

CHAPTER FOUR

THE QUESTION OF THE STATE IN THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The contradictory formulations on the state that were developed during the twenty-four year existence of the Communist International (1919-1943) are in all essentials consistent with the variations previously introduced by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

This theoretical fidelity was not due to dogmatism nor to simple lack of originality, but to the fact that the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state already provided theses suited to either drably reformist or, if need be, intense “class struggle” situations. The second-generation theoreticians of the Communist International—Zinoviev, Bukharin, Stalin, Radek, Manuilsky, Kuusenin, Dimitrov, and others—therefore only needed to draw on particular passages from the classic works in order to rationalize their current positions, even if those positions directly contradicted previous Comintern lines.

The political history of the Comintern divides into four main periods.

The first three Comintern Congresses (1919, 1920, 1921) anticipated revolutionary upheavals in Western Europe, and particularly in Germany, and so provided more militant guidelines for the new communist parties. Although the Third Congress advocated a limited united front policy to attract Social-Democratic rank and file workers, the general policy of the Comintern at this time was one of intransigent hostility towards Social Democracy and competition for influence among the workers. Consequently, the Comintern upheld the dictatorship of the proletariat as the immediate aim of the revolution, and sharply opposed the compromising policy of the Social Democrats and their participation in bourgeois coalition governments.

The second period began shortly after the Third Congress, continuing through the Fourth (1922) and Fifth (1924) Congresses, and ending just prior to the Sixth (1928). In order to accommodate a general downturn in the spontaneous workers’ movement, the Comintern expanded its united front efforts and emphasized reformist issues. Corresponding to this turn, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) offered the phrase “Workers’ Government” as a substitute for proletarian dictatorship. and through a very loose definition allowed it to mean anything from a reformist coalition government with the Social Democrats to Soviet power under communist leadership. After several attempts to establish durable “Workers’ Governments” with the Social Democrats failed, the Fifth Congress retreated from coalitions, but maintained the slogan in the hope that more fruitful situations would arise.

The third period (defined as such by Stalin) was initiated at the Sixth Congress in 1928 with a return to the more militant phrases of 1919-21. This period is characterized primarily by open attacks on the Social Democrats and comprehensive propaganda against imperialist war threatening the USSR. Consequently, the notion of Communist-Social-Democratic coalition “Workers’ Governments” was dropped altogether and emphasis was once more laid on proletarian dictatorship in the form of Soviet power.

The fourth and last period marked yet another turn to the Right and a rejection of the “class against class” tactics of the third. Beginning approximately in mid-1933, the Comintern sections once more approached the Social Democrats for united action and, by the Seventh Congress in 1935, for organizational merger. The unity of Social Democrats and communists would provide the basis for a broad united front of the working class, and that in turn would be the basis for an even broader People’s Front. The basic theses Lenin had formu-

lated in *Impending Catastrophe* are taken to their logical conclusion in the slogan for a "People's Front Government", a coalition government not only of Social-Democrats and communists, but patriotic democrats of every description.

This period was formally brought to a close by the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, but as we will see it provided the theoretical foundation on which most of the post-war People's Democracies were built.

Despite (or rather, because of) these vacillations on the question of the state, every formulation can be traced to one or another Marxist-Leninist text and is therefore quite legitimately Marxist. Zinoviev was a Marxist. Bukharin was a Marxist. Dimitrov was a Marxist, par excellence. Even Brandler and Thaelheimer were Marxists. They were all honorable Marxist men. And if they failed to achieve the stature of Marx or Lenin (or, on the contrary, found themselves in front of socialist firing squads), it is only because they were too careless, too inflexible in their thinking, too narrow and slow in manipulating their political lines. In short, they were not sufficiently opportunist to cover for themselves and endure.

A. The First Congress – 1919

The initial position of the Comintern on the state was essentially a paraphrase of Lenin's thinking in *State and Revolution*. Participation in parliamentary politics was obligatory in principle, although the formal parliamentary path to power was rejected.

In his thesis on democracy and proletarian dictatorship for the First Congress, Lenin again credits Marx with revealing "...the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system..." (LCW Vol. 28, p.457), and upholds the Soviet form as its antithesis. The Paris Commune, Lenin states, "...was not a parliamentary institution..." (Ibid.), but a uniquely working class form of government equaled only by Soviet power. To counter the reformist strategy of the Social Democrats, Lenin explains further "...in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty bourgeois lamentations..." (Ibid. p.463).

On the surface, the choice is clear: either reliance on parliamentary institutions as the sole or main arena of struggle, which inevitably leads to reformism and covert defense of capitalism. Or, use of parliament only for propaganda purposes, with concentration on mass struggle and ultimately Soviet power. But since Lenin skips over his own 'non-bourgeois' third way of February-October, 1917, the choice is not really quite so clear. By this omission, Lenin theoretically allows for a 'non-bourgeois', i.e. petty bourgeois, government as a legitimate step towards socialism, an allowance that the Comintern leaders would not begin to adequately appreciate until late 1921.

A curious demonstration of the flexibility of the First Congress principles was provided by the short-lived Hungarian revolution in mid-1919. Actually, it was not much of a revolu-

tion, since the Hungarian bourgeoisie voluntarily handed power to the Hungarian communists and Social Democrats. With their national security threatened by the big powers, the Hungarian ruling class decided to inspire national defensiveness among the masses by the creation of a popular, Soviet government. The bourgeoisie stepped aside, and the communists and Social Democrats proceeded to create a Soviet system on the basis of a complete organizational merger of the two parties.

Despite his own practical experience and good advice on the treacherous role of Social Democracy, Lenin congratulated the Hungarian socialists and declared that "...you have set the world an even better example than Soviet Russia by your ability to unite all socialists at one stroke on the platform of genuine proletarian dictatorship..." (LCW Vol. 29, p.391). As might be expected, the Social Democrats eventually reneged on their patriotic responsibilities, and the Soviets were dispersed by foreign troops. Lenin thereafter attempted to justify his enthusiasm by stating that at the advent of the Hungarian events, "...one might have thought that a new era had set in for socialism..." i.e. communist-Social-Democratic unity, but that "...recent events have shown that the socialist-conciliators had not changed in the least..." (Ibid. p.549).

Of particular significance is the fact that the Hungarian Soviets were immediately accepted as a genuine proletarian dictatorship although they were formed without a revolution, without forcible "smashing", with little rank and file initiative, and were staffed by a coalition of Social-Democratic and communist intellectuals. In class terms, the Hungarian Soviets were only a middle class government of national salvation, a fact that the Hungarian bourgeoisie appreciated instinctively when it transferred power to them. But for the Comintern, the fact that a makeshift system of Soviets had been formed with communist participation was sufficient. The pattern established by Marx's and Engels' generous interpretation of the Commune and by Lenin's even more benevolent attitude towards the Russian revolution was thus repetitiously applied to Hungary and would become the main characteristic of all subsequent attempts at creating "workers' governments".

B. The Second Congress – 1920

Discussions on the state at the Second Congress centered on the use of parliamentary tactics and their relation to the creation of Soviets.

In opposition to the Social Democratic view of parliament as a vehicle for power, Bukharin explained at "...a parliament is only a tribune, merely a weapon of revolutionary struggle, simply the organization of the broad toiling masses for the inevitable armed struggle between exploiters and exploited..." (*Report of the Second Congress of the Communist International*, USGPO, 1920, p.57). But despite the "only", "merely" and "simply" nature of parliament, most of the Congress's efforts were directed not against those who overestimated parliamentary politics, but against those who rejected them outright.

Lenin, who, in addition to writing “Left-wing” Communism, spoke at the Congress in favor of parliamentary tactics, formulated the opposition to anti-parliamentary tendencies within the new communist parties.

The anti-parliamentary tendency, Lenin explained, “...appears not so much among those who have come out from the petty bourgeoisie, as it is supported by forward-looking detachments of the proletariat, and by hatred for the old parliamentarism, lawful and quite correct hatred for the conduct of parliamentary opportunists...” (*Report* p.28). However lawful and correct, however, anti-parliamentary tendencies were nonetheless a “naive childish doctrine” (*Theses of the Second Congress Petrograd, 1920, p.68*) that had to be corrected.

Consequently, the final theses on parliamentarism adopted by the Congress were phrased in such a way as to discredit the leftism of the International Workers of the World (IWW) and other syndicalist groups, and at the same time make parliamentary work attractive to them via more socialist catch-phrases.

The theses reassure the syndicalists that parliamentarism is, after all, “...a definite form of state order. Therefore it can in no way be a form of Communist society, which recognizes neither classes, nor class struggle, or any form of state authority...” (*Thesis* p.62). It follows from this, however, that any form of state, even Soviet power, can in no way be a form of Communist society, since communist society theoretically requires no state. The fact that the Congress felt compelled to include such a muddled argument in its criticism of parliamentarism only indicates how hard-pressed the Executive was in mustering arguments against something it still had high hopes for.

Further, the theses state, parliamentarism cannot be a form of proletarian dictatorship. since that dictatorship requires that the bourgeoisie be eliminated from the government. Therefore, “...the only form of proletarian dictatorship is a Republic of Soviets...” (*Theses* p.63). This argument, too, is unconvincing, since by imposing only a temporary suffrage ban on the bourgeoisie, even the Russian Soviets allowed for their participation in government.

Likewise, the Congress’s declaration that parliament “...cannot be won over by the proletariat any more than can the bourgeois order in general...” (*Theses, p.63*) would not prevent the Comintern from attempting to win over parliament by way of a Social Democratic and communist coalition. Ever true to its principles, the Comintern never repudiated the superiority of Soviets to the parliamentary form. It simply found ways to elevate certain parliamentary tactics to a near-Soviet status.

However unsuitable the parliamentary form may be, the Congress concluded, it was still necessary to participate in it “...not for the purpose of organizational work, but in order to blow up the whole bourgeois machinery and the parliament itself from within...” (*Theses* p.66).

As examples, the theses cite the work of Karl Liebknecht in the Reichstag, and the work of the Bolsheviks in the Imperial Duma and the Constituent Assembly. The theses omit the fine details as to how, specifically, this “blowing up from within” is to be accomplished. In Germany, for example, it was Karl Liebknecht, not the Reichstag, who was eventually “blown up” by the German state. And the ability of the Bolsheviks to disperse the Constitu-

ent Assembly was based, not on the bombastic speeches of Bolshevik Deputies, but the Party's control of an extra-parliamentary force.

Sensing that even this explosive imagery might not be enough to convince the anti-parliamentarians, the Congress added an Annex to the theses which called for "...a new type of revolutionary parliamentarian—Communist warrior..." (*Theses* p.71). **A communist warrior**, now that is something any hothead syndicalist can identify with.

The new revolutionary catch-phrases were supplemented by a warning to the syndicalists that any splits in the new communist parties over the issue of parliamentary work "...is a crime against the Labor movement..." (*Theses* p.69). Since the trends closer to the Bolsheviks were quite willing to do both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work, the responsibility for maintaining unity clearly rested with the syndicalist groups.

Indicting one's opponents on criminal charges in order to change their minds is a very old polemical device that had, however, some success at the Second Congress. But by making participation in parliamentary politics a matter of principle, it was the Comintern itself that provoked a split with the remaining syndicalist workers.

While insisting on parliamentary work, the Congress reaffirmed Lenin's later views of the Soviets as the exclusive form of proletarian dictatorship. As the theses on Soviets by Zinoviev state, "...the Soviets are the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Constituent Assembly is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. To unite and reconcile the dictatorship of the working class with that of the bourgeoisie is impossible..." (*Theses* p.80).

But as Lenin's writings prior to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and the subsequent history of the Comintern show, the irreconcilability of Soviets with parliament was simply a tactical maneuver, and not a matter of principle as the theses state. Thus, it would not be long before Zinoviev himself would attempt the impossible via the parliamentary formulation of "workers' government" and lay the Second Congress resolution to rest.

The two most significant positions on the state passed by the Congress concern the question of when Soviets should be formed and what classes should participate in them.

The theses on parliamentarism explain the secondary importance of parliamentary work by reasoning that "...if the center of gravity lies in a struggle for power outside the parliament, then naturally the question of a proletarian dictatorship and a fight in the masses for it is immeasurably greater than the secondary one of using the parliament..." (*Theses* p.69). But by the same reasoning, if there is no active struggle for power, then the question of Soviets is **not** immeasurably greater, but is in fact secondary to parliamentary tactics.

This implication is confirmed by the Congress's declaration that Soviets should not be formed prematurely. In 1905, Zinoviev explained, the Bolsheviks "...warned against the immediate formation of the Soviets, and pointed out that such a formation would be well-timed only at the moment when the revolution would have already begun and when the turn would have come for the direct struggle for the power..." (*Theses* p.77). Lenin, contrary to his previous views, announced, "...during the Kerensky period, the revolutionary significance of the Soviets was not worth a broken penny" expresses the same sentiment (*Report* p.59). Thus the formation of Soviets prior to October 1917, as well as their formation in Germany and Austria, is portrayed as something of an untimely mistake. Zinoviev's

argument concludes that "...soviets must be organized exclusively for the purpose of opposing a governmental apparatus of the proletariat that is striving for dictatorship to the governmental power of the bourgeoisie. Soviets should function exclusively in this field..." (*Report* p.67). And further, "...Soviets without a revolution are impossible, Soviets without a proletarian revolution inevitably become a parody of Soviets..." (*Theses* p.82). In making this conclusion, Zinoviev evidently forgot that the Soviets were initially viewed as organs of the democratic, not proletarian, revolution.

It follows that if extra-parliamentary organs of working class power are suitable only in extremely revolutionary situations, then working class power in non-revolutionary times should be restricted to non-revolutionary, i.e. parliamentary and trade union, channels.

At first sight, such cautiousness would seem to contradict the enthusiasm of the Comintern for every sign of discontent among the masses, including spontaneous attempts to form independent organs of power. But this conservative line on Soviets has a very practical purpose. By discouraging the creation of Soviets until the highest pitch of revolutionary fervor had been achieved, Soviets created at such a moment would be much more likely to have a more left, Marxist-Leninist majority, and thus avoid the parliamentary power-politicking that characterized the pre-October Russian Soviets and the Soviets formed in Germany and Austria. Being thus delivered into the hands of a specific faction of the socialist intelligentsia, they would then be suitable as instruments of power. At the same time, reserving the Soviets as an enticing revolutionary catch-phrase until the decisive hour would help to conceal their essentially reformist and democratic character.

As for the class composition of the Soviets, the Congress covertly declared the equivalence of the proletarian and petty bourgeois democratic revolutions and insisted on a form that would guarantee the participation of both the working class and petty bourgeoisie.

When the syndicalists attempted to define Soviet power in strictly working class terms and thus proposed the trade union syndicates as the logical basis of power, Lenin asked them "...where will you organize and agitate among the peasants, clerks and retrograde workmen who do not join syndicates..." (*Report* p.59). Citing the example of the Russian revolution, Zinoviev recalled that "...at the beginning of the February revolution of 1917, when the Soviets of Workers' Deputies were transformed into Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, they drew into the sphere of their influence the widest circles of the popular masses and at once acquired a tremendous authority, because the real force was on their side, in their hands..." (*Theses* p.78). The reader should remember that Zinoviev is speaking of the Soviets during a time when, in Lenin's words, the 'real force' was not worth a broken penny. Zinoviev's final resolution nonetheless condemned any effort to "...form Soviets not embracing the larger working masses..." [i.e. the petty bourgeoisie] "... and unable therefore to enter into a direct struggle for power..." (*Theses* p.81).

By insisting that the Soviets be multi-class structures, the Comintern insured that the class independence of the workers would be eroded from two ends: from the top, through the Party leadership of the intelligentsia, and from the bottom, through petty bourgeois influence in the mass Soviets. Militant resolutions on behalf of "proletarian dictatorship" notwithstanding, the Comintern advocated a form of Soviets objectively suited to a democratic,

petty bourgeois dictatorship. in line with Lenin's original views of the 1905 Soviets and the Paris Commune.

C. The Third Congress – 1921

The emphasis on more traditional parliamentary work at the Third Congress and the ECCI's subsequent theses on "Workers' Government" were conditioned in part by the failure of the March Action uprising in Germany of 1921. Although the failure was blamed on the Right wing of the German Communist Party [KPD], it was the ECCI (in particular, Bela Kun, Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin) that initiated the uprising despite lack of preparation and mass support. As compensation, the Third Congress formally defended the 'left' rationale behind the March Action, but began supplying more reformist phrases aimed at winning mass support through parliamentary means.

The Third Congress theses on parliamentary work thus call for the use of parliament not simply for debate but for "...the stirring up of the fighting spirit of the working masses and in attracting the semi-proletariat and petty bourgeois strata of society to the proletariat..." (*Theses and Resolutions of the Third Congress*, Contemporary Publishing Association, NYC, 1921, p.54). Such work is all the more necessary since "...even in Western Europe a part of the peasantry, a considerable section of the petty bourgeoisie in the towns, the numerous so-called 'new middle-class', the office workers, etc., are sinking into ever worse conditions of life..." (Ibid. p.61) and are becoming revolutionary. The communist parties are urged to absorb "intellectuals and employees" who are becoming disillusioned with capitalism.

The most creative formulation on the use of parliament in relation to the state is expressed in a thesis on lower and middle level bureaucrats. The resolution states that "...the Communist Parties, by espousing the cause of the lower and middle officialdom, and by helping it economically, irrespective of the state of public finance, will do most effective preliminary work for the destruction of the bourgeois institution and the preparation of the elements requisite for the superstructure of the proletarian state..." (Ibid. p.63).

Formerly, the old bureaucratic apparatus was to be "smashed" from top to bottom, with the functions of the old officialdom to be assumed by rank and file workers. With this thesis, on the contrary, the bulk of the old bureaucracy is not only viewed as an "element requisite for the superstructure of the proletarian state", but is to be won over in advance by having the working class rally for the bureaucrats' salaries.

Following the Third Congress, the Comintern took this reformist tendency to its logical conclusion with the call for comprehensive united front tactics and the creation of coalition "Workers' Governments".

In October 1921, the KPD engaged in parliamentary maneuvers to force the Social Democrats and German Independent Socialists to form a socialist government in Thuringia. Although the KPD did not risk its revolutionary reputation by actually participating in the government, Thalheimer declared that "...the KPD leaves no doubt as to its readiness to

support with all its power any socialist government which will aim at carrying out the demands put by the masses..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 1 #12, p.99). By way of explaining how such a government related to a future Soviet one, Thalheimer added that continuing struggle between the socialist government and the bourgeoisie would eventually lead to "...the shattering of the parliamentary limits..." (Ibid.). But it is clear from Thalheimer's declaration that the starting point for such shattering would not be extra parliamentary mass struggle, but a formal united front government based on a parliamentary coalition.

By December 1921, the ECCI issued the united front and "Workers' Government" slogans, but left the question of what these slogans actually meant to the Fourth Congress.

D. The Fourth Congress - 1922

The interpretations given to the united front and "Workers' Government" at the Fourth Congress only confirmed the worst suspicions of the syndicalists and anti-parliamentary groups. In order to prevent further splits over the new slogans, the Fourth Congress developed an ambiguous definition of "Workers' Government" that would appeal to, and yet avoid the excesses of, both the Right and left-wing trends in the International.

The united front, it was explained, did not mean an electoral alliance or organizational unity with the Social Democrats, but only unity of action for common working class demands. This tactic was necessary because the masses were not yet revolutionary and therefore, in Radek's words, "...the conquest of power is not an immediately practicable aim..." (*Report of the IV Congress*, Communist Party of Great Britain, 1922, p.51).

To counter the opposition of the lefts and the enthusiasm of the Rights, Zinoviev explained that the slogan of a Labor or Workers' Government "...is a particular concrete application of the tactics of the united front under certain specific conditions..." (Ibid. p.37) and was therefore not universally applicable. For practical purposes, however, the slogan was employed for nearly all countries after the Fourth Congress, with a slight modification for the less industrially developed ones.

Zinoviev himself, who had just prior to the Fourth Congress defined "Workers' Government" simply as a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a means to popularize Soviet power, initiated confusion over the slogan. As the same time, the slogan was also used in Thalheimer's sense, as a transitional, parliamentary government that would eventually lead to a Soviet, proletarian dictatorship.

The unspoken purpose of this 'dialectical' use of the phrase was, as we have seen already from the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, to simultaneously uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat as the immediate aim, and yet theoretically allow for a parliamentary path to power, thus absorbing Social Democratic tactics. And doing this demanded a certain flexibility of principle that only the most theoretically advanced could hope to achieve.

Sensing that Zinoviev's use of "Workers' Government" as a synonym for proletarian dictatorship would limit the Comintern's possibilities, Radek declared that "...a Workers' Gov-

ernment is not the Proletarian Dictatorship. that is clear; it is one of the possible transitory stages to the Proletarian Dictatorship..." (Ibid. p.51). In support of this argument, Radek added that since European workers preferred labor coalition governments and since workers' parties usually arise "...either through preliminary struggles or on the basis of a parliamentary combination, ...it would be folly to turn aside the opportunities of such a situation in stubborn doctrinaire fashion..." (Ibid. p.52).

By appealing to the existing parliamentary prejudice of the workers, the Comintern could avoid any resistance to such an 'alien' concept as proletarian dictatorship. Radek agreed that a Workers' Government was not absolutely necessary as a transitional stage, but it was a real possibility "...in a number of countries having a strong proletarian and peasant movement, or where the working class overwhelmingly outnumber the bourgeoisie as is the case in England. A parliamentary labor victory in England is quite possible ..." (Ibid, 52).

In addition to the question of whether the proposed Workers' Government was identical to or merely a transitional step towards a proletarian dictatorship, was the question of how, specifically, a coalition "Workers' Government" as proposed by the Comintern differed from an ordinary Social Democratic government.

Meyer, a member of the KPD delegation, offered the explanation that "...the chief difference between a Workers' and a Social Democratic government is—that the former, without bearing the label of a socialist policy, is really putting socialist-communist policy into practice. Thus the Workers' Government will not be based on parliamentary action alone, it will have to be based on support of the wide masses..." (Ibid. p.41).

Given that even the Social Democrats relied on a combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (trade union, cooperative, social service leagues, etc.) support, this "chief difference" does not amount to much, after all. And given that, in line with the Second Congress resolutions, armed and independent Soviet organs were not to be created until the thick of the revolution, the "support of the wide masses" for a parliamentary coalition would in reality only have been electoral support. The objective chief difference between the Comintern's "Workers' Government" and a Social Democratic government was simply that, in the former, the communists hoped to predominate in parliament, and in the latter, the Social Democrats.

Opposition to the "Workers' Government" slogan at the Congress was condemned outright as an ultra-left deviation. Disputes over united front tactics in the Czech Communist Party had resulted in the expulsion of some locals. Vajtauer, speaking on behalf of the left opposition, was accused of anarchism. Duret, on behalf of the French left opposition, spoke against the united front on the grounds that the CP France was already too reformist. The united front in France was only "...a sort of electioneering tactics (Ibid. p.55), and although the French communists "...make speeches in Parliament, ...we retain the methods of the old unified Socialist Party of the pre-war days, without any change whatever..." (Ibid. p.54). Action in the French CP. Duret complained, meant "...writing of articles..." (Ibid. p.54).

Evidently oblivious to the actual content of the discussion, the left-leaning Bordiga of Italy naively agreed that if the slogan of a Workers' Government meant a "...'revolutionary mobilization of the working class for the overthrow of bourgeois domination', we find that in

certain cases it might replace that of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In any case we would not be opposed to it..." (Ibid. p.56) unless it was used to conceal the need for armed struggle. Acebedo of Spain applauded the united front in general, but opposed the "Workers' Government" slogan in particular. Kolarov of Bulgaria credited the united front tactics with having helped the CP Bulgaria to win over "...government clerks and officials, the most inert proletarian section of the country..." (Ibid. p.77) but discounted the "Workers' Government" slogan since Bulgaria was too agricultural. And Domskey of Poland took what was essentially a centrist position, stating that "Workers' Governments" may indeed come into being but that the Comintern should not advocate them beforehand.

The spokesmen from the Right countered, in agreement with Radek, that failure to employ the "Workers' Government" slogan would lead to further isolation of the communist parties.

Graziadei of Italy cautioned that "...we cannot reject the Workers' government because it may for a short time take a parliamentary form..." (Ibid. p.59) and, ironically, cited the Bolsheviks' call for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly after the February revolution and the coexistence of the Reichstag and Soviets in Germany in support of his position. Of course, Graziadei added, "...the Communists must always teach the workers that a real workers' government can only be formed as a result of armed revolt against the bourgeoisie..." (Ibid. p.59).

