

The Lessons
OF THE
German Events



Published by the Communist International

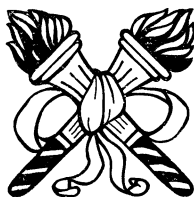
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1924

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The Presidium met to discuss the German question for the first time on January 8. A report was read by Comrade Losovsky on the Trade Union question. After the report there was a brief discussion.

The second meeting took place on January 11. There were present, apart from the members of the Presidium and the members of the Executive Council present in Moscow, several representatives of the Polish and Bulgarian parties and the representatives of the three sections in the C.P.G.

The discussion of the political question was conducted on the basis of five draft resolutions :—

A draft by Comrade Zinoviev,

A draft by Comrade Radek and Comrade Trotsky,

A draft by the representative of the Left,

A draft by the Centre,

and an agreed draft drawn up jointly by Comrade Zinoviev, two representatives of the Centre, Comrades Remmele and Keonen and Comrade Pieck.

The discussion was opened by a report by the representative of the E.C.C.I., which was followed by reports by Brandler, Remmele, and R. Fischer.

We give here the speeches delivered during the discussion as well as the speech of Comrade Zinoviev delivered at the meeting of the Commission of January 12. We also give a report of the progress of the work of the Commission, a report of the meetings of the Presidium on January 19 and 21, the results of the voting and in addition the statements entered in the minutes and resolutions carried.

I

THE REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN GERMANY

My report will be divided into two parts. The first will describe the work of the delegation, and give the facts and the most important documents in connection with this work. The second part will attempt to examine the great defeat of the Party, to explain its significance as Arwid and I see it.

I will commence with the first part. The delegation does not accept the decisive resolution of the Party that was passed at the Chemnitz conference in its absence.

What did the delegation find? The complete collapse of the plan of war as passed by the Executive. The plan of attack of the Party as was decided on here in September and October was based on the following: the proletariat was to march in Saxony in order to defend the workers' government which we were to join: in Saxony an attempt was to be made to utilise political power in order to arm, and in this limited proletarian district, in Central Germany to build a barrier between the counter-revolution of the South, Bavaria and the Fascism of the North. Simultaneously, the Party was to carry out a national mobilisation of the masses.

This plan failed for the following reasons. In the first place, when our comrades entered the government, they were not in a position to bring about the arming of the proletariat. We were informed that the Party in Saxony possessed 800 guns. At the Chemnitz conference the second part of the plan, namely, the joint advance of the social-democratic and communist masses of the workers was found to have collapsed. The proposal to proclaim a general strike and armed revolt was never made in Chemnitz in view of the opposition of the Left Social-democrats. Our Party retreated, and covered its retreat by the formula of the establishment of a committee of action which was to decide what was to be done. The Central Committee decided to avoid a battle on the ground that in this battle the proletarian united front could not be established, and in view of divided forces and the insufficient technical preparation, a revolt was impossible.

I have to take up a position on this situation. In my conversation with the comrades, I agreed that as they were unable to establish a united front with the Social-democratic workers, they had to abandon this plan for a revolt in Saxony. Nevertheless, I demanded of the comrades that they proclaim the strike. I argued that if we were not strong enough as a Communist Party alone to organise the revolt against the Fascists, nevertheless, we were strong enough to resist, and at least not to give up the position without a fight. All the comrades present at that time repudiated this point of view.

After the first practical decision, fresh discussions commenced every day. Always the question was raised, what is to be done next? In order to bring about a momentary pause in the discussion on the Central Committee, the delegation on the 26th proposed to the Seventh Commission the following resolution:—

The Seventh Commission resolves:—

- (1) Social and political antagonisms are becoming more acute every day. Any day may bring great and decisive battles between revolution and counter-revolution.
- (2) The vanguard of the working class (the Communists and a section of the Social-democratic workers) are eager to take up the fight, but the mass of the workers, in spite of their extreme feeling of bitterness and poverty, are not prepared to fight.

- (3) Therefore, the proletarian reserves must, by means of an energetic agitation, be drawn into the vanguard. The sections of the proletariat which are of special importance in the fight (metal workers, miners, railwaymen, agricultural labourers, and State employees) must be reached by special efforts of the Party. All efforts must be devoted to technical preparation. In order to unite the proletariat for the struggle, negotiations be immediately entered into with the Social-democrats locally and centrally, with the view, either to compel the Social-democrats to take up the fight, or to divorce the Social-democratic workers from their treacherous leaders.
- (4) In view of the present situation, it is necessary that the Party restrain the comrades from armed revolt for as long as possible, in order to gain time for preparation. In the event, however, of spontaneous uprisings of the working class breaking out, the Party must support them by all means at its disposal. The Party must also parry the blow of the counter-revolution by means of mass action (demonstrations, political strikes). In these actions, armed conflicts should as far as possible be avoided.
- (5) In reply to the Stresemann ultimatum, the Party must call a national protest strike, in which armed conflicts are to be avoided. In the event of the Social-democratic Party in Saxony refusing to take up the fight against the Stresemann ultimatum, our comrades must break with the Saxony government, and commence a campaign against them.
- (6) All members of the Central Committee must carry out the decisions of the Party. The Central Committee will arrange for a re-distribution of work among its members.

This resolution was adopted unanimously. *Comrade Ruth Fischer voted for this Resolution.* This was five days after the first defeat in Saxony, after the Chemnitz conference.

Then came the second Saxony phase, namely, the Stresemann ultimatum, &c. The delegation submitted to the Central Committee the decision on the strike. The Central Committee, however, decided to call only a partial strike.

Comrades, we saw the task of the delegation of the Comintern and of the Central Committee as follows : That we have suffered a great defeat—a defeat that will leave its effects for some considerable time perhaps, was clear. There was the danger of panic and extreme disappointment among the masses. The defeat in itself was not as dangerous as this fact. For this reason, we took up the following task : to stop the flight of the masses, to make the Communist Party of Germany once again the rallying centre for the fighting masses, and to resume the fight.

When the Central Committee met it was not quite clear to us

yet around which point to rally the masses and on what field action was to be undertaken. The lever of the action was not yet in our hands. That is why the passage in the thesis of the Central Committee, which we submitted, dealing with this point, is not sufficiently concrete. After a few days, it became clear, that the first task of the Party was to prevent itself from being forced underground. Already we had neither freedom of the Press nor freedom of assemble (street demonstrations). We sought to rally the Party on the policy of active struggle. How was this policy accepted? In general, the whole of the Executive was agreed on the question of unemployed demonstrations, &c. On the question of defending these demonstrations, the majority of the Central Committee was agreed. When it came to carrying out this policy, we met the strongest resistance of the Berlin representatives of the Central Committee, who held the view that the bitterness and disappointment of the masses of the Party was so great, that the comrades were not in a position to rally the masses for these demonstrations.

Comrades, the second point of difference was the question of armed demonstrations. The Berlin representatives in opposition to the Hamburg representatives, took the view that we could do nothing, it would only lead to unnecessary bloodshed. Our men cannot march through the streets armed merely with rattles.

It is clear why this policy was adopted. To me, it is clear, that the source of the weakness of the Party and of the masses is their passivity. As long as the masses are not convinced that we Communists at least, are prepared to exert all efforts and take all risks, it will not be possible to draw them into the struggle. What at present prevails among the German proletariat is a reflection of the general position in Germany. The collapse of political activity—extraordinary political passivity of all social classes, with the exception of the militarists. Without military, and without being able to say concretely how we shall be able to arrange for this defence, that was a question of military leadership, I said to myself, we cannot lead the workers for once or a second time into demonstrations and there to be beaten up like dogs, and then say to them come a third time and be beaten up again. Either the demonstrations were a mere gesture, or they had to be protected.

I now proceed from the explanation of the tactic of the delegation of the E.C. to the political analysis, in which I must assert two things. Of course, the first thing in our minds was the causes of our defeat, and we wrote concerning this in our reports to the Executive. The reports are before me. When the Party Committee met, the question was as follows: shall we *at this stage* enter into an internal Party discussion on the weaknesses and mistakes of the Party or not? My opinion, and the opinion of the whole delegation was that *at the moment when the first attempts were being made to rally the Party to bring it to a stand, it was not only*

inexpedient but totally inadmissible to raise a debate on Party tactics. This is still my opinion to-day.

This was my view, and although I knew, of course, that after such a severe defeat a discussion in the Party must tend to an acute crisis, I held that it was necessary to postpone this until clearness had been reached on two points: whether we have entered into a long preparatory period, in which no great possibilities for action will exist; in that case the Party must solve the matter in the discussion; or we have come through a partial battle into a great battle. In that case the Party will overcome its weakness in that battle.

These are the reasons why I most energetically opposed the opening of the discussion in the middle of November. Naturally, I do not wish to assert, that the delegation and I at that time were in a position to see the full consequences of the defeat. Perhaps I have not read through all our correspondence. What I will say in concluding this discussion may contradict what we, under the first impressions of the events, reported to the Executive as being the causes of these events. I do not think it is the first duty of a statesman, if he has said A once to say A for the rest of his life. Sometimes we must say B, sometimes we must even say Y, but sometimes we must even say that it never was A.

I will now begin with the second part of my report.

What were the causes of our great defeat?

Firstly, is it a great defeat? I believe it can be established, that the defeat has thrown us back just when we were so near to achieving our goal. I hold the view, *that we have missed a great historical situation, such favourable situation occurs rarely.* This is the first thing.

The second thing is, we do not know whether the collapse of capitalism in Germany will come about soon. We, however, must keep the fight in view as long as it is not perfectly clear that it will not take place. A political party cannot say that an event will take place in this way or that. The theoretician can take all possibilities into consideration. The Party leader must ask himself, what do I desire in this relation of forces? If the possibilities are that things will become more acute, then we must decide to accelerate this situation, but I say, although at first we did not deem it necessary to take all possibilities into consideration, that all possibilities exist, including the possibility that the situation will remain bad for a long time; in that case our defeat will be much greater than it is now.

Thirdly, we did not know what would be the effects of this defeat internationally, upon the other Communist Parties.

I do not wish to say a single word to gloss over this defeat.

We must ask ourselves first of all, what were the causes of this defeat? I find, in the main, two opinions on this matter. Some comrades say the mass of the Party is a good proletarian mass, but the leadership consists of social-democratic officials,

whom we have not yet converted into Communists. These officials have betrayed us. The second opinion, which is also my opinion, is that our Party is a good proletarian party, but lacks revolutionary experience. Its leadership, like all Communist leadership, naturally, has its weaknesses which are connected with its having originated from the social-democracy, and also because it has never taken part in great mass struggles previously, has not sufficient revolutionary experience.

(BANFLER : Some were not even social-democrats.)

(MASLOV : There are some who will go back to the social-democrats.)

Although we are a good workers' party, nevertheless, we are not yet a good Communist party, and this is the most important part of the situation that I see. It is not true, comrades, that the leaders would not fight, while the masses everywhere were rushing into battle. That was not the situation. Take the Left Social-Democrats : perhaps the leaders are traitors, but the masses are not traitors : they are honest workers. But the fact is, that these masses did not regard their leaders as traitors, and the greater part do not regard them as traitors to-day. This shows that the reserves which are on the road towards us have still to be trained. Our German Party is not a social-democratically led party, but it is an as yet imperfect Communist party.

These facts greatly influence the development of the Party in its latest phase.

Comrades, we are asked, have we over-estimated the October situation ? Is this the cause of the error of the defeat ? I do not think so. I say that the cause of our defeat lies in that the Ruhr business opened a new phase in the development of the class struggle in Germany. At the Leipsic congress, in our appeal to the Party, we said : this phase will end with civil war. Theoretically, we saw the situation correctly, and we did not draw the practical conclusions from this. When the collapse of the Ruhr action was clear, and when the destructive elements were growing exceedingly, we should not have advocated the occupation of the factories, but encouraged the growing mass struggle.

Comrades, the fact remains that we, in Moscow, realised that decisive events were taking place in Germany, only after the August days. The evidence of this is the following : we had the conferences in Essen and Frankfort. Both these conferences had merely an agitational significance. They were not conferences for the purposes of organising the struggle. The proof of this is the fact that the Executive was not in the least disturbed that the French Party had sent only twenty comrades for work among the troops. At the meeting of the Enlarged Executive, we were concerned with the propagandist aspect of this thing. Had we regarded the situation seriously as driving towards revolution, there would have been but one question on the agenda of the

Enlarged Executive, namely, the question of preparing for the mass struggle in Germany, and for the armed uprising.

(CLARA ZETKIN : Quite true !)

We did not do this. After the August events we saw the direction which things were tending, and we said : Either the Fascists take power, or we must. If we desired the fight, we could not make the defence of the November Republic our aim. The difference between the Kerensky and the November Republics was that under Kerensky the workers had the Soviets : they had something to defend. But the German November Republic did not live in the hearts of the workers ; not a dog would move in its defence. Consequently, if we wished to fight through, we had to place as our aim the conquest of power.

What transpired ? Before we here, in September and the beginning of October, had decided on this policy—the struggle for the capture of power, had decided the question of the date, as it were, Zinoviev wrote his draft of the fourteen points, which I amended, and which was sent to the German Party, not as decisions but for discussion. The German Party declared that it accepted the points. It was a programme of action. It stated concretely what should be done in all spheres. The outstanding fact is, that we could at no time conduct rearguard actions. When the Communist Press was suppressed we did not make a single retort.

We resolved, the situation is serious ; either the Fascist take power, or we do. We decided that we must take power. We set ourselves a certain date. Now the attempt is being made to stamp this as the principal error. Now I say we must keep two things separate.

Firstly, when the Communists seriously think of capturing power must they set a definite time for their work, or not ? They should.

Can you picture yourself saying to the masses : Dear comrades, we do not know when we shall take power, but for pedagogical reasons we fix a certain date ? No, you cannot do this.

Therefore you must fix a date for the fight. The mistake was not in fixing a date, but in that the fixing of the date was done in Moscow. I pointed out at that time that only in the course of events can the body which is conducting the struggle fix the date. If Moscow fixes the date, the Party learns of it ; if it does not, it is absurd to fix a date, for when it is necessary to postpone the fight it gives rise to panic and cries of treachery.

My opinion, however, is that fixing dates, whether right or wrong, is not in the least important. The main thing in the whole business is the fact that the Party had not reviewed the line of battle. They said, we must prepare for the attack, but they did nothing.

This was the outstanding fact of the defeat.

You may say, the important question is not whether we

erred in October or May. The important question is, why we erred.

Comrades, there is a period in our history that goes right up to the March struggle. What period is this? The period when we strove to set the capture of power as an active task before us. Since 1920, since our defeat in Poland, it was clear that the tide of revolution was on the ebb, and that our main task must be to win over the majority of the proletariat. How did we come to fix this task? The Party could not proceed further with the effort to capture power without approaching closer to the tactic of first organising the majority of the proletariat. It soon became clear that neither we, in Moscow, nor the comrades here, observed in time that a change in the situation had taken place. Only when we were unexpectedly attacked did the scales fall from our eyes, and we said the situation has changed: we must first of all win over the masses. This period of winning over the masses by agitation and propaganda lasted until the Ruhr war. Then we could no longer win them over merely by propaganda, and we had to go over to action. And again the situation arose that we were on the eve of another revolutionary tide which neither we in Moscow nor you there saw in time.

Well, does this mean that the leadership was Social-Democratic? No. The leadership of the German Communist Party is better than in any other country where we have mass parties, and this for one simple reason: in no other country had we the struggle that we had in Germany. We had the Marxian training. There was the fight against Kautsky, and there is the great experience of the revolution. Naturally, the leadership has Social-Democratic features, just as there are comrades that betray the complete failure to understand the meaning of mass movements, and who have never been Social-Democrats. The leadership of the Party is made of the elements that we possess. It is not made out of air.

For this reason the most important question for me, after having thus defined the causes of our defeat, is what next?

Before replying, we must first of all establish the following. First of all we must discover who is ruling in Germany. In every situation the leader of a mass action must first of all know the opponent against whom he is to lead the struggle. The controversy over the question as to whether Fascism had conquered or not, was settled not by words but by facts. It was settled by the fact that the bourgeoisie, by military means, drove back the working class and thrust the Stinnes programme upon it, and that the working class fled. I can understand your opposition as long as you thought that we were still able to attack and that we were barring our road by formulas which Comrade Zinoviev thought meant capitulation. At that time your opposition had another meaning. When, however, dear comrades, you will be compelled to argue for another year whether Fascism has

triumphed, then that in itself is a proof that it has come. I place so little importance on formalities that I concede to the request of Comrades Remmele and Koenen in order not to aggravate the controversy that the Whites have won. For my part, we can say that the brunettes or blondes have won.

Why do the Fascists win? The preceding period in Germany, as it says in the book, was the period of bourgeois democracy. Except for recurring periods of suppressions, in no other country in the world have the proletariat such freedom of action as in Germany. And what great influence the Labour aristocracy had on the November Republic! Those who ignore this fail to understand why the Social-Democratic masses clung so to their republic. The dispute among us was not over the question as to whether the Social-Democracy was violated or whether it was a prostitute. The reason why I regarded it as necessary to say that the Fascism had won is quite different. If Fascism has won, and the Social-Democracy is its ally, then there can be no alliance between us and the Social-Democracy.

The second reason. Next to the question of the revision of the united front tactics, *i.e.*, the challenge to the Social-Democratic leaders, as was stated in the National Committee resolution, I think the outstanding question in the German revolution is the attraction of the petty bourgeois masses. And here I come to a point which I must say is for me, on the one hand, one of the most important, and on the other the most humorous question of controversy.

Comrades, during the discussion over the national question in Moscow with the German comrades in the spring, we said the Party is confronted by a new task, the winning over of the petty-bourgeoisie, which is becoming proletarianised, as an ally, who will help us to capture power in Germany. Hence the participation of the Party in questions affecting the middle class and the national question. On the Enlarged Executive we took up a definite attitude. The speech on Schlageter was unanimously approved. After that speech, Comrades Fischer and Remmele carried this propaganda further arm-in-arm with me. More than that: in the theses of the Executive and of the Russian Central Committee on the German question, and in the articles published by Comrade Zinoviev on the German revolution, all this was quite rightly mentioned again and again. In Russia the peasant is an ally because he belonged to the army. Had there been no army he would have played an important role later, after the capture of power, but not so important a role as *during* the capture of power. In Germany we have a proletarianised petty-bourgeoisie which marches under the banner of Fascism, whereas the victory of Fascism means its ruin. Hence the differences in the Fascist camp are of decisive political importance for us. Only when these antagonisms become pronounced, and when the petty-bourgeois masses, or at least a section of them, can be torn away from

Stinnes and Westarp and won over to our side, not as members but as allies, even if somewhat hesitating, shall we have made some real progress.

Comrades, what special tasks confront us? Permit me to read you an extract from Comrade Lenin's brochure on "Infantile Sickness of Left Wing Communism":—

"A powerful enemy can be overcome, only by the greatest exertion of effort by the absolutely careful, painstaking, cautious, and able utilisation of the most minute differences in the camp of the enemy, the antagonism of interests between the various sections of the bourgeoisie in each country, as well as even the smallest possibility of recruiting allies even when they are temporary, hesitating, vacillating and unreliable. He who does not understand this, has not grasped a gramme of Marxism and of modern 'civilised' scientific Socialism generally. Those who have not, during a fairly lengthy period, and in various political situations, shown that he knows how to apply this truth in practice has not yet learned how to help the revolutionary class in its fight for the emancipation of toiling humanity and the exploited. What has been said applies equally to the period prior to, as well as after the capture of power by the proletariat."

In another part of the pamphlet, he deals with the differences not only between the petty-bourgeois and the masses, but also the peaceful, transition situation in England.

For me, this implies the following: in Germany, the peasants after the victory of the revolution, will play an important role, because the question will arise: how shall we obtain bread? The peasants will not play an important part in the actual capture of power, because it will be captured in the towns. There is no concentrated peasant army in Germany, and no great concentrated mass. For that reason, the petty-bourgeois of the towns will play a great part.

What part will the conflicts of groups in the Fascist camp play in this?

In his article on the "German Koltchak," Comrade Zinoviev does not sufficiently emphasise the difference between the petty-bourgeoisie in Germany and that in Russia. He says, that the mensheviks after the defeat of the revolution in 1905, caused the differences between the Cadets and the Octoberists to come out more clearly. We, Bolsheviks, knew that these parties represented various sections of the bourgeoisie, but we said that these antagonisms will not be outstanding, and therefore we would have to fight the bourgeoisie.

Comrades, if the difference between the petty-bourgeois doctors, government employees, handicraftsmen, and Stinnes and Westarp were the same as the differences between Guttekhov and Muilukov, Zinoviev would be right. But he forgets the most outstanding. In Western Europe, we have large masses of new middle class, the remnants of the old middle class, and the millions

of the petty-bourgeoisie, whom capitalism is ruining completely. This situation is different to that in Russia in 1907. Russia was in a period of economic development in which capitalism, while it robbed the middle class of its independence, did not worsen its social position to such an extent. In Western Europe we have a process of the expropriation of the middle classes, which has taken place nowhere else. These, then, are the destructive elements, which we must utilise.

Comrades, I am prevented from taking up a question on which there are important differences between us, namely, the continuation of the united front tactics on an international scale. On this I will say just one or two words. The Fourth Congress did not have the view that the united front tactics were to serve evolution, that a long period would elapse before the revolution during which we would be under democracy. Nevertheless, it had in mind the possibility of situations arising in Europe, when it would be possible to utilise democratic workers' governments, which fall into our hands as spring-boards in the fight for the dictatorship. We make thousands of mistakes in the application of the united front tactics, but we can rectify them. If, however, we lose sight of these possibilities, if we say that the united front tactics is purely agitation, we are wrong even theoretically, because we close our eyes to possibilities that may recur in Germany.

(SCHOLEM : Hear, hear !)

I declare that I am not a politician, but I want to have the differences discussed, in order that when the break-up of Fascism and of the Fascist troops takes place, we shall be in a position where we can play our Saxony cards better than we played them before.

(Cries of : Quite right ! Hear ! hear !)

And for those who wish to close up these possibilities, there can be no compromise on this question.

(Quite right !)

For the simple reason that we, in Western Europe, will make our organisations either Communist discussion parties, or fighting parties, and if the latter, then we must make use of all practical possibilities. Ninety-nine chances out of a hundred are that the question of a workers' government will not play an important role on the continent of Europe, but that it will play a decisive role in England, I have not the slightest doubt.

For these reasons, I say, I am prepared, because for me the practical policy of the Party is a thousand times more important than all the theoretical hairsplitting as to what things will look like in one, five, or six years' time, to sacrifice ten formulas, rather than obstruct our own path. If we do, we shall raise a crisis in Communism due to the fact that our theories do not reflect the real requirements of the movement.

I now conclude.

I would like to throw out just one more thought. The greatest cause of the crisis we are now experiencing, and of the many crises that we shall yet experience for years to come, if the revolution does not come, arises from the fact that we are the Party of dictatorship, but when there is no revolutionary wave, we can only conduct propaganda and agitation for the dictatorship. The masses however, do not live merely by propaganda and agitation alone. Practical tasks confront the Communist Party. It is so difficult to carry through the point of view of Communism, that a great discrepancy arises between desiring and doing. If we fail to see this, we shall break up. When I heard the speech of Thalman, I said to myself : What agitational zeal, what faith in the revolution: and yet in Hamburg we have 14,000 members, while the Social-Democrats have 78,000.

(A voice : It has now lost 30,000.)

After five years of the greatest betrayal of the revolution.

With a purely agitational policy of Communism, we will have only small Communist parties. The question will again arise, sect or masses. That question has already come up. Had we not restrained the Party in March, Levi would have been right. We restrained it, saying, go among the masses on a practical basis. And to-day the question has come up again.

We will fight out our differences. We are not Levis. Whatever the decision of the Executive will be, we will all submit, but we will not ignore the differences as they stand to-day. We will fight this matter out in the Communist International.

If the Commission will function, I will present my views in the form of the theses drawn up by Comrades Trotsky, P., and myself.

II

COMRADE BRANDLER'S REPORT

How is the October defeat to be explained ? The representative of the Executive has described how he came to Germany to the Chemnitz Conference on the 22nd and was faced with a *fait accompli*. It must be made quite clear what it was that created the situation the Executive Representative had described.

I came to Germany on October 8th ; on the 12th the Saxon Government was already formed. I arrived when the negotiations for the formation of the Government were almost completed. Events moved with great rapidity. I had no time to consider the situation which faced me carefully and thoroughly. The participation in the Saxon Government was a result of the decision of the Executive. The Executive demanded by telegram that the comrades should enter the government although the necessary preparations had not been made. I was against the proposal

made by Zinoviev in the telegram, and in favour of the amendment of Radek, for I believed that if the intention of entering the Saxon Government was in order to make it possible to arm, this could only follow after intensive preparation both in Saxony and in the rest of the Reich. The decision to enter the Government was precipitately carried into effect. The object of entering the Government was not a parliamentary manoeuvre, but in order to procure arms. Since the entry into the Government took place practically without preparation, the necessary measures could not be taken. In order to procure arms one must know the bureaucratic machine and one must know the arms depots. For this purpose certain preparatory measures are necessary, of which not a single one was taken. The bureaucratic machine must be conquered and learned before we can use it. These may appear to petty and irrelevant details, but for us they were of the greatest importance. The Communist period of power lasted nine days in all. During these nine days nothing was done, except that attempts were made to procure weapons. The attempts failed owing to insufficient preparation.

I am still of the opinion that it was possible to make a better thing of the Saxon experiment than was actually the case. It is highly probable that in future things will develop quite differently and we shall never have a similar situation again. We must learn from the mistakes we have made.

Thälmann said that at bottom we did not believe in the revolution and that therefore when the moment became ripe for the fight, we were unable to make a sudden spring. This argument, stated with Thälmann's power of conviction, seems very plausible. Nevertheless it is false. I put the question thus : was the situation in October objectively ripe ? Does the revolution depend upon the fact—although nobody more appreciates the subjective role of the Communist Party than I—that leaders of the Communist Party have no inner faith in the revolution ? Does revolution come to a halt on that account ? Or are there other forces objectively at work preventing it from breaking out ? If Thälmann is right then we have betrayed the revolution. The matter is then quite simple. The traitors must be removed and the 100 per cent. revolutionists put in their place.

Comrades, the March action in 1921 showed us that the whole class situation, the objective relations as a whole, had not ripened to such a degree that we could overthrow capitalism by a storm attack. Objective factors so brought it about that in the March action after a storm attack we were badly defeated. For this defeat, I personally was made just as responsible as for the October defeat, although the situations were entirely different. But that by the way. I have committed political errors, and so did other comrades. But I think it is my nature not to commit the same error twice. I assume full responsibility for the October retreat. I assert that if I had not intervened in the very critical situation

after the Chemnitz conference, and entirely reversed matters, we should have entered upon a fight which would have brought us decisive retreat with the result that all question as to the possibility of a victory of the proletariat would have been impossible for many years to come. I personally assume all responsibility for the retreat. I go further: in a similar situation I would have behaved in exactly the same way. We consulted with the Executive. We believed that we could make Central Germany a marching off place, that from defence we could pass to attack, and thence to the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Executive in September gave its complete consent to this plan. The plan was correct, but in estimating the relation of forces, we—the Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Central Committee of the German Communist Party alike—made a mistake. We chose the easiest path for the victory of the revolution. The victory, however, is somewhat more difficult. What was the estimate of the relation of forces on the basis of which we chose this relatively easiest path? In order to make this clear, I must deal with the events which took place during the occupation of the Ruhr.

The Leipzig Party Congress coincided with the beginning of the Ruhr occupation. It was clear to us that the occupation of the Ruhr would be of decisive importance for the development of events in Germany and for the German revolution.

(HESSE and MASLOV: But nothing was said about it.)

This question was clearly dealt with by us in the manifesto and by Comrade Zetkin in her report.

(R. FISCHER: At the public meeting.)

The manifesto was adopted unanimously at the Party Congress. It was therefore not at the public meeting; it was the expression of opinion of the Party Congress, and in fact this point of view was documented at the ceremonial session.

We defined our attitude on this matter in the political report also. In this report I stated that we could not foresee whether we should remain long in the trough of the revolutionary wave in which we then were, or whether the occupation of the Ruhr would bring us on to a new rising revolutionary wave. There was not one among you then who was wiser than I, and who could have declared that we were certainly going to rise on a revolutionary wave. And in the theses, which were adopted by the majority, I declared that we must be prepared for both possibilities. The Party policy was carried on on the basis of this decision of the Leipzig Party Congress. What was this policy? It was that we could at first mobilise the masses against the Ruhr occupation only with difficulty. We could not get them to rise against the occupation. They were not moved by the broad national tumult; only the petty-bourgeoisie was to any extent nationalist and nationally aroused. We had, before attempting to create a movement, to grope for what would arouse the masses and make them

fight. We issued ten rallying slogans, which were somewhat mixed and confused. Why? In order to orient ourselves as to on what grounds we could lead the proletariat into the fight and in order to get beyond mere propaganda. It was the period when the opposition was determined to have action at any price; when they issued the slogan for the occupation of the factories, which the French were also advocating, and which the Party had rejected. We brought the workers into action with the slogan for the Control Commissions and the formation of proletarian hundreds. We did not invent this slogan but arrived at it after testing the situation.

Such was the situation at the beginning of the Ruhr war. It ended very quickly, after the passive resistance of the German bourgeoisie had collapsed in May and all the costs and burdens not only of the first so-called fulfilment policy, but also so-called policy of sabotage, were placed upon the shoulders of the proletariat. There began for the first time that elemental struggle of the Ruhr population, which came without opposition under the leadership of the Communist Party. What the Social-Democrats before the war and during the war failed to obtain, and what we also failed to obtain after the war, namely, the determined leadership of a broad mass movement, we obtained for the first time after the collapse of the passive resistance of the German bourgeoisie.

Of course it is now easy to say that the characteristic of the Ruhr war was that it was the rising wave of the proletariat.

After the Ruhr strike came the strike in Upper Silesia, where we were again able, uncontested, to lead the proletariat into the fight. This proves that the influence of the united front, as we conducted it, was successful.

Comrades, I now come to the most important point of all. What was shown in these struggles in the Ruhr and in Upper Silesia was also shown in Saxony at the beginning of the Ruhr occupation. In Saxony, too, we succeeded in gaining the leadership not only of the non-party working-class masses, but also of the organised Social-Democratic masses; this was thanks to our whole Saxon policy, by which we prevented the coalition of the Social-Democrats with the bourgeoisie, and by which the Right opportunist leaders, under the pressure of the Social-Democratic workers, rejected compromise and a coalition Government with the bourgeoisie and, under the pressure of the Social-Democratic and other workers, declared themselves ready to co-operate with the Communists.

Thus at three points, in the Ruhr, in Upper Silesia and Saxony, and later in Central Germany, we held the leadership of the working class fairly securely in our hands.

But it is worth while examining why the workers entrusted themselves to our leadership in all the questions of their daily needs—in the Ruhr mainly on the question of wages; in Upper

Silesia the same; only in Saxony did we go a shade further; there we were entrusted with the leadership of the political struggle on the question of taking advantage of the existing parliamentary situation.

Comrades, I do not want to deny any blame; I am an exponent of the policy of the Party since Leipsic and of the Saxon policy. But, comrades, it would be absurd, it would be entirely over-estimating my capacities, strength, and influence, to suggest that I was able to force a false political policy upon the whole Party. What is then in dispute? The quite definite circumstances under which we undertook the struggle. And what were these circumstances? In Saxony we forced the dissolution of the Landtag; we had a proletarian majority in the Landtag. Had we declared, as the opposition demanded, that the proletarian majority did not interest us in the least, that we would not attempt to make use of it, then I say, we should have become a sect not only in Saxony but also in the whole of Germany. We had to take up the struggle in the situation which then existed, with all its good sides and all its bad sides. Mistakes were made. The force of the attack and the impulse of the Party should have been stronger; greater advantages should have been obtained; but the decisive factor is not the great or small mistakes that we made, but the given conditions for the fight of which we had to make use. And what use had we to make of them? The slogans of the Third and Fourth Congresses. To the Masses. Make Use of the Questions of the Day. What resulted? Judged by our standards something quite worthless; a great deal, comparatively; freedom of movement for the formation of the Control Commissions, the Factory Councils, and the Proletarian Hundreds.

What was the result of exploiting the existing situation? Certainly, judged by the ultimate aims of Communism, nothing, something entirely worthless; but judged by the vital needs of the workers, something more: absolute confidence in the leadership of the German Communist Party.

This policy led to very dangerous illusions among the workers, who estimate too lightly the path laying before them. In our own Party circles illusions were created which perhaps might have been prevented by an intensive propaganda of principles. But the greatest danger was that they said to themselves: first a bourgeois coalition, then a Social-Democratic Government supported by the Communists, then a Government of Communists and Social-Democrