies in the struggle between the forces of socialism and capitalism, its military and economic might, which is a shield safeguarding the socialist gains of all the peoples, the vanguard role of the C.P.S.U. in paving the way to communism—all this imposes upon the Communist Party of the Soviet Union an exceedingly great international responsibility.

The C.P.S.U. realises this responsibility and considers it its primary international duty to enhance the power of the Soviet Union. Having built socialism, the C.P.S.U. has paved the way to progressive development for all peoples. The transition from socialism to communism, which is taking place under the leader-

* *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, p. 79.

ship of the C.P.S.U., strengthens the position of democracy and socialism throughout the world, opens up wider prospects to the struggle for a happier future for all mankind. The scientific and technological progress which is taking place in the U.S.S.R., the successes in space research strikingly demonstrate the advantages of socialism and enhance its attractive power.

The C.P.S.U. is a consistent fighter for unity of the communist parties, of the socialist countries, of all progressive, anti-imperialist social strata, a unity aimed at steadily building up superiority in the competition with the world system of capitalism, at extending the positions of those who are fighting for peace, democracy and socialism.

At its congresses and plenums the C.P.S.U., as an equal member of the communist concord of nations, devotes more and more attention to the problems of world communism, to theoretical questions of the revolutionary struggle and socialist development.

The Programme of the C.P.S.U. adopted at its Twenty-Second Congress is an outstanding Marxist-Leninist document which deals with problems that are the concern of all mankind.

Developing and enriching the theory of Marxism-Leninism, continuing the Leninist tradition of creative analysis of the ever-changing historical situation, the C.P.S.U. in its Programme advanced a number of important propositions of international as well as national significance.

The Programme analyses the major objective laws common to all countries that have taken the path of socialism, shows that the world socialist system embodies a new type of economic and political relationships between countries, a new type of international division of labour.

On the basis of an analysis of the contemporary phase in the general crisis of capitalism the Programme makes its contribution to the strategy and tactics of the struggle against capitalism, for peace, democracy and socialism. It develops Lenin's idea concerning the interdependence between the general democratic struggle and the socialist revolution, puts the case for the policy of broad alliances under present-day conditions and multiform organisational frameworks for agreements and co-operation between different progressive parties and classes of the working people united in a powerful anti-imperialist stream, demonstrates the objective necessity for transitional stages in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the mastery of all forms of struggle, both peaceful and non-peaceful.

The Programme introduces new elements into the conception

of the national liberation struggle, enriching Lenin's ideas and the general propositions of the world communist movement on this question. It formulates a number of important conclusions, namely: *the emergence of socialism marks the advent of an epoch of liberation for the oppressed peoples*; the nationalism of the oppressed nations has *a general democratic content*, which Communists support, considering it historically justified at a definite stage; the young national states are objectively a progressive, anti-imperialist force; consolidation of the union between the socialist countries and these states in the struggle against the menace of war is a most important factor of world peace. *The Programme stresses that the aims of the Communists are in the highest interests of every nation.*

The Programme of the C.P.S.U. is imbued with historical optimism, boundless faith in the triumph of communism throughout the world.

"Communism," says the Programme, "accomplishes the historic mission of delivering all men from social inequality, from every form of oppression and exploitation, from the horrors of war, and proclaims *Peace, Labour, Freedom, Equality, and Happiness for all peoples of the earth.*"*

In its Programme the C.P.S.U. reaffirmed its allegiance to proletarian internationalism. *"The Party regards communist construction in the U.S.S.R. as the Soviet people's great internationalist task,* in keeping with the interests of the world socialist system as a whole, and with the interests of the international proletariat and all mankind."**

The work done by the C.P.S.U. in publishing Marx, Engels and Lenin is a notable contribution to the task of raising the ideological and theoretical level of the whole communist movement. A vast amount of hitherto unpublished writings by Marx and Engels were painstakingly collected and issued in a second, incomparably fuller edition of the *Collected Works* of the founders of Marxism. This edition served as the basis for the collected works of Marx and Engels published in the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Japan.

An important event in the intellectual life of the world was the publication of the Fifth Complete Edition of Lenin's works. The complete works of Lenin are being published in nearly all the socialist countries and in many capitalist countries. Lenin's works

* *Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1961, p. viii.

** Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

hold first place in the world in the number of translations. Lenin's great teachings, which are a continuation, development and enrichment of Marxism as applied to contemporary conditions, are international in character; they help the peoples of the world to solve the great and complex problems of social renovation, of the struggle for socialism and communism.

In the post-war period the C.P.S.U. took a still more active part in the struggle for unity of the labour movement. The meetings between leaders of the C.P.S.U. and leaders of the socialist and Social-Democratic parties of many countries and the discussion at these meetings of the key issues of the labour movement helped to clarify and draw closer together the points of view on a number of problems of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The C.P.S.U. stands firm in its support of the general line of the world communist movement worked out jointly by all the Marxist-Leninist parties, and is working hard to overcome the existing split in the communist movement and ensure the triumph of Marxist-Leninist principles in the relations between the parties.

A significant contribution towards strengthening and extending the positions of the world communist movement and consolidating its unity was made by the Twenty-Third Congress of the C.P.S.U. In its report to the Congress summarising its activities in the communist movement, the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. emphasised: "Armed with a scientific theory of social development, communism is the only political movement in the world that is able to see clearly the historic prospects of mankind. The general line of the communist movement, worked out collectively by the fraternal parties at the 1957 and 1960 Meetings, is a line for achieving the triumph of peace, democracy, national independence and socialism. It accords with the interests of all mankind. In the last few years, most of the Communist Parties have adopted new programme documents on its basis, defining national as well as international interests and problems.

"In the period under review the international activities of the C.C. C.P.S.U. have been imbued with the unchanging desire to strengthen unity and fraternal solidarity with the other Communist and Workers' Parties and to work with them for implementation of the general line of the world communist movement."*

The Congress decisions stressed the invariable desire of the C.P.S.U. to strengthen brotherly solidarity with the Communist and Workers' Parties and work together with them in carrying

* *Twenty-Third Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, p. 25.

out the general line of the world communist movement. The Congress declared against hegemony in the world communist movement and for genuine equality and fraternal relations between all parties on the principles of proletarian internationalism and reaffirmed the vital necessity for waging a consistent fight against Right and "Left" revisionism, against nationalism, and for achieving unity of the communist ranks on the basis of elimination of every kind of deviation from Marxism-Leninism.

The C.P.S.U. maintains close ties with nearly all the communist parties in the world, receives their delegations, sends its own delegations, exchanges experience, discusses with the fraternal parties in a friendly and comradely atmosphere the important problems of the revolutionary struggle and of the world communist movement, and together with other parties comes out against imperialism and its political and ideological diversions.

The C.P.S.U. highly appreciates the role of the Comintern in the history of the world communist movement. Together with other parties the C.P.S.U. founded the Comintern. At all stages it took a most active part in its work, and today remains true to its Marxist-Leninist decisions and traditions.

The Decision of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. "On Preparations for the Lenin Centenary" stated: "An outstanding role in uniting the revolutionary forces was played by the Communist International, which was sponsored by Lenin. Lenin, with all the revolutionary passion characteristic of him, fought against opportunism, adventurism, and nationalism in the world labour movement, warned the communist parties of their danger to the destinies of the revolution and socialism."

A great event in the world communist movement, the triumph of its struggle, was the fiftieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The world's communist parties in their greetings and statements stressed that this anniversary was a great occasion for the whole progressive world. The fifty years that had elapsed since the victory of the October Revolution had not only wrought radical changes in the life of the Soviet people but had marked a turning point in world history. Those fifty years had seen theoretical and practical answers given to all the most important questions agitating the minds of humanity and had furnished an example of progressive solution of the epoch's fundamental contradictions.

Those fifty years saw the U.S.S.R., followed by other socialist countries, lay the foundations of a communist civilisation to which the future belongs.

THE TRADITIONS OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR UNITY OF THE COMMUNIST RANKS

Development of Proletarian Internationalism

Proletarian solidarity in the fight against the exploiters is one of the most important revolutionary traditions of the labour and communist movement.

The October Revolution carried out by the people of Russia under the leadership of the working class was the greatest manifestation of the labour movement's international character.

The October Revolution, the emergence of the modern communist movement and the further development of the world socialist revolution raised the ideology and practice of proletarian internationalism to a new level, enriched its content, and considerably enhanced its real political role. International solidarity became a powerful weapon of the international proletariat in its revolutionary struggle.

The emergence of the world's first Soviet state and the prospects of emergence of new socialist states posed the problem of interrelations between the labour movement in the capitalist countries and the consolidation of the U.S.S.R. and the future socialist states. On the one hand, the international working class received in the person of the Soviet Republic a material base for its revolutionising activities. On the other, the Soviet Republic and other socialist countries (as and when they appeared) were an object of the joint attacks of international reaction. In view of this the Comintern had formulated a new important feature of proletarian internationalism—the duty of every party, of every Communist, to give stalwart support to any and every socialist state in its fight against the counter-revolutionary forces. With the sharpening of the class struggle and the development of the world socialist revolution this feature acquired more and more significance. The realisation of this principle played a paramount role in widening and strengthening the positions of socialism in the world arena.

The consolidation of the communist parties and the mounting revolutionary onset of the proletariat in different countries posed in a new way the problem of interrelation among the different

national detachments of the militant proletariat. Lenin and, in accordance with his ideas, the Comintern, emphasised that proletarian internationalism in the new conditions included revolutionary initiative on the part of the national detachments of the working class and fullest possible support to this initiative by the workers of other countries. Proletarian internationalism, Lenin pointed out, "demands, first, that the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale, and, second, that a nation which is achieving victory over the bourgeoisie should be able and willing to make the greatest national sacrifices for the overthrow of international capital".*

An important feature of historical development in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism is the involvement in the revolutionary movement against imperialism of a new contingent of the working people—the many-millioned mass of people in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries. A new broad world front of the liberation struggle was opened. The decisions of the Comintern quote scientific, theoretical and political evidence in support of alliance and mutual aid between the labour movement in the home countries and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples. These decisions specially emphasised that every party that wished to belong to the Comintern should support the liberation movement in the colonies not by words, but by deeds, and should demand the withdrawal of its country's imperialists from these colonies.

The development of the revolutionary movement and the theoretical and political activities of the Comintern enriched also the dialectic of the interrelation between the national and international elements in the policy of the communist parties, the patriotic and class elements in the liberative struggle of the proletariat. The social-chauvinists, as we know, posed as patriots, but betrayed the class and national interests of the proletariat. Some leaders of the communist movement reacted to this official pseudo-patriotism by repudiating the role and significance of patriotism altogether. Lenin, and, under his leadership, the Comintern, persistently made it clear that in standing at the centre of all the oppressed and exploited, in working indefatigably for a progressive solution of national, social, economic and political problems, the working class was carrying out both its class duty and its national patriotic tasks. The working class is the true heir and successor to and

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 148.

defender of the progressive traditions of the nation, of its cultural wealth. Its supreme patriotic mission is to create qualitatively new conditions for national development by eliminating the sources of class contrasts within the nation—private property and the political power of the exploiters.

Internationalists are the best patriots—such was the basic attitude of the Comintern on this question. Thanks to the Comintern's activities it was brought home to Communists that the close combination of internationalism and consistent patriotism, a proper correlation of national and international tasks were essential conditions of success for the proletarian struggle. They roused and mobilised to the cause of socialism vast new political and moral reserves, recruited new allies for the working class.

Under the banner of continually developing and deepening internationalism, the communist movement attained a higher ideological, theoretical and political level. The various currents and national contingents of the world liberative struggle coalesced and an offensive was launched against international capital. Under the banner of proletarian internationalism socialism was built in the Soviet Union, a great victory was won over fascism, new breaks occurred in the chain of imperialism and a world socialist system was formed over three continents. Under the banner of proletarian internationalism a great confrontation is now taking place between the forces of world socialism, of all streams of the revolutionary movement, and the monopoly bourgeoisie.

The world communist movement of today acts as successor to and continuer of the great traditions of proletarian solidarity authenticated in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, rooted in the activities of the First International, continued by the Second International in the best period of its activities and raised to a new level by the theory and practice of the Communist International. Throughout these periods the ideology of proletarian internationalism came in for violent attacks on the part of the ruling bourgeoisie and the opportunist factions in the labour movement. The principles of internationalism are being put to severe tests under present-day conditions, subjected to pressure both by the reformists and by the reformist and nationalist elements within the communist movement. Proletarian solidarity, however, is standing up staunchly to these attacks by the enemies of the revolutionary movement and successfully coping with the splitting activities within the ranks of the Communists.

The communist parties, in their collective decisions and programmatic documents, establish the following principles, which

under contemporary conditions are recognised as being the most important aspects of proletarian internationalism:

— Solidarity and mutual aid among all the national detachments of the working class in the struggle against international capital, against all reactionary forces, for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

— Exertion *in every socialist country of maximum efforts* for strengthening the positions of the new social system, increasing the influence of socialism in the world arena and enhancing its prestige and appeal.

— Exertion by every *detachment of the working class* in the capitalist countries of maximum efforts for strengthening the positions of the revolutionary forces, of all democratic forces within its country and employment of the growing might of the labour and democratic movement to undermine and weaken the national and international positions of the monopoly bourgeoisie, to curb aggressive and reactionary activities and to organise further breaks in the chain of imperialism.

— Prosecution by all communist parties of such a national and international policy as would help strengthen the world socialist system, regarded as a decisive factor of the world revolutionary movement, help to quickly smooth out the existing differences between the communist parties of the socialist countries and establish unity of action by the whole of world socialism in the anti-imperialist struggle.

— Provision of all-round mutual assistance in the most diverse forms among the world streams of the revolutionary movement—the world socialist system, the international working class and the national liberation movement—in achieving their common anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, socialist aims; a striking manifestation of this mutual aid, which has assumed a truly international character, is the fight of the communist parties and of the world labour and democratic movement against U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

— Solidarity and active defence of the cause of peace by appropriate action both within national limits and on an international scale.

— Education of party members, the working class and all working people in the spirit of friendship among the peoples, equality of nations and races, intolerance to all manifestations of chauvinism and to all aspects of disrespect to other peoples; a determined fight against all hegemonist, dominant-nation tendencies and reactionary nationalism, which are splitting the labour and

democratic movement and depriving it of its main power—unity of action in the face of the world imperialist forces.

— Consistent defence and strengthening of the unity of the international communist movement, an active policy aimed at overcoming the split and differences, at achieving unity of action by all national Marxist-Leninist detachments in the fight against world imperialism, in achieving the great socialist ideals with strict observance of the independence and equality of all the fraternal parties.

— Defence of the integrity and purity of Marxist-Leninist theory, its creative development by the collective efforts of all parties in the interests of a more profound analysis of the common tendencies of development of the world revolutionary process in contemporary conditions, taking into consideration the concrete historical peculiarities of the revolutionary transformative activity of the working class in each country.

— Allegiance to the jointly charted general line of the world communist movement, and persistent patient efforts to overcome all deviations from this line both in the direction of Right-opportunist theory and practice and in the direction of Left extremism, sectarianism and adventurist tactics.

Consistent adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism opens up to the communist movement new historical vistas, strengthens its unity, acts as the source of its growing strength and transformative power, and leads to the triumph of the ideals of socialism all over the world.

The Fight for Unity of the Communist Ranks

The foundation and development of the Comintern and its sections took place in intense struggle against all kinds of opportunist factions, trends, groups and currents. The Marxists-Leninists upheld the unity and revolutionary principles of the communist movement, the purity of its scientific foundations and fidelity to the principles of proletarian internationalism, and repelled the attacks of reformists, Centrists, anarcho-syndicalists, Trotskyites, revisionists, Right opportunists, advocates of petty-bourgeois revolutionism and Leftist adventurism, sectarians and other unstable, wavering elements.

In the present epoch the question of ways and means of secur-

ing unity of the communist movement and the purity and creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory has acquired far greater urgency and political significance.

On the one hand, all forms of centralised leadership and influence on the theoretical and practical activities of the communist parties are now things of the past. The principle of the party's autonomy in determining its strategy and tactics and prosecuting its policy has become firmly established in the communist movement and is being consistently carried out.

On the other hand, the rapid development of the communist movement, the involvement in the revolutionary struggle of vast masses of people in the formerly oppressed countries, the expansion of the motive forces of social progress by inclusion of the non-proletarian strata of the working people, and augmentation of the ranks of the proletariat by a vast mass of non-manual workers, while testifying to the irresistible process of the transition to socialism, have its negative aspects. Features alien to the communist and labour movement are introduced into it—elements of non-proletarian ideology, ideological and political vacillation, revisionist waverings, revolutionary impatience, aversion to international self-discipline, neglect of international duty and all kinds of nationalist moods.

"Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development," wrote Lenin, "constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular."*

In fact the communist movement is experiencing the tremendous pressure of non-proletarian ideologies and policies. The most concentrated expression of these ideologies and policies, which are alien to Marxism-Leninism, is complacent reactionary nationalism, which has a tendency to grow into chauvinism and nourishes Right and "Left" opportunism.

The development of the liberative struggle is accompanied by a growth of nationalism, which, in its anti-imperialist aspect, performs a progressive role. Introduced, however, into the communist movement and the world of socialism as a challenge to the principles of proletarian internationalism, nationalism plays a negative

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 348.

role, is detrimental to both the nation and the common cause of socialism. It weakens the forces of liberation and reform, checks social progress.

"One who has adopted the standpoint of nationalism," wrote Lenin, "naturally arrives at the desire to erect a Chinese Wall around his nationality, his national working-class movement; he is unembarrassed even by the fact that it would mean building separate walls in each city, in each little town and village, unembarrassed even by the fact that by his tactics of division and dismemberment *he is reducing to nil* the great call for the rallying and unity of the proletarians of all nations, all races and all languages."*

Finally, it needs to be said that nationalist apartness, differences within the communist movement become especially dangerous in a situation of tense conflict between world capitalism and world socialism. Imperialist reaction is out to reverse the course of historical development in its favour, and the existence of nationalist attitudes in the communist movement, the split within it, and the contradictions and difficulties in the relationships between the socialist countries provide the monopoly bourgeoisie with an impulse towards adventurist counter-offensives. Therefore the fight against nationalism, against revisionism and petty-bourgeois revolutionism and Leftist extremism, for fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and for consistent adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism as laid down in the programmatic documents is a major task of every Marxist-Leninist party, of every internationalist revolutionary.

The communist parties in the last quarter of a century have often come up against the revisionist danger. The revisionists virtually repudiate the international character of Marxism-Leninism, and under the guise of creative development of revolutionary theory and generalisation of the new facts and phenomena, make use of the existing difficulties and subjective mistakes in an attempt to emasculate the teaching concerning the common objective laws governing the development of the revolution, the building of socialism and the organisation of socialist life. The revisionists exaggerate the specific national features, to which they give an absolute value as opposed to the general conception of transition from capitalism to socialism. Hence the peddling of various ideas of "national socialism" and propaganda boosting new "patterns" of socialism which ignore both accumulated experience and

* Ibid., Vol. 6, pp. 520-21.

Marxist-Leninist teachings. Stern practice, however, again and again confirms that any and every attempt to depart from the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the essence of socialist society invites disastrous political and economic defeats and gives wide scope to more active bourgeois pressure.

A heavy blow to the unity of the world communist movement has been dealt by the Mao Tse-tung group, which has sunk to anti-Leninist positions and is pursuing a Leftist adventurist policy of great-power chauvinism in the international arena and the world communist movement.

The opportunist degeneration of Mao Tse-tung and his group is a logical evolution and consummation of their erroneous political and theoretical views which the Comintern had once combated.

The point of view of Mao Tse-tung and his group on questions concerning the general line of the international communist movement is a revision of the Marxist-Leninist views on the cardinal problems of the communist parties' policy, strategy and tactics as set forth in the Declaration and the Statement.

The Maoists launched a furious campaign aimed at splitting the world communist movement and do not scruple to use any means to gain their ends. They tried to impose their diktat on other communist parties and split them. They started to collect all kinds of renegades, careerists, people who had been expelled from the parties. Under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party so-called "Marxist-Leninist parties or groups" were set up, which were generously financed and actively published and promulgated Maoist literature. The Mao group tried first of all to weaken the most powerful communist parties of the capitalist countries.

The Maoists launched no less intense splitting activities among the mass international organisations of the working people—the trade unions, youth, students', women's, writers' organisations, and so on.

In putting over the idea of a crusade of the "world countryside" against the "world city" as a new discovery in the theory of revolution, Mao Tse-tung tries to divorce the national liberation movement from the socialist countries and the international working class in order to control it and use it for the realisation of his great-power hegemonist aims.

Mao's disastrous adventurist policy imposed on the groups under his control has already led to a number of defeats.

In continuing their policy of splitting the communist movement, and the world socialist system, the Maoists are in fact playing

into the hands of the imperialists, encouraging their military adventures, first and foremost their predatory war in Vietnam.

The splitting policy pursued by Mao Tse-tung weakens the communist movement, and therefore it is the primary and most important duty of all Communists to fight for the unity of the communist movement and for international solidarity.

The Statement of the Communist and Workers' Parties specially emphasises that "A resolute defence of the unity of the world communist movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and the prevention of any actions which may undermine that unity, are a necessary condition for victory in the struggle for national independence, democracy and peace, for the successful accomplishment of the tasks of the socialist revolution and of the building of socialism and communism."*

The future of world development, the immediate and even particular prospects of the struggle between socialism and capitalism, in the world arena depend primarily upon the unity of the world communist movement and international solidarity of all the revolutionary forces.

The rich experience of many years shows that the *dominant tendency of the world communist movement is a tendency towards unity, a tendency towards proletarian internationalism.*

This tendency does not move in a straight line or take effect mechanically. The various disruptive, opportunist groups and trends which arise periodically in the communist movement under the influence of non-proletarian elements are, despite their persistence, of a temporary, transitory nature. The role of the objective underlying factors working towards unity is enhanced at every new stage of the struggle. The objective possibilities are realised through the active efforts of the consistently revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist forces.

Unity of the communist movement is an objective necessity and a powerful historical instrument of the revolutionary transformation of society, an active accelerator of social progress, a decisive condition for the success of the whole anti-imperialist struggle, for preserving peace, ensuring social progress and economic prosperity in the developing countries, for the victory of socialism on a world scale. All the progressive strata of society, all democratic parties and organisations, all fighters against the threat of war, against fascism and other forms of reaction have a vested interest in strengthening the unity of the world communist movement.

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* *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, p. 79.

As the Declaration of the 1960 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties points out, constant strengthening of the unity of the international communist movement is the highest international duty of every Marxist-Leninist party. Every communist party, big or small, in power or not, bears a great historical responsibility for the prospects of the world revolution, for the unity of the world communist movement.

In the course of the struggle for the unity of the communist ranks the principles of inter-party relations have been worked out and steadily improved. These principles provide for the communist parties' increased independence, their greater international role and international responsibility.

The basic feature of these principles is the dialectic of *interdependence between the international essence of the communist movement and the specific national features of every communist party's activities*. And this dialectic finds expression in a number of propositions, most significant among which are the following:

(a) consistent allegiance to the principles of proletarian internationalism, organic combination of the national and international elements in all activities;

(b) the ability to shape a principled policy in keeping with the national conditions, the cause of socialism and international obligations;

(c) the autonomy of every party in determining its policy, irrespective of whether that party is in power or not, whether it is big or small, legal or illegal;

(d) non-interference by any communist party in the internal affairs of another;

(e) equality of every party in all spheres of socio-political activities, including equal opportunities for displaying revolutionary initiative and equal revolutionary responsibility for the destinies of the world revolutionary movement;

(f) mutual political, organisational and theoretical aid in fulfilling revolutionary tasks, mutual enrichment on the basis of a thorough and sincere exchange of experience; mutual assistance in the fight against imperialism, against its aggressive policy and the anti-socialist forces;

(g) joint decision on the cardinal issues of world policy; collectivity in all questions of the anti-imperialist struggle and voluntary responsibility for the carrying out of these joint decisions;

(h) combination of historical responsibility for the destinies of the world communist movement, for the success of the world revolutionary process, and international self-discipline with the national sovereignty of every Marxist-Leninist party;

(i) international solidarity, consistent proletarian internationalism, which is incompatible with any form of self-isolation and separateness, and includes a determined fight against all reactionary nationalist views.

These principles clearly reflect great concern for the unity of the world communist movement. They are spearheaded against splitting activities and political apartness. Giving as they do full scope to the specific national features and fullest opportunities for national self-expression, they are imbued with the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

The communist parties, which are internationalist by their very nature, have always experienced a vital need for pooling experience and co-ordinating their actions. Multilateral regional meetings have played a great role in strengthening international solidarity among the national revolutionary detachments, in uniting the world communist movement and co-ordinating the actions of the fraternal parties.

An important landmark in the history of the communist movement was the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties held in Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia) in April 1967.

The parties attending this Conference jointly drew up and submitted to public opinion for consideration a programme for creating a system of collective security based on the principles of peaceful coexistence among states having different social systems. This programme includes: inviolability of existing European frontiers; recognition of the two sovereign and equal German states—the G.D.R. and the F.R.G.; non-access by the F.R.G. to nuclear weapons in any form; the Munich pact to be declared null and void from the moment it was signed; preparation and signing by all European states of an agreement renouncing the use of force in their mutual relations and interference in one another's internal affairs and settling all mooted problems by peaceful means; the historical need for defending and developing democracy in the F.R.G.; elimination of all artificially created barriers in the economic relations between the socialist and capitalist countries of Europe; implementation of a number of measures of disarmament and creating a Europe without military blocs. The delegates supported a proposal to convene a conference of European states on the question of security and peaceful collaboration in Europe, to arrange a conference of representatives of all European parliaments.

It is worthy of note that the decisions of the Conference contain a collective formulation of the idea of the historical responsibility of every communist party for the destinies of peace and socialism.

"Each of the communist parties," says the Conference document, "in the specific conditions under which it has to carry on the struggle, bears the responsibility for its policy before the working class and the people of its country. At the same time each party is aware of its international responsibility for the preservation of peace and the formation among the nations of new relations in keeping with the requirements of our epoch.

"This sense of responsibility demands of us, communist parties of Europe, that we unite our forces for dealing with these problems. The stronger the unity and solidarity of the communist and workers' parties in Europe and throughout the world, the more effective will our struggle be."*

Efforts to achieve unity of the communist movement have lately been considerably stepped up. Imperialism, as we know, is now intensifying its ideological challenge to communism, increasing its attempts to disunite the socialist countries and the communist parties, using for this purpose all kinds of nationalist elements. Under these circumstances the problem of unity among all fighters against imperialism, first and foremost unity among the Communists, acquires paramount importance. All splitting activities in the communist movement and disunity within its ranks are a real godsend for reaction.

The unity and fighting efficiency of the communist ranks are weakened also by all kinds of deviations from Marxism-Leninism —by manifestations of revisionism, Leftist extremism, and nationalism. Consistent Marxists-Leninists are waging an uncompromising fight against all these deviations and resolutely upholding the general line of the communist movement, the purity of Marxism-Leninism, which is the tried and tested doctrine of the revolutionary proletariat. In recent years the striving towards unity of the communist ranks on the common basis of anti-imperialism has grown still stronger.

For this purpose the world's communist parties put in a good deal of work in preparing a new international Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, which was held in Moscow in 1969.

An important historical achievement of this Meeting was the working out, by the joint efforts of its delegates, of the political line and cardinal tasks of the world communist movement at the present stage of social development. The materials of the Meeting stress the fact that the central, decisive, priority task of the whole revolutionary and democratic movement at the present time is the launching of an active struggle against imperialism; the programme of this struggle has been outlined. The documents of the Meeting state that the contemporary socio-political situation in the world makes it possible for the struggle against imperialism to be elevated to a new level, for the attack on it to be stepped up, for decisive superiority over it to be achieved and for its policy of aggression and war to be defeated. The Meeting stated that the decisive condition for victory in the anti-imperialist struggle was unity of all the anti-imperialist forces, first and foremost unity of the communist and workers' parties. The Meeting adopted a Main Document on "The Tasks at the Present Stage of Struggle Against Imperialism and United Action of the Communist and Workers' Parties and All Anti-Imperialist Forces", and an Address "Centenary of the Birth of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin"; an Appeal "Independence, Freedom and Peace to Vietnam!"; an Appeal in Defence of Peace, etc.

The Meeting was a great stride forward in strengthening the unity of the world communist movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The materials of the Meeting reflect the diverse forms of unity of the world communist movement, and the continued enrichment of its content. Unity of the Communists is a requirement of history. Unity of the Communists is demanded by the interests of the working class, by the interests of all mankind. Unity is essential if all the peoples are to be assured a happy future.

The great vivifying idea of unity of the communist ranks on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism is forcing a way for itself by the collective efforts of the communist and workers' parties.

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* *Konferentsiya yevropeiskikh kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii po voprosam bezopasnosti v Yevrope*, Moscow, 1967, p. 278.

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