Along the same lines, Marklevsky of the Polish CP discounted the entire discussion with the statement that "...I believe that philosophical speculation is out of place, for we have practical historical experience...", citing the Bolsheviks' call for power to the Soviets at a time when this would have meant "...a workers' government in which social-traitors participated..." (Ibid. p.60). Marklevsky is drawing from the Bolsheviks' experience only the small portion that suits him. In reality, the Bolsheviks called for power to the Soviets at a time in which social-traitors not only participated, but also dominated.

Zinoviev, who formulated a comprehensive view of "Workers' Government" that would hopefully placate every trend, presented the final arguments on the question. "Every working class government is not a proletarian government..." Zinoviev declared, and "...not every workers' government is a socialist government..." (Ibid. p.87). If Zinoviev had been a bit more forthright, he could have added that not every capitalist government is a bourgeois government, and that, in fact, some capitalist governments are "the dictatorship of the proletariat".

Deepening this basic thesis, Zinoviev listed four fundamental types of workers' governments.

First, "...a liberal workers' government, for example, the Australian Labor Government..." or a "...bourgeois workers' government, if one may so term them..." (Ibid.). Such a government may make things worse for capitalism, although composed of bourgeois liberals.

Second, a socialist government created by a Social Democratic parliamentary majority. "That would also be a workers' government, a Socialist government, with the word – Socialist—of course in inverted commas (Ibid.). In line with his favorable interpretation of liberal-labor governments, Zinoviev advised that even a Social Democratic government

might of worthy of "...a certain conditional support. One can imagine a Socialist government as being a first step in revolutionizing the situation..." (Ibid. p.88).

Third, "...the so-called coalition government; that is, a government in which Social Democrats, trade union leaders and even perhaps Communists take part..." (Ibid.). Such a government "...is not yet the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it is perhaps a starting point for the dictatorship..." (Ibid.). The transitory nature of this sort of government is explained by the possibility of kicking "...one Social-Democrat after another out of the government until the power is in the hands of the Communists..." (Ibid.). Zinoviev does not qualify this scheme to show whether such ousting would result in a communist parliament or at what stage Soviets might be introduced.

And fourth, "...a Communist workers' government, which is the true workers' government..." (Ibid.). To extricate himself from his earlier identification of "Workers' Governments" in general with proletarian dictatorship, Zinoviev states that "...this fourth possibility is a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat..." (Ibid.).

Thus we have three forms that are 'not truly' workers' governments, and one that is. If the former are not truly workers' government, it follows that they are, after all, only bourgeois or petty bourgeois governments. But since this cold class definition would deprive the Comintern of very useful avenues for mass propaganda, the class reality is simply suspended, in the same fashion as Lenin suspended it throughout 1917. The vacuum thus created is immediately filled with an imaginary, 'non-bourgeois' Workers' Government that becomes a legitimate and viable means to power.

Zinoviev supplemented his four varieties of Workers' Governments with the reminder that even a Soviet government "...does not always mean the dictatorship of the proletariat. Far from it..." (Ibid. p.90). The Soviets under Kerensky, for example, were not a proletarian dictatorship. With the word "Soviets" thus stripped of its revolutionary aura, Zinoviev thus makes the phrase "Workers' Government" more attractive.

And, in a final effort to appease the lefts, Zinoviev stated that "...the important thing is that we overthrow the bourgeoisie after which various forms of the workers' government may be established..." (Ibid.). This reassurance only muddles the issue more, since even according to his own theses at least three of the "various forms" are likely to occur prior to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

Towards the close of the Congress, Zinoviev gave a small demonstration of the potential rewards of the united front policy. Citing the election victory of a communist deputy in Motherwell, Scotland, Zinoviev stated that while "...we do not overestimate the value of parliamentarism, ...this victory has nonetheless a significance for our principles..." and is "...not an unimportant victory for the Communist International..." (Ibid. p.153). With such an optimistic attitude, it is no wonder Zinoviev went overboard when the KPD later had sufficient parliamentary strength to actually enter the government in Saxony and Thuringia.

Summing up the debate, Radek urged the Congress to accept the "Workers' Government" slogan and put off any further disputes as it its actual meaning. Reminiscent of Lenin's theoretical indifference in *Letters From Afar*, Radek warned that "...the masses would only be confused by theoretical calculations..." (Ibid. p.143). As it turned out, it was the commu-

nist intellectuals who suffered the greatest theoretical confusion throughout the following decade, until opportunist clarity was once more achieved at the Seventh Congress.

Ironically, it was Bukharin who came the closest to making the only theoretically valid statement during the entire Congress. Speaking of the Kautskyite distortion of Marxism and the failure of the Second International to deal with the question of the state, Bukharin observed that "...we should admit quite frankly that the Marxian theory, and even orthodox Marxism, did not investigate the question of the state quite thoroughly..." (Ibid. p.168). Had he pursued this line of reasoning, Bukharin might have begun to see what class motives lay behind this theoretical deficiency. But typical of the intelligentsia as a whole, his analysis concludes precisely where it should have begun.

Following the Fourth Congress, the slogan of "Workers' Government" was extended to the call for a "Workers' and Peasants' Government".

At the ECCI session of June, 1923, Zinoviev explained that although "...our Party can say with justice that...we do not recognize any bourgeois fatherland, nevertheless we defend the future of the country, the people, and the nation..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 3, #45, p.439). The Communist Party, Zinoviev continues, is not a narrow workers' party, "...but a Workers' Party that is a party of the whole people. This applies still more to the Peasant question..." (Ibid.). Since "...the peasants stand in no real opposition to the workers..." (Ibid.), the Party should make every effort to win them over. Therefore, Zinoviev concludes, "...our slogan of a Workers' Government must be extended to: 'A Workers' and Peasants' Government'..." (Ibid.). And just as the Workers' Government was in one sense a synonym for proletarian dictatorship. "...'A Workers' and Peasants' Government' is a circumlocution for the dictatorship of the proletariat..." (Ibid.)

As for the united front in general, Zinoviev remarked that "...formerly we wished to achieve this end over the heads of the leaders. We have convinced ourselves that it would not work..." (Ibid.). Successful united front tactics would therefore require direct negotiations with the Social Democratic leaders. Having convinced themselves of the viability of Social Democratic tactics via the "Workers' Government" slogan, it was only natural, from the standpoint of political opportunism, that the Comintern leaders would also convince themselves of the necessity for a closer working relationship with the Social Democrats themselves. With these formulations, the Comintern sought to embrace the urban petty bourgeoisie, represented by the Social Democratic leaders, labor aristocrats, intellectuals, etc., on the one hand, and the rural petty bourgeoisie on the other.

The "Workers' and Peasants' Government" slogan advocated by the ECCI was in all essentials a paraphrase of Lenin's revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasants. Formally, it identifies the interests of the mass of workers and rural middle class, but in practice attempts to win the upper petty bourgeoisie as well. By the same mechanism, the October revolution formally based itself on the proletariat and poor peasants, but in reality also initially relied on the kulaks.

The actual nature of this alliance was revealed by Bukharin, who, as an advocate of the rich peasants, declared that "...very closest regard must be paid to the interests of the poorest peasantry, and sometimes too to the wealthier. These 'concessions' are revolutionary and

opposition to them is opportunism in the worst sense..." (*The Communist*, #25, Summer 1923, p.12).

The first major test of the Comintern's new policy was provided by the Bulgarian events of June 1923.

The ruling Stambulinsky government represented the interests of the rural bourgeoisie and peasants, in opposition to both the urban bourgeoisie and working class. Since the Peasant Party had actively suppressed the communists, the Bulgarian CP took a neutral stand when the Stambulinsky government was overthrown in June by forces supporting the urban bourgeoisie.

To demonstrate the practical content of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" slogan, the ECCI denounced the neutrality of the Bulgarian CP and urged the Bulgarian communists to immediately ally with the remnants of the Peasant Party. As Radek stated during the June ECCI session, "...there is no doubt whatever that at the moment when the Peasant Party was fighting for its existence, we were given a historic opportunity to enter into a coalition with it, regardless of everything which separated us from it..." (*Communist International* #26-27 Summer 1923, p.96). This was precisely Lenin's attitude towards the S.R.'s and Mensheviks after July 1917, although he had earlier sworn never to ally with them due to their collusion with the Kerensky government in forcibly suppressing the Bolsheviks. The Bulgarian communists, Radek declared, "...lacked the audacity required for revolutionary struggle..." (Ibid.).

In order to redeem itself, the Bulgarian CP laid plans for an uprising in the fall against the new government. The proposed struggle was to be a general anti-fascist and anti-monopoly movement, based not only on a united front of labor, but unity of "the people" as a whole.

Dimitrov, who was one of the first within the Bulgarian Party to understand in what direction the ECCI was moving, wrote in the Party press that "...the masses and the working intelligentsia, as well as their political parties and economic organizations, have one vital common interest: with joint efforts to preserve their freedom, right, honour and life by curbing the rising bourgeois' reaction..." (DSW Vol. 1, p.127). This joint effort was to include "...all the working people—from workers, peasants, artisans, small tradesmen and clerks to physicians, lawyers, engineers, professors, retired officers and even generals, who make a living by their own labor..." (Ibid.), and was essential "...to guarantee the political freedom, national independence and peace of the country..." (Ibid. p.138).

Reminiscent of Lenin's declaration in *Impending Catastrophe* that there is no 'third way' between ordinary bourgeois dictatorship and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship. Dimitrov declared that "...there are two ways of settling the present political crisis: the capitalist solution of the crisis and the popular one, i.e. a solution indicated by the masses. There is no and there cannot be any middle road today..." (Ibid. p.135).

Thus the choice is not between capitalism and socialism, between bourgeois dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship. but between capitalism and something 'non-bourgeois'. The actual, petty bourgeois class content of the proposed revolution is thus obscured by the "popular", anti-monopoly statements on the one hand, and by portraying middle class law-

yers, doctors, and even generals as “working people”, on the other. The petty bourgeoisie is thereby absorbed into the working class, and the working class into “the people”.

After the planned uprising in September was decisively crushed, the Bulgarian communists disclaimed any responsibility. The CP. Dimitrov explained, was simply preparing for the elections, and was forced into struggle only because the masses were anxious for a fight. The left wing of the Party, incidentally, would later denounce Dimitrov’s claim as a patent lie. Besides, Dimitrov argued, “...the aim of the struggle was not to set up a dictatorship or to establish a Soviet regime in Bulgaria, as the present government maintains with wile, but to abolish the raging military dictatorship and to form a broad democratic government...” (Ibid. p.163).

As proof of the communists’ good intentions, Dimitrov pointed out that “...nowhere in the course of the struggle did the insurgents establish a Soviet regime in the districts where they had taken over local power. ...Only general revolutionary committees of the worker-peasant government were set up...” (Ibid.). It was simply “...a general movement of the people...” (Ibid.). Dimitrov thus prides himself on the fact that the communists acted to restrain the mass movement and restricted it to only the most democratic-reformist channels.

For the ECCI, the Bulgarians’ propaganda fulfilled every requirement of the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” slogan, and their efforts were lacking only in practical success. Dimitrov’s theoretical contributions, in particular, would be remembered, and most generously rewarded when the need for a comprehensive united front policy would again arise.

The meager results of the Bulgarian events were more than compensated for by the political opportunities in Germany.

In the spring of 1923, France occupied the German Ruhr region in order to insure Germany’s payment of the Versailles reparations. The German government responded with a policy of passive resistance that, in turn, forced the French to conduct an even more aggressive occupation. This situation was ideal for the ECCI’s united front tactics, since middle class aggravation over the presence of foreign troops and the burden of reparations payments was supplemented by disillusionment over the government’s inability to resolve the crisis. It was a golden opportunity for the KPD to extend its influence through alliance with the Social Democrats and by putting itself at the head of the struggle to defend German national pride.

In the summer of 1923, Thalheimer wrote that “...either the German working class must conduct a war of defense against French imperialism, and this can only be if the defensive war is fought with a revolutionary aim. Or the aim is not revolutionary, in which case the working class must have nothing to do with the defensive war...” (CI #25, Summer 1923, p.105). Outlining his plan of action, Thalheimer explained that “...the leadership is to be snatched from the bourgeoisie by the working class under Communist leadership. defeating or exhausting the external enemy, which the bourgeoisie is either not able or not willing to defeat...” (Ibid.).

Given the widespread anti-war sentiment in Europe following WWI, justifying defense of the fatherland in Germany was no small task. Thalheimer thus qualified his appeal to make defencism contingent upon a “revolutionary aim”, i.e. material relief to the workers and

middle class, which might or might not result in socialist revolution. Just as Lenin rationalized “revolutionary defencism” for the democratic revolution, dependent only on the formal exclusion of the bourgeoisie from the government, Thalheimer called for an anti-imperialist national struggle which might not restore Germany as an imperialist power but would “...save the nation in a different manner...” (Ibid. p.107).

Aside from the communists, the most active middle class advocates of national interests were the German fascists. Paralleling its united front efforts with the Social-Democrats, the ECCI decided to woo the rank and file fascists on the claim that the communists were, after all, the best defenders of the nation.

In his “Schlageter speech”, Radek mourned the death of a young patriotic fascist, faulting him only with having followed the wrong road to national salvation. Socialism, Radek proclaimed, “...was never merely a fight for a piece of bread for the industrial workers. It has always tried to be a burning torch showing the way for all sufferers...” (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 3 #51, p.527). Including, evidently, those suffering from nationalist sentiment.

United front propaganda around the Ruhr crisis was complemented by practical preparations for the creation of coalition “Workers’ Governments” in the provinces of Saxony and Thuringia. After some dispute within the ECCI, it was decided to enter communists into the new governments and, using their parliamentary and ministerial positions to pave the way, to later call for the creation of workers’ councils to assume power.

On October 12, 1923, the KPD entered the Saxon government in alliance with the left Social Democrats. The KPD had attempted to place a communist deputy as Minister of Interior, a position that would have given the Party at least formal control over the local militia, but due to disagreements with the Social Democrats settled for Assistant Secretary of the State Chancellery, a position with only limited parliamentary influence over the police. Two other KPD deputies assumed the positions of Minister of Finance and Minister of the Economy.

In Thuringia, two KPD deputies joined the government as Minister of Education and Minister of the Economy. However, as the KPD would learn shortly, possession of a few state Ministries did not mean possession of state power, and in fact in no way facilitated the Party’s extra-parliamentary preparations for struggle.

Despite the ECCI’s many resolutions on the illusory nature of parliamentary politics, it nonetheless viewed the Saxon and Thuringian “experiments” as valid means for taking power. In an article written during the course of the German events, Zinoviev observed that “...the entry of the German Communists into the Saxon government is worth while only

if it is accompanied by sufficient guarantees that the machinery of State power will really be made to serve the working class, that arming of tens of thousands of workers for the struggle...will be undertaken, that the mass expulsion of bourgeois officials...from the state administration will be begun... that economic measures of a revolutionary nature, resolutely striking at the bourgeoisie, will be adopted immediately..." (*CI #29*, December 1923, p.24). And, "...if the present Saxon government can really turn Saxony into a red country...then the revolutionary German proletariat will understand and support the Saxon experiment..." (*Ibid.* p.24-25). That is, if the parliamentary path to power actually works, we will support it.

Fearing that the situation in Saxony and Thuringia might get out of hand, the central government sent the Reichwehr troops into the provinces to maintain order. As Assistant Secretary of the State Chancellery, the KPD leader Brandler complained of the Reichwehr's occupation and to prove the KPD's peaceful intentions swore his allegiance to the German constitution. Everything was to proceed along peaceful democratic line, providing, of course, the bourgeoisie did not "break legality".

Meanwhile, the Party was feverishly arming its own members, to the exclusion of mass propaganda and organization for the coming fight. At the Chemnitz Conference of trade union, Social Democratic and KPD leaders in October 1923, Brandler proposed an immediate general strike against the Reichswehr occupation. Since the Party had not previously sought "sufficient guarantees" of even working class support, Brandler's proposal was rejected. The "Workers' Governments" were subsequently dispersed, the Party's armed struggle cancelled, and, except for sporadic fighting in Hamburg, the whole affair was brought to a peaceful conclusion.

On the eve of the governments' collapse, Zinoviev began retreating from his more optimistic formulations so that the blame for the impending disasters would fall on Brandler and Thalheimer instead of the ECCI.

Zinoviev now stated that the slogan of a "Workers' Government" did not in any way mean a parliamentary coalition, but all along was only a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. "Whoever lent any other meaning to the formula..." Zinoviev declared, "...whoever believed that such a government...could be formed by means of parliamentary combinations, entirely misunderstood the intention of the Communist International..." (*CI #29*, p.45). There were thus not four kinds of workers' governments, as Zinoviev had stated earlier, but only one.

Quoting his own words at the Fourth Congress, Zinoviev reminded the Germans that "...in order to bring the workers' government into power, it is first necessary to abolish the bourgeois government..." (*Ibid.*), and that "...only by way of exception...may it be possible for a brief period to set up a temporary 'workers' government, which will still not be the dictatorship of the proletariat..." (*Ibid.* p.46). In an attempt to dissociate himself from the KPD's "experiment", Zinoviev called the Saxon coalition only a "...feeble 'labor' government..." (*Ibid.* p.54). He was careful, however, to avoid mention of his other remarks at the Fourth Congress, which spoke so optimistically about the other varieties of "Workers' Governments" and which explained how a parliamentary combination could be a logical and possible means to power.

By the time the Saxon and Thuringian governments actually fell, Zinoviev had created “sufficient guarantees” of his own innocence in the matter to observe that “...the episode was beginning to deteriorate into a banal parliamentary coalition...” (Ibid. p.58) and to feign surprise that “...not a single communist thought of setting up Soviets...” (Ibid. p.59). And, anticipating the reaction within the Communist International against the united front policy as a whole, Zinoviev declared that “...our slogan now is ‘unity from below’...” (Ibid. p.58). The “Workers’ Government” would have to wait for a better day.

E. The Fifth Congress - 1924

The debate within the Comintern immediately before and during the Fifth Congress centered on responsibility for the German events and the proper definition of “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”.

Remmele of the KPD admitted that the Party “...carried out with excessive zeal...” (CI, #2, Spring 1924, p.29) its plans for an armed uprising, to the detriment of necessary mass work. The KPD not only failed to organize rank and file workers, but “...we even went out of our way in those days to stifle deliberately any desire that was manifested by the proletariat to engage in mass actions, strikes, and so on...[that] would weaken the ‘decisive fight’...” (Ibid.). The entry of communist deputies into the government “...did not make the masses of Social Democratic workers more militant, but on the contrary, had a lulling effect on them...” (Ibid. p.33). The Saxon “experiment” thus “...turned out to be a low parliamentary comedy from its first hour to its miserable end...” (Ibid. p.35). Remmele therefore advised that “...the armed preparation, the armed partial action as a method of class struggle must be added to our previous work...” (*Lessons of the German Events*, ECCI Session January 1924 London Caledonian Press, 1924, p.27).

Brandler, on the other hand, complained that the ECCI had ordered the KPD into the Saxon government, even though the Party leaders had not made adequate preparations. Once in the government, the KPD Ministers could not make use of their positions since, according to Brandler, they were unfamiliar with the bureaucracy. Complicating matters was the fact that the Saxon workers tended to assume that the replacement of a Social Democratic government by a coalition with communists would naturally lead to a purely communist government “...without the necessity for severe and bloody fights...” (Ibid. p.16). This unfortunate interpretation “...was a by-product of our policy, but that of course could not be avoided...” (Ibid.). By this, Brandler means that since the KPD was arming only its own cadre, and not the masses of workers, the rank and file could not know what the Party actually planned.

Shifting the blame onto the German Rights, Zinoviev stated, “...instead of a revolutionary strategy we had a non-revolutionary parliamentary cooperation with the ‘left’ Social Democrats. The special assertion of the Communist ministers that they were responsible only to the Landtag and to the constitution, was scarcely suited to destroy democratic illusions...” (Ibid. p.71).

In addition to such parliamentary excesses, the blame also fell on the left Social Democrats who, in Zinoviev's revised view, were "...even more dangerous than the right wing of the Social Democratic Party leaders..." (Ibid. p.73).

This love-hate relationship with the Social Democrats is, as we have seen, a consistent theme throughout Bolshevik and Comintern history. When the opportunity arises, the Marxist-Leninists do everything in their power to unite all the various middle class socialist trends for the common good, which, the Marxist-Leninists hope, will put themselves in the leading role. When for one or another reason, this alliance falls apart, the Marxist-Leninists, like jilted lovers, bitterly denounce their partners and swear off any further amorous adventures. But, really having too much in common to call it quits for good, the Marxist-Leninists eventually recover their affections, and begin courting the Social Democrats once again. Although relations with the Social Democrats after the German events would be strained through the remainder of the 1920's, the Comintern would make up for lost time during the 1930's.

Part of the criticism of the KPD's Right wing involved the charge of intellectualism against Brandler and Thalheimer, their lack of contact with the rank and file and their parliamentary bias revealed during their ministerial careers. At the January 1924 ECCI session, Zinoviev asked why Remmele and Thalmann, two working class members of the Party who had opposed the Rights, had not been elevated within the Central Committee. But in order to stifle any anti-intellectual backlash, Zinoviev cautioned that the need to elevate workers within the Party "...by no means implies that we can dispense with intellectuals—that would be demagogy. We need all our comrades from the intelligentsia, but we must once and for all adopt a firm basis..." (Ibid. p.48). This warning was especially necessary, since if "demagogic" hostility towards the intelligentsia got out of hand, it would immediately threaten the entire Comintern hierarchy, including Zinoviev himself.

Setting the tone of the impending Congress, Zinoviev wrote in May, 1924, that although Brandler's policy in Saxony and Thuringia was "...opportunist and wrong..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #29, May 1924, p.284) the KPD was still making significant gains. These gains, in the form of electoral victories for KPD deputies, showed that "...there is no way out for Germany except by a proletarian revolution. This is what the elections have shown..." (Ibid. p.285). Thus while formally condemning the KPD's parliamentary excesses, Zinoviev maintained his fundamental belief in parliamentary politics as a vehicle for the revolutionary sentiment of the masses.

Zinoviev's praise for the KPD's parliamentary successes was tempered only by Piatnitsky's periodic observations on the actual state of the major communist parties. In a discussion article for the Fifth Congress, Piatnitsky wrote that all the Comintern sections "...do not differ in respect to form of organization from the Social Democratic parties...notwithstanding the fact that the aims of the Social Democrats and the Communists are profoundly different..." (*CI*, #4, Summer 1924, p.100). The Social Democrats operate on the basis of parliamentary politics, "...therefore their party is built up on the basis of residential electoral constituencies..." (Ibid.). The communists, on the other hand, are supposed to be a revolutionary, not parliamentary, party. But "...because the Communists have adopted the Social Democratic form of organization rather than shift the center of gravity of all party work to the factories, the Communist Parties are unable to cement organizationally their enormous in-

fluence in the working class..." (Ibid.). In reality, the communist parties were based on electoral line since, aside from revolutionary catch phrases, their aims and methods were identical to the Social Democrats.

Polemical disputes at the Fifth Congress revolved around the actual definition of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" slogan and to what extent the German events had been products of or deviations from the decisions of the Fourth Congress.

Because the Fourth Congress definition had been phrased in deliberately ambiguous terms, Zinoviev could claim that it was really only a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the KPD Right wing and their ECCI sponsor, Radek, were guilty of deviations in principle. But at the same time, Zinoviev was careful not to eliminate its parliamentary interpretation altogether, since the electoral victories of the KPD might once more allow for a coalition government. While thus taking a generally 'left' line, Zinoviev perpetuated the Fourth Congress ambiguity to allow for future options.

Not surprisingly, Zinoviev's supporters in the various parties quickly adapted themselves to his duplicitous definition. Trient, of the CP France, proclaimed "...complete agreement with Zinoviev. The Labor government is a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat intelligible to all workers; it is a synonym for the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat..." and, "...we are against the Saxonization of the united front..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #42, July 1924, p.416). The Workers' Government is thus identical to proletarian dictatorship. a harmless paraphrase. And simultaneously, it was identical to the beginning of the proletarian dictatorship, i.e. may be a form of parliamentary coalition leading to proletarian dictatorship. Trient and Zinoviev's other supporters, however, studiously downplayed this second aspect. The primary task of the moment was to discredit the Rights, something that could only be done by emphasizing the "synonym" interpretation.

Seeing that Zinoviev's definition still left room for various parliamentary maneuvers, Rossi of Italy proposed that the "Workers' Government" be interpreted strictly as "...the direct seizure of political power by the proletariat. If we cannot have an exact definition in this sense, it would be better to reject the slogan..." (Ibid. p.418). Going even further, Bordiga proposed that both the united front and "Workers' Government" be dropped, since not even the Comintern itself understood what "Workers' Government" actually meant (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #49, July 1924, p.502).

Radek attempted to counter this anti-parliamentary reaction and Zinoviev's maneuvering by reminding the Congress that it was in fact Zinoviev himself who had previously proposed parliamentary combinations. Citing Zinoviev's first draft on the united front for the Fourth Congress, Radek pointed to Zinoviev's statement that "...when we are defending the united front, communists must not hesitate under certain conditions, to form a government in conjunction with non-communist parties..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #42, July 1924, p.419), including Social Democrats and even Christian socialists.

But even this evidence did not save Radek from further abuse. Schneller of the Comintern's youth section replied that "...it is clear from some parts of Radek's speech that he looks upon the Social Democrats as a workers' party, with whom coalition for a revolutionary workers' government is possible. Such conceptions might lead us to revisionism of Communism..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #47, July 1924, p.479). Of course, Schneller had missed the

point. The comradely attitude towards Social Democracy and the coalition “Workers’ Government” were not solely Radek’s inventions, but had been maintained in one or another form throughout the theoretical development of Marxism-Leninism. The revision of working class communism had already occurred.

In his concluding speech, Zinoviev simply pretended that he had never advocated coalitions in any form, but by “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” had only meant to find a more popular expression for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Covertly repudiating his previous advice to the Bulgarians, Zinoviev asked “...how can it be asserted that the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government is based on a coalition with the workers’ and peasants’ parties, if we know that in the whole wide world there is not a single peasant party that is really revolutionary...” (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #52, July 1924, p.543). As for a coalition labor government, Zinoviev declared that “...a real workers’ government...will never be attained through a coalition of ‘all labor parties’...” (Ibid. p.544). But immediately after excluding coalitions, Zinoviev speculated as to whether “...in Germany the communist government would include part of the social-democracy? In my opinion this might happen...” (Ibid.).

The final Theses and Resolutions of the Congress circumvented any formal repudiation of the Fourth Congress by, on the one hand, adhering to Zinoviev’s claim that the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” was only a synonym for proletarian dictatorship. and, on the other, introducing a diversionary argument to further confuse the question of transitional forms.

The theses declare that all attempts to interpret united front tactics in general “...as a political coalition with counter-revolutionary Social-Democratic parties are opportunism and are repudiated by the Communist International...” (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #62, August 1924, p.651). Likewise, “...opportunist elements in the Communist International have endeavored to distort the watchword of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government by interpreting it as a government ‘within the framework of bourgeois democracy’, as a political alliance with Social-Democracy. The Fifth World Congress of the Communist International categorically rejects such an interpretation...” (Ibid.). This bold declaration was made despite the fact that it was the ECCI, not isolated “opportunist elements”, who initially gave the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” that interpretation and who, on that basis, ordered the KPD to play out its parliamentary comedy.

The diversion was provided by the theses’ statement that “...in order to create a real labor or Workers’ and Peasants’ government, it is necessary first of all to overthrow the bourgeoisie...” (Ibid. p.652). But overthrowing the bourgeoisie in the Comintern’s view meant, as it had meant for Marx, Engels and Lenin, eliminating the bourgeoisie from the government, from its strictly formal positions of power. And this goal could as easily be achieved through a parliamentary coalition as through the neo-parliamentary Soviets. The phrase served a useful purpose, however, since the workers would naturally be attracted to the idea of overthrow, and the Comintern could later interpret it to mean the formal exclusion of bourgeois political parties from a parliamentary coalition government. That was, in fact, precisely the way Lenin had rationalized his call for a ‘non-bourgeois’ coalition government prior to October 1917, that was subsequently implemented under the catch-phrase “dictatorship of the proletariat”.

The transitional interpretation of “Workers’ Government” was also quietly affirmed in the Programme of the Communist International. In its theses on transitional demands, the Programme states that rejection of partial and transitional slogans “...is compatible with the tactical principles of Communism, for it unavoidably leads the party to passivity and destroys its connection with the masses...” (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 4 #69, September 1924, p.762) In line with this, “...the tactics of the united front and the slogan of the Workers’ and Peasants’ government form the most important section of the tactics of the Communist Party during the whole period of the conquest of the masses for Communism...” (Ibid.). Thus the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” slogan is placed, not in the category of final aims, but as an integral part of the Comintern’s transitional demands.

In the years between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, declining opportunities for significant parliamentary advances and further failures of the Comintern’s existing united front efforts led to a more sustained ‘left’ interpretation of Workers’ Government.

In 1925, Manuilsky wrote that although the slogan “...was compromised in the eyes of the German working class by the Saxon experiment...” (*Communist International* #10, 1925, p.63) it should be retained. But, “...we should point out in our propaganda for this slogan, that this in no way means an ‘entrance hall’ to the proletarian dictatorship. but that it is a synonym for this dictatorship...” (Ibid.).

And at the Sixth ECCI session in May, 1926, the ECCI stated that in France, the “...Workers’ and Peasants’ government must be set against every form of coalition government, socialist or otherwise, which does not attack the foundation of private property and which is content to remain within the framework of capitalist society....” (*Inprecorr*, V. 6 #40, May 1926, p.633). Further, “...the Party must combine its agitation for this slogan with a programme of revolutionary measures going beyond the limits of capitalist society...” (Ibid.).

Even with this more radical-sounding thesis, however, the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” was not simply juxtaposed to parliamentary coalitions in general, but only to those which do not intend to eventually go beyond ordinary parliamentarism. Thus a “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” based on a parliamentary coalition plus a programme of radical legislation after the example of the *Communist Manifesto*, is still theoretically accommodated. This option was such an integral facet of the Comintern’s parliamentary prejudice that it would survive the storm of ‘leftist’ catch phrases of the Sixth Congress, and emerge with new vitality at the Seventh.

F. The Sixth Congress – 1928

The Sixth Congress introduced the “Third Period” in Comintern policy. Under the slogan of “class against class”, the Congress launched a polemical offensive against the Social- Democrats, rationalized the accelerated collectivization of agriculture in the USSR, and elaborated comprehensive tactics against the threat of imperialist war on Russia.

In line with this tactical turn, the new Programme adopted by the Congress presented more militant theses on Soviet power and, while not repudiating united front tactics in general, omitted the troublesome formula of the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government”.

The Programme affirms that “...the conquest of power by the proletariat does not mean peacefully ‘capturing’ the ready-made bourgeois state machinery by means of a parliamentary majority...” (*Programme of the Communist International*, Workers Library Publishers, NYC, 1936, p.36) and calls for “...new organs of proletarian power...” (Ibid. p.37). Going even further to the left than Lenin, the Programme declares that the Soviet state is “...the rule of a single class—the proletariat...” (Ibid) and that it “...must not adopt the viewpoint of sharing power in any form...” (Ibid. p.49).

On the other hand, this strict interpretation is given a more liberal content by the statement that the proletariat “...holds power not for the purpose of perpetuating it, not for the purpose of protecting narrow craft and professional interests, but for the purpose of uniting the backward and scattered rural proletariat, the semi-proletariat and toiling peasants...” (Ibid. p.37), including, as stated elsewhere in the Programme, the urban petty bourgeoisie. Likewise, the Programme affirms Lenin’s view of the ‘dictatorial’ measures to be used against the bourgeoisie, regarding the “...deprivation of political rights and partial restriction of liberty as temporary measures...” (Ibid.).

As for the structure of Soviet power, the Programme cites as characteristic features “...the right of electing and recalling delegates, the combination of the executive with the legislative power, the electoral system based on production...” (Ibid. p.38). The classic Commune measures of workmen’s wages for officials and abolition of the standing army are omitted altogether. Nevertheless, the three Soviet electoral features mentioned are credited with marking “...the sharp difference that exists between the bourgeois-parliamentary republic and the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat...” (Ibid.).

Given that the right of recall is essentially a bourgeois-democratic reform, and that in practice executive and legislative functions were indeed separate in the USSR, the “sharp difference” in reality reduces to election by productive units, a system that, after all, eventually divides into territorial election districts standard to most democracies.

The theses on the treatment of the various social classes under Soviet power are abstracted from the Russian experience on every significant point. The big bourgeoisie and landowners are to be deprived of rights, but only as a transitional measure. Although this class is to be suppressed, “...the organizing skill of a certain section of these strata may be utilized...” (Ibid. p.48), i.e. cooperative sections of the old bureaucracy may be spared, providing state power is adequately consolidated. Likewise, every encouragement must be given to neutral sections of the technical intelligentsia, “...and especially to those that are friendly towards the proletarian revolution...” (Ibid.). Since “encouragement” means special privileges, higher salaries, etc., it is understandable that the Programme would omit “workmen’s wages” as a feature of Soviet power.

The Programme recommends a policy of neutralization, i.e. laissez faire, towards the middle peasants, and a policy of merciless suppression towards “...the slightest opposition on the part of the village bourgeoisie...” (Ibid. p.49). Thus, the village bourgeoisie is to be accommodated as long as it offers no active resistance. This generosity extends to the urban

petty bourgeoisie, who should be won over "...by leaving to them their small property and permitting a certain measure of free trade...". In fact, the proletariat should help them "...in all sorts of ways in the struggle against all and every form of capitalist oppression..." (Ibid. p.50), i.e. the oppression of the banks, high credit rates, monopoly competition, etc.

Although based on the Russian example, these guidelines are laid down for future Soviet governments in even industrially advanced countries. The compromising measures which were formerly justified on the grounds of Russia's economic backwardness (cooperation with agreeable capitalists, indulgence of the old bureaucracy and specialists, suspension of the principle of workmen's wages for officials, compromise with the rich peasants, etc.) are now generalized as necessary tactics for any Soviet revolution.

As for transitional forms to the proletarian dictatorship, the Programme divides the capitalist world into three basic categories that necessitate different stages of struggle.

In the most advanced countries, "...the fundamental political demand of the program is direct transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat..." (Ibid. p.55). The United States, Britain, Germany, etc., are thus ineligible for transitional forms. Countries with mixed semi-feudal and capitalist economies, such as Spain, Portugal, Poland and the Balkans, and which lack basic democratic reforms do qualify, however, and may require a "...process of transition from the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat..." (Ibid.). That is, these unfortunate countries may have to repeat word for word the entire Russian experience. Although the Programme does not elaborate, it must be assumed that the democratic dictatorship in such countries would also occur in the Soviet form. And finally, the colonial and semi-colonial countries must wage a two-fold struggle "...against feudalism and the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and ... fight against foreign imperialism and for national independence..." (Ibid. p.56). In a separate resolution on colonial revolutions, the Programme calls for the establishment of "...the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry on a Soviet basis...", or, if there is no proletariat, the development of "...people's (peasant) Soviets..." (Ibid. p.58).

With these theses, the Comintern returned to what Radek at the Fourth Congress had obliquely referred to as the "stubborn doctrinaire fashion" of the first three Congresses. In terms, however, nothing had changed. If the resolutions on Soviet power at the First, Second, Third and Sixth Congresses seemed clearer and caused fewer disputes than the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" slogan of the Fourth and Fifth, it was simply because these formulas were presented in more abstract terms. In practice, however, the theses on Soviet power entailed all the maneuvering, parliamentary coalitions, transitional steps and accommodation of the Social Democrats that had been attributed to "Workers' and Peasants' Government" and denounced as opportunism.

The more orthodox Marxist-Leninist line of the Sixth Congress would remain in effect for approximately five years. During that time, the failure of the "class against class" policy to produce palpable results eventually led to a kindlier attitude towards Social Democracy and a wholesale return to united front and transitional government tactics.

That the turn to more militant phrases did not in any way imply a more cautious attitude towards parliamentary politics is shown by the ECCI's reaction to the electoral advances of the KPD. Citing the 35% increase in votes for the KPD during the 1930 elections, the ECCI

enthusiastically declared “...Does not this brilliant success of the Communist Party...testify to the fact that the masses are rapidly becoming revolutionary! ...” (*CI*, Vol. 7 #12, 1930, p.247). And, “...A revolutionary crisis is maturing in Germany; this is the chief indication given by the elections...” (*Ibid.* p.248).

In light of the slogans the KPD employed in its parliamentary work, the electoral successes of the Party are not difficult to understand. In the spring of 1931, Thalmann, on behalf of the Central Committee, called for “...the social and national emancipation of the German people...” (*CI*, Vol. 8 #6, March 1931, p.146). In a truly creative application of Marxism in this context, Thalmann proposed that this emancipation be oriented around the slogan of a “People’s Revolution”, and, paraphrasing the now discredited Zinoviev, proclaimed that “...the slogan of the People’s Revolution is only a synonym for the proletarian Socialist Revolution... The Party must explain and instill among the widest masses the character of the proletarian Socialist Revolution as a true People’s Revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat in the sense of Marx and Engels...” (*Ibid.* p.147).

Of course, the catch phrase of a “people’s revolution” is as old as Marxism itself. Thalmann’s unique contribution lies in the fact that while Marx, Engels and Lenin alternately used the term to describe bourgeois-democratic and only occasionally proletarian movements, qualified by the class make-up of ‘The People’, Thalmann applies it to both simultaneously. The theoretical union of the national democratic and socialist revolutions is thus achieved one stroke.

At the same time, Thalmann was careful to explain that, in line with the Sixth Congress stand, “...now as before, Social Democracy and particularly the ‘left’ Socialists, represent the main obstacle to the revolutionary emancipation struggle of the German proletariat...” (*Ibid.* p.148). Thus his formulation is to the Right in relation to the state, but to the Left in relation to Social Democracy. The KPD would reserve the “People’s Revolution” for itself alone.

In the spring of 1933, Thalmann further proposed the slogan “...for the struggle for the workers’ and peasants’ republic...” (*CI*, Vol. 10 #1, January 1933, p.31). This resurrection of the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” slogan was accompanied by a broader united front tactic towards Social-Democracy, although still restricted to “...the lower units of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union organizations...” (*Ibid.*). Thalmann claimed that this tactic was still only a united front from below, but the fact that overtures were being made to Social-Democratic functionaries objectively place it as a united front from above maneuver.

The KPD as well as the Comintern were anxious to conceal their readiness to conclude united front agreements with the Social Democrats, since this was the proposal that Trotsky had previously made. In order to repudiate Trotsky, it was necessary for the time being to repudiate the united front from above. As Thalmann wrote of Trotsky’s proposals, “...This policy would mean that we would abandon our correct Bolshevik policy, and adopt one which would be even much worse than that which manifested itself most crassly in 1923, in the German party, in the policy of the Brandlerites, in the question of the false theory of the state, the erroneous policy of the united front, and the policy of a bloc with the

'left' Social-Democrats..." (Ibid. p.36). But within a few months, the Comintern itself would lead the return to the 'false theory of the state and the erroneous policy of the united front'.

The formal return to united front from above tactics was initiated by united front appeals to the Social Democrats published simultaneously in *l'Humanite* and *Pravda* during March 1933.

In an article on the Social Democrats' response, Piatnitsky wondered aloud at the Social Democrats' confusion over the ECCI appeal, and reminded the Social Democrats that the ECCI had proposed the same united front in 1922. For diplomatic purposes, Piatnitsky did not bother to analyze the practical outcome of the 1922 tactics or cite the Comintern's previous denunciation of them. As for the Social-Democrats' demand that the Comintern cease its polemics, Piatnitsky wrote "...the Communist International replies: 'Yes, but only on condition that the Social-Democrats observe the conditions of the agreements concerning concrete struggle in actual deeds, and only for the duration of the struggle'. And the workers understand this..." (*CI*, Vol. 10 #8, May 1933, p.255).

Whether or not the workers actually understood what was going on, the Comintern hoped they would go along with it, since the continued split among the socialist intellectuals was ruining the prospects of both the communists and Social-Democrats and was allowing yet another middle class fraction, the Nazi's, to get the upper hand.

Although the Comintern was willing to abandon its intransigence towards the Social Democrats, it was not yet willing to abandon its hope that the political crisis in Europe would still deliver a revolution. Social-Democracy was faulted for having restrained the mass movement after WWI via democratic reforms, but such reforms were illusory since "...political democracy contradicts the system of monopolist capitalism, whose political expression is reaction and violence both in home and foreign affairs..." (*CI*, Vol. 10 #9, May 1933, p.283).

The Social-Democratic leaders, wrote Bela Kun, were offering a false choice between fascism or democracy, when in reality the choice was between bourgeois dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship (*CI*, Vol. 10 #10, June 1933, p.349). Schwab of the KPD wrote that many Social-Democrat workers were confused and that "...perhaps the majority of them are convinced, even today, that one should fight for democracy. But the best elements among them are prepared to struggle..." (Ibid. p.355). And Heckert, who had been Minister of Finance in the Saxon government in 1923, wrote that the German workers could not go "...back to bankrupt bourgeois-democracy which has of necessity developed into fascist dictatorship; but forward to the proletarian dictatorship which guarantees the broadest and freest democracy for all toilers..." (*CI*, Vol. 10 #12, June 1933, p.416).

Similar views were expressed throughout 1933. The coming struggle was not to be simply anti-fascist, but anti-capitalist as well. Against the Social-Democratic proposals that Russia ally with France against German and Italian fascism, the Comintern stated that "...the revolutionary proletariat does not support either the German-Italian or the French bloc; but fights against both..." (*CI*, Vol. 10 #11, June 1933, p.367).

Indicative of just how rapidly the 'objective situation' was developing, Russia did in fact conclude a mutual assistance pact with France the following year. In November, the KPD began extending its united front appeals to include not only Social-Democrats, but

“...Christian workers, ...the non-Party workers and workers who have been deceived by the National Socialists...”, and restated its call for “...the proletarian revolution, the only real people’s revolution...” (*CI*, Vol. 10 #22, November 1933, p.777). The only hint at this time that the Comintern might stop short of “proletarian revolution” was given in an article by Bela Kun, who wrote that the victory of fascist tendencies “...was not inevitable. Whether or not the bourgeoisie succeeded in establishing a fascist State apparatus, depended on the working class...” (*CI*, Vol. 10 #12, June 1933, p.425). Thus while the Comintern affirmed Lenin’s thesis on the inevitable tendency of imperialism towards extreme political reaction, it also allowed the possibility that this tendency could be restrained by mass activity. This line would be elaborated in full at the Seventh Congress.

The last remnants of the Sixth Congress line were gathered at the XIII Plenum of the ECCI in December 1933. The ECCI chastised the Social-Democrat leaders for their opportunist support of “...the ‘sacred unity of the nations’ under the slogan of ‘defense of democracy’...” (*XIII Plenum ECCI*, Modern Books LTD, London, 1933, p.15), and resolved that “...there is no way out of the general crisis of capitalism other than the one shown by the October Revolution...” (Ibid. p.23). Therefore, “...the chief slogan of the Communist International is: Soviet Power...” (Ibid. p.25). On the other hand, since the communist parties might be too weak to actually establish Soviet governments, “...the possibility of a fascist-democratic see-saw is by no means precluded...” (Ibid. p.38). This possibility was not only not precluded; it soon became the Comintern’s operative reality. Consequently, the Comintern shortly abandoned the Soviet power slogan and threw its weight on the democratic side.

Although the Comintern claimed that many Social-Democrat functionaries were becoming radicalized and were thus moving closer to the communist position, the Comintern itself was in fact becoming more openly reformist and thus drifted to Social-Democratic positions. This turn did not occur without considerable confusion within the Comintern and its parties.

In a polemical article against fellow ECCI member Losovsky, Piatnitsky wrote that Losovsky was wrong in asserting that “...fascism can be destroyed only when the dictatorship of the proletariat is set up. ... It is inadvisable to do this, because this is only true when we speak of fascism in general and not of fascism in those countries where the fascists are still fighting for power. The united front in such countries can prevent them coming to power...” (*CI*, Vol. 11 #17, September 1934, p.582). By way of informing his readers that new line was in the making, Piatnitsky concluded that “...the proposal made by Comrade Losovsky resembles the old methods...” (Ibid.). That is, the ‘old’ methods of the XIII Plenum some nine months before. Thus at this point Soviet power is confirmed only for countries in which fascism had already triumphed. In the remaining countries, a third way between fascism and socialism was still possible, and although Piatnitsky does not spell it out, it could only be the “defense of democracy” for which the Social Democrats were so recently denounced.

Among the many ironies of the united front policy during this time, the debate between the Social Democrats and communists over the terms of the united front agreements involved something of a role-reversal between the two parties. The Social Democrats were agreeable to joint action, but insisted that the communist parties cease their polemical attacks. Responding to this demand, Bela Kun assured the Social Democrats that the communists were willing to make such concessions, although the right to polemicize one’s views was an

essential part of “working class democracy”. Thus the Social Democrats, the foremost champions of pure democracy, nevertheless insisted on violating democracy, and the communists, notoriously anti-democratic in the Social Democrats’ view, became the new champions.

While agreeing to the Social-Democrats’ anti-democratic conditions, Kun assured anyone who cared that “...we communists will never abandon our principles and tactics—at any price...” (*CI*, Vol. 11 #14, July 1934, p.456). Concessions were in order only because the united front was “...a great and serious matter, a sacred matter...” (*Ibid.*). As the Seventh Congress showed, the more concessions the Comintern made, the more sacred the united front became.

G. The Seventh Congress – 1935

By January 1935, appeals for unity of action with the Social Democrats had matured to appeals for organizational unity.

In a discussion article for the Seventh Congress, the KPD declared that it now aimed “...at unification in the process of the joint struggle with all our Social-Democrat class comrades and groups of them, on the basis of the program of the Communist International...” (*CI*, Vol. 12 #2, January 1935, p.72). To make this appeal more palatable to the Social Democrats, the Seventh Congress subsequently modified its program to the most basic points of agreement. In the Comintern’s view, the long-standing split in the socialist movement was gradually being overcome through a complete ideological and organizational merger of Social Democracy and communism.

This inter-Party collaboration was supplemented on an international scale by the mutual assistance agreement between France and the USSR. In addition to establishing the terms for mutual military defense, the Franco-Soviet pact initiated what for the Comintern would become a policy of “defense of the fatherland” for bourgeois-democratic countries. The joint communiqué issued after the agreement was signed states that neither country should “... allow their means of national defense to grow feeble...” and that “...in this connection Stalin understands and fully approves the national defense policy carried out by France to maintain her armed forces at the level necessary to her security...” (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 15 #21, May 1935, p.555-556).

For diplomatic purposes, of course, a simple statement on the need for a strong national defense would have sufficed. But by emphasizing that Stalin himself understood and fully approved of French militarism, the communists hoped to persuade the French workers to take part in, or at least not interfere with, the defense of French imperialist interests. Until this was spelled out in programmatic form later on, the French communists pretended that Russian support for French armaments in no way contradicted the Party’s declared aim to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Following the Seventh Congress, however, the deception was dropped and the CP France became one of the foremost advocates of national defensism and national unity.

The line introduced at the Seventh Congress represented a retreat only in that the formal call for Soviet power was replaced by various transitional government slogans. This substitution was not an abandonment of Marxist-Leninist principles, since those principles already allowed for a variety of parliamentary and democratic combinations as intermediate steps towards the final goal. Thus, just as the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” slogan of the Fourth Congress was theoretically in tune with Lenin’s ‘non-bourgeois’ proposals during 1917, the United Front and Popular Front Government slogans of the Seventh followed established formulations which, though suffering from bad reputations, had been maintained as viable alternatives.

To rationalize the contradiction between the Sixth and Seventh Congresses, Dimitrov asserted that the Comintern had not arbitrarily changed its line, but that objective conditions had radically changed. He therefore advised the Congress that the Comintern should “...suitably reconstruct our policies and tactics in accordance with the changing situation and the changes occurring in the world labor movement...” (*VII Congress Report*, FLPH, Moscow, 1939, p.191).

Explaining the content of this changing situation, Manuilsky subsequently wrote that “...now the proletariat in the majority of countries are not faced with the question of bourgeois democracy or proletarian dictatorship, but with that of bourgeois democracy or fascism. Now, the slogan of bourgeois democracy is a step forward by comparison to fascism...” (*CI*, Vol. 12 #21-22, November 1935, p.1476). That was precisely what the Social Democrats had been saying all along.

To circumvent the fact that both democracy and fascism are only forms of the same type of state, a fact that the Comintern had previously used to expose the Social Democrats’ pro-democracy stance, the Congress simply omitted any discussion of the state in general. Democracy as a form of bourgeois dictatorship evidently no longer existed. Instead, there was only ‘pure democracy’ in the Kautskyian sense, democracy worthy of support and defense, and collaboration.

The Congress could not, however, ignore the fact that the new line indeed seemed out of place compared to the ‘left’ phrases of the Third Period. To dispel this uncanny sensation, Dimitrov was forced to repeatedly denounce any “...sectarian ‘sticking to principle’...” (*VII Congress Report*, p.186). Likewise, Gottwald of the Czech CP impatiently declared that “...if you like us to call this ‘defense of democracy’, very well then! We do not wish to quarrel over what it should be called...” (*Ibid.* p.321). It did not matter what it was called, as long as it was carried out in practice. Gottwald concluded that “...we shall defend the republic against fascism and call upon all true socialists, democrats and republicans to form a united front for joint struggle...” (*Ibid.* p.322). As Pieck, a leader of the KPD, succinctly stated, “...we communists are the real defenders of the national interests of the people...” (*Ibid.* p.4).

Defense of democracy and national interests was defined by the Congress as a multi-class collaboration among “the people”, excluding only the most openly reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie. The Social Democrats had fulfilled this task on the grounds that the defense and progressive expansion of democracy would inevitably lead to a greater economic equality and consequently to socialism. The communists in their more militant moments

had previously denounced this view, on the grounds that the entire democratic apparatus was a fraud, that state power rested not in democratic institutions but in the military, and that therefore class collaboration and parliamentarism would be replaced by class struggle and Soviet power.

To maintain its identity as a more left, working class organization, the Comintern had to somehow preserve the superiority of Soviet power, and at the same time make ordinary parliamentarism more agreeable to the active workers. If it admitted (or if the Comintern theoreticians themselves had recognized) that the parliamentary United Front government, like the “Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” before it, was simply a variation of Lenin’s “revolutionary-democratic dictatorship”, then the fundamental identity between Soviet power and parliamentarism might inadvertently be exposed. And if that was exposed, in turn, the fundamental unity between Social Democratic intellectuals and communist intellectuals, and in fact all middle class socialist trends, might also be shown up. The theoreticians of the Seventh Congress were therefore careful to draw only limited parallels between the United Front and earlier transitional government slogans, and at the same time assert that Soviet power was still something qualitatively different.

Manuilsky, for example, wrote that “...neither in 1905 nor in the years of reaction, nor in 1917, did the Bolsheviks advance the slogan of a government of the united front, still less of the people’s front...” (*CI*, Vol. 12 #23-24 December 1935 p.1588) But, according to Manuilsky, conditions had changed: “...in transferring the experience of the tactics of the Russian Bolsheviks to the present working class movement, a ‘supplement’ must be made to the changed social and political situation...” (*Ibid.* p.1590).

Actually, no real supplement was necessary in theory. Dimitrov came close to admitting this by stating that the October revolution itself was a sort of ‘post-revolutionary’ united front government, since it included the Left Socialist Revolutionaries (*VII Congress Report* p.174). Similarly, the entry of the KPD into the Saxon government in 1923 “...was no mistake in itself...” (*Ibid.* p.177), though it should have carried out more revolutionary measures. It was Lenin himself, Dimitrov reminded the Congress, who advised the Comintern to seek out transitional forms, and “...it may be in a number of countries the united front government will prove to be one of the most important transitional forms...” (*Ibid.* p.178).

The question of whether transitional governments must occur in a Soviet form or through a parliamentary combination was thus resolved once again in favor of parliamentary coalitions. The unnecessary confusion within the Comintern over this issue stemmed from the fact that although Lenin himself had at one time advocated a united front government based on a coalition of communists, Social Democrats and S.R.’s and had postulated the co-existence of Soviets and a Constituent Assembly, he later revised this scheme to include only left elements of the Social Democrats and S.R.’s and rejected the Constituent Assembly outright. It was on this basis that the supposedly anti-parliamentary character of the Soviets was established, and with it one of the formal dividing lines between communist and Social Democratic strategies.

In addition to citing Lenin’s advice on transitional forms, Dimitrov could have theoretically justified the entire Seventh Congress line on the basis of Lenin’s mid-1917 writings. Contrary to Manuilsky’s assertion, Lenin did indeed advocate a united front government, i.e. a

coalition government of 'workers' and middle class parties, and even a People's Front government, i.e. a coalition of 'workers' and middle class parties plus "revolutionary democrats" and republicans. These positions, in turn, could have been more than adequately justified on the basis of the writings of Marx and Engels.

If some ambitious theoretician within the Comintern had put all this together, the Seventh Congress could have fulfilled Lenin's *State and Revolution* promise to "re-establish what Marx and Engels really taught on the question of the state". At the same time, however, it would have had to admit that the historical split within the socialist movement was, like religious feuds, based not on principle, but on simple sectarianism. The left-leaning phrases that distinguished the communists from their competitors had to be maintained. Hence the Congress's ambiguity, its allowance for extremely reformist lines to attract the middle class, and its reassurance to the workers that the Comintern was still revolutionary after all.

The resolutions on the United Front and People's, or Anti-Fascist, Front governments adopted by the Congress are essentially a rehash of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government" slogan of the Fourth Congress.

The United Front government is described as a parliamentary combination based on a Social Democratic and communist majority, whereas the People's Front may include other bourgeois-democratic parties. In class terms, the People's Front thesis is for all practical purposes identical to the United Front, since it makes little difference whether bourgeois democrats participate in the government as a separate party, or as Social Democrats or even communists.

Passing recognition that such governments are still bourgeois governments was given by Dimitrov, who in reference to a possible Anti-Fascist government in France declared that "...the communists, while remaining the irreconcilable foes of every bourgeois government, will, nevertheless, in face of growing fascist danger, be prepared to support such a government (applause)..." (Ibid. p.155). Expanding on this line, Thorez of the CP France swore his Party's support for a People's Front government "...in which, if necessary, it might even participate..." (Ibid. p.218). The final Resolutions adopted on the basis of Dimitrov's report thus state that "...the participation of the communists in a united front government will be decided separately in each particular case as the concrete situation may warrant..." (*CI*, Vol. 12 #17-18, Sept. 1935, p.1344). As shown by the subsequent activity of the CP France, this cautious attitude towards participation in government had less to do with the communists' will to power than with their fear that the entry of communists might frighten sections of the middle class they wished to attract.

Where formerly the Comintern masked its defense of middle class interests by more left sounding, working class phrases, the Seventh Congress issued an open appeal to the middle class in its own terms.

Thorez criticized the communist parties for paying "... insufficient attention to the partial demands of the masses of working people, principally to the needs of the middle classes which became easy prey to fascist demagogy..." (*VII Congress Report*, p.200). Dimitrov simply declared that the communists must combine "...the demands of the working class with these demands..." (Ibid. p.149). The identity of interests of the working and middle classes,

which Marxism-Leninism had hinted at various times and denounced at others, was thus elevated to one of "...the fundamental, the most decisive things in establishing the Anti-Fascist People's Front..." (Ibid. p.149).

As could be expected, the Seventh Congress line facilitated and revitalized the activity of nearly all the Comintern sections. The intelligentsia at the head of the parties could now openly attend to their own class bias without sectarian catch phrases and proletarian posturing. Social Democrats, free-lance intellectuals and other ousted middle class elements flooded into the communist parties, since all could readily understand whose interests the People's Front served. The communists had at last returned to the democratic fold.

H. Between the Seventh Congress and Dissolution of the Comintern 1936-1943

Over the next ten years, the Seventh Congress policy would be augmented and enriched by additional variations of the People's Front which, taken collectively, would eventually fall under the category of "People's Democracy".

In the Third World countries, the call for a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship based on Soviets was replaced by proposals for more traditional parliamentary coalitions, although the communist parties still defended the Soviets as a superior form.

R. Palme Dutt of the British CP proposed that the slogan of a Constituent Assembly become the rallying point for the anti-imperialist movement in India, but cautioned that this slogan was not in "...inevitable opposition to the aim of Soviets...". In fact, "...the example of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution has shown how in a given situation the slogan of a Constituent Assembly can be a most powerful mobilizing force which can be combined with the propaganda of Soviet Power as the ultimate aim..." (*Inprecorr*, Vol. 16 #11, February 1936, p.300). Dutt thus reasserts what Lenin had intuitively known at one time: that middle class democracy in the Soviet form is entirely compatible with democracy in the parliamentary form, and that preference for one or the other depends upon the feasibility of allying with the upper stratum of democracy.

Because it already had operating Soviet base areas, the CP China (despite Mao's opposition) went a step further and proposed an outright merger of the Soviets with a parliamentary republic. In its unity appeal to the bourgeois Kuo Min Tang party (KMT), the CP China proposed that as soon as a republic was formed, "...the Soviet regions will become composite parts of the united democratic republic, the delegates from the population of the Soviet regions will participate in the National Assembly, and a democratic system will be set up in the Soviet regions similar to that introduced in the remaining parts of the country..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #1, January 1937, p.72). The CP China viewed this step as a necessary compromise for national unity. But even after the united front with the KMT fell apart, the areas governed by the CP China maintained an essentially parliamentary structure, a fact that pro-

vided polemical ammunition for the 'Communards' of the Cultural Revolution many years later.

Likewise, the Italian CP dropped the Soviet slogan and proposed instead to "...establish a democratic republic headed by the working class..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #10, October 1937, p.768). In its unity agreement with the Italian Socialist Party, the CP Italy sought to avoid any mutual interference which might "...lead to breakaways, the undermining of discipline and to the discrediting of the other party..." (Ibid p.769). The Social Democrats were thus not only to be spared criticism, but the communists would attempt to prevent the left Social Democrats from coming over to their side, at least until the Socialist Party as a whole was ready for organizational merger.

In Spain, the communists pursued a People's Front policy prior to and throughout the civil war, and actively fought the leftist 'excesses' of the anarchists and syndicalists. In declaring its support for the republican government, the CP Spain explained "...at the present time we are not putting forward the transition from completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution... But we aim at completing and carrying to its conclusion the people's democratic revolution..." (*CI*, Vol. 13 #8, December 1936, p.968). This statement harmonizes completely with the Seventh Congress view that in countries threatened by fascism, the task was not socialism, but defense of democracy.

As the Spanish civil war intensified, the CP Spain declared that it "...respects the will of the people, and is taking the side of the government which expresses this will, the side of the republic, the side of democracy..." (*CI*, Vol. 13 #10, October 1936, p.1309). Taking the side of democracy meant, among other things, restraining the working class movement so that the democratic front would not rupture from the strain of class hostility. The Comintern stated that the Spanish communists were "...quite correct in opposing the wholesale nationalization (or 'collectivization') of industry, allowing of nationalization only in those definite cases when this is dictated by the requirements of the defense of the republic against fascism and intervention..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #2, February 1937, p.111). The syndicalists were criticized for "...still continuing to make experiments in collectivization, thus threatening to disrupt the alliance between the working class and the peasantry..." (Ibid p.112), i.e. alienating the peasant bourgeoisie. As the CP Spain further explained, "...the stage of development of the democratic revolution...requires the participation in the struggle of all anti-fascist forces, and these experiments can only result in driving away a very important section of these forces...such things are not only not desirable, but absolutely impermissible..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #5, May 1937, p.320).

Preserving national unity also required, as the Seventh Congress had indicated, a more perfect union "on the left". On behalf of the Spanish party Central Committee, Ibarri stated that "... differences have almost vanished between the Socialists and Communists in evaluating the main problems of the war and the revolution..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #9, Sept. 1937, p.648), and that therefore the fusion of the two into a single Party "...armed with the mighty theory of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin will be the basic guarantee of the victory of the people, and be the leader of the people's revolution..." (Ibid. p.642). Similar appeals were made in a number of other countries.

The most significant theoretical contribution by the Spaniards was the call for "...a new type of democratic parliamentary republic..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #5, May 1937, p.319) which was, in principle identical to the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship" but occurring in a parliamentary rather than Soviet form. The proposed republic would not be "...a democratic republic of the French type or like the republics of other capitalist countries. No, the democratic republic for which we are fighting is a different republic...". The difference consisted in the fact that "...we are fighting to destroy the material foundation on which reaction and fascism were based...", meaning, "...put an end to the financial oligarchy, to the bankers and manufacturers who were closely connected with the landowners and the church and hindered the development of the national economy..." (Ibid. p.320). The new democracy was thus to be an anti-monopoly government, which, as indicated above, would nationalize only those industries crucial for an accelerated national development. In short, a government of the anti-monopoly middle class plus democratic elements of the bourgeoisie, which would contain the working class and semi-proletariat with anti-fascist and patriotic phrases.

Following the defeat of the Spanish republic, Andre Marty of the CP France commented that it had been "...a people's democracy of a new type..." (*CI*, Vol. 16 #10, October 1939, p.1056). Actually, there was very little new in it that had not already been anticipated or advocated by Marx, Engels or Lenin, except that the more militant anti-capitalist phrases had been withheld.

In France, the original testing ground for the People's Front, the Party sought to achieve a working alliance not only with the Social Democrats, but with the Radical Party as well, the party of the republican and democratic bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

In 1936, this coalition won a parliamentary majority, in support of which the Party declared that "...it is necessary for the Communist Party to maintain close and loyal collaboration with the government in its work to bring about the fulfillment of the program of the People's Front..." (*CI*, Vol. 13 #8, August 1936, p.944).

Although the communists did not take ministerial posts in the new government, Marty explained that this was "...not a question of principle. It is a question of political advisability..." (Ibid.). If the communists had entered the government, it would have made "...it easier for the reactionaries to exert pressure on the Radicals..." and thus "...lead to the break-up of the People's Front..." (Ibid. p.945). Participation in a bourgeois government was thus not a matter of principle for the CP France, but only tactics. This and other CP maneuvers were expressed by the general slogan: "...All for the People's Front, everything through the People's Front..." (Ibid.).

In addition to making its own personal sacrifice of refusing ministerial portfolios, the Party leadership urged the working class to make material sacrifices as a gesture for national unity. Thorez warned the workers that "...you must know how to end strikes at the proper time..." since "...a more rapid advance on the part of the working class risked its estrangement from the middle classes who were disturbed and made uneasy by strikes..." (*CI*, Vol. 13 #11, Nov. 1936, p.1459). Evidently sensing that the sound mental health of the middle class was not a priority for rank and file workers, Thorez later added that provocations for strikes were simply a "...net spread...by the forces of reaction..." (*CI*, Vol. 14 #10, October

1937, p.697). Striking for better conditions would thus only serve the fascists. In a fit of wishful thinking, Thorez concluded that "...the working class...is more and more identifying its own material and political interests with the cause of democracy, the cause of the republic..." (Ibid.). It follows that if the workers' material and political interests are identical to "democracy", i.e. identical to the other social classes of the nation, they should not pursue any 'selfish' aims that might harm their fellow republicans.

The People's Front slogan was also advocated in Germany, although the Comintern had previously called for proletarian revolution in countries already taken by the fascists.

In its united front appeals to the Social Democrats, the KPD assured them that "...the Communist Party is not aiming at a split in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party, but is striving to establish a united, powerful revolutionary party of the proletariat..." (Ibid. p.709). According to Ulbricht, the united party would strive, not for an immediate proletarian revolution, but a "... democratic republic, a republic of a new and higher type..." (CI, Vol. 14 #6, June 1937, p.379). Under such a government, "...the people will enjoy predominant influence, and privileges of big business will be destroyed, and the roots of fascism extirpated..." (Ibid.). True to its word, the KPD did in fact merge into a new party with the Social Democrats and, following the war, established just such a government.

In the USSR, the People's Front spirit was expressed in the adoption of a new constitution in 1936. In his comments on the constitution draft, Stalin stated that since the working class, peasantry and intelligentsia in the USSR were all "entirely new", "... the dividing line between the working class and the peasantry, and between these classes and the intelligentsia, is being obliterated..." (*On the Draft Constitution of the USSR*, Moscow, 1936, p.14). The Constitution was therefore based on "...the fact that there are no longer any antagonistic classes in society..." (Ibid. p.19). The lack of class antagonisms, in turn, meant that, as Lenin had promised in 1919, restrictions on the franchise for bourgeois elements could at last be lifted. It was hardly necessary. By now the middle class intellectuals who had led the 1917 revolution had matured to the status of a state-capitalist bourgeoisie, and had all along been voting to their hearts' content in the Party Central Committee.

Structurally, the Soviet form had by this time settled into a parliamentary respectability. The unity of executive and legislative functions, which in Lenin's view had been one of the chief characteristics of the Soviet, was in reality a fiction, since legislative duties were performed by the Soviet sessions, and executive duties by the various Commissariats. This division was so well established that in an article on the Soviets in 1938, Smeral of the ECCI referred to the Supreme Soviet as "...the Soviet parliament..." (CI, Vol. 15 #4, April 1938, p.338). In response to the charge that the Soviet deputies enjoyed special privileges like parliamentarians in bourgeois countries, Smeral asked "...why should not those who do unusually good and particularly useful work possess motorcars..." (Ibid. 337), special honorariums of 1000 rubles a month, free rail passes, etc. -- so much for "workmen's wages for officials".

The People's Front effort was interrupted by the French concessions to Germany at Munich in 1938. The French move was viewed as a "...prelude to a large-scale attack on democracy, on the People's Front, on the working class..." and a "...betrayal of national interests..." (CI, Vol. 15 #11, Nov. 1938, p.1024). The Franco-Soviet mutual defense pact was thereafter re-

placed by a Soviet-German non-aggression pact, and the appeals for a militant national anti-fascist unity were replaced, at the outbreak of the war, with appeals for national indifference and pacifism.

To continue the anti-fascist crusade at this point would have been incompatible with the USSR's desire to stay out of the war. The Comintern therefore reverted to quasi-Third Period phrases, describing the war as "...an imperialist robber war...a war against the interests of the peoples..." which "...does not differ from the first imperialist world war..." (*CI*, Vol. 16 #10, Oct. 1939, p.1037). It was "...not a conflict between 'democracy' and 'fascism', but the bloody and criminal conflict of capitalists greedy for power on both sides..." (Ibid. p.1062).

But instead of open appeals to turn the imperialist war into a class war for socialist revolution, the Comintern made only oblique references to ending the war "...by revolutionary means..." (Ibid. p.1038) and stated that since the war "...does not distinguish between the forms of bourgeois dictatorship..." it would "...call forth the judgment of the masses of the people on all forms of this dictatorship..." (Ibid p.1062). The manner in which the Comintern hoped this judgment would express itself was summed up by Dimitrov, who wrote of "...the people's need for peace, not war. The movement for peace is growing universally..." (*CI*, Vol. 17 #6, June 1940, p.353).

This social-pacifism was supplemented by renewed criticism of the Social Democrats who had joined in the national war effort. The united front, Dimitrov explained, could not include "...those who are in a common front with the imperialists and support the criminal anti-popular war...". (*CI*, Vol. 16 #11, 11-39, p.1108). The united front must be "...raised in a new fashion...", i.e. "... must be achieved from below..." (Ibid.). The Comintern had thus come nearly full circle once again.

With the German attack on the USSR, the half-hearted opposition to the war was dropped. The war was no longer described as imperialist, but "...a war of all peoples for national independence and liberation from German fascist enslavement..." (*CI*, Vol. 20 #9, September 1941, p.777). As Stalin wrote, "...all honest people must support the armies of the USSR, Great Britain, and the other allies, as armies of liberation..." (*The War of National Liberation*, International Publishers, 1942, p.33). The united front with the pro-war Social Democrats was quickly restored, with the communists asserting that "...differences must take second place, and third and fourth. First place is taken by the national objective..." (*CI*, Vol. 20 #9, September 1941, p.761).

The various united front tactics that had been tested during the Seventh Congress period were pursued with a vengeance throughout the war. The Comintern justified the wartime alliance between Britain, the United States and Russia on the grounds that although differences still existed between bourgeois and proletarian democracy, fascism was the negation of all democracy. Bourgeois democracy was therefore no longer viewed as a screen for bourgeois dictatorship, but a barrier against it.

As could be expected, the defense of democracy behind which the communists sought to rally the workers necessitated certain violations of democracy. The CP USA explained that workers should not be "...passive and indifferent to the national war effort and the battle of production..." (*CI*, Vol. 20 #10, October 1941, p.852), and that labor unrest should be minimized since "...it is necessary to make sacrifices for the independence and future of the na-

tion..." (Ibid. p.853). Thus the elementary right to defend and improve the workers' economic position was to be suspended as long as the national, i.e. bourgeois, interest required.

As for the national minorities, the CP USA cautioned that although "...it would be wrong to underestimate the grievances of the Negro people; it would be equally wrong to press these demands without regard to the main task of the destruction of Hitler..." (Ibid. p.889).

Not surprisingly, the CP spared the middle class any similar sacrifices. The national unity required by the war was to be paid in full by the working class and oppressed minorities alone.

The question of what state forms would arise following the defeat of fascism was raised and answered during the course of the war in the most reassuring democratic tones. In a 1942 article entitled "The People's Front of Yesterday—the National Freedom Front of Today and Tomorrow", the editor of the *Communist International*, Ernst Fischer, wrote that "...the world-political foundation for true peace and successful collaboration of all nations must and will find its consummation and consolidation within each country through the bloc of all progressive democratic forces truly devoted to the nation..." (*CI*, Vol. 21 #9, September 1942, p.848), i.e. through a People's Front government.

Anticipating the liberation of France, the CP France in 1944 declared for a Constituent Assembly as the necessary provisional government, and stated that the "new French democracy" would have to be predicated on "...freedom of conscience for all ... freedom of the press, and of assembly and association; the inviolability of the home and the secrecy of correspondence... and the absolute equality of all citizens before the law..." (*World News and Views*, Vol. 24 #3, January 1944, p.19). That is, fascism would be replaced by ordinary bourgeois democracy.

In the United States, the party Chairman, Earl Browder, carried the line established at the Seventh Congress to its logical conclusion. Although Browder was later expelled from the party for revisionism, his formulations were entirely consistent with the positions developed by the Comintern and other parties during the war.

Browder reasoned that since raising socialist issues in the United States would "...not unite the nation, but would further divide it..." the communists should reassert "...our wartime policy that we will not raise the issue of Socialism in such a form and manner as to endanger or weaken the national unity..." (Ibid. Vol. 24 #4, January 1944, p.26). The CP USA promised not to "...help the reactionaries by opposing the slogan of 'Free Enterprise' with any form of counter-slogan..." (Ibid.). In addition, the CP declared it self-evident that "...political issues of this time will be decided within the form of the two-party system traditional for our country. In this framework can be fought out and won the necessary struggle of the American people to safeguard our country's victory and the preservation of its institutions..." (*The Communist*, Vol. 23 #2, February 1944, p.100). Following these patriotic words with actual deeds, the CP USA subsequently liquidated itself as a Party, repeating on a national scale what the Comintern had already accomplished internationally with its own dissolution in 1943.

The open class collaboration of the CP USA and other major parties, the war-time chauvinism of the USSR, the Fatherland Front and People's Front movement common to most of

the occupied European countries, and the pre-war united front efforts of the Comintern all have a common theoretical basis, which rests, in turn, not only on the theses of the Seventh Congress, but on the preceding Congresses, and ultimately on the writings of Lenin, Engels and Marx. The “battle for democracy” proclaimed in *The Communist Manifesto*, a strategy based on parliamentary prejudice towards the state and which objectively contained the working class under the leadership of middle class democracy, materialized during the Second World War as a global rationale for mutual slaughter between the workers of belligerent countries and for the further containment of the international proletariat in the post-war period.

In the advanced capitalist countries, the communists advocated the unity of democratic forces, i.e. the working and middle classes and ‘non-monopoly’ bourgeoisie, in an anti-monopoly coalition, a coalition that would exert its influence along Social Democratic, parliamentary lines. In the East European countries occupied by Soviet troops, and in China, this anti-monopoly coalition became the state power, and preserved the wartime unity of classes under the title of “People’s Democracy”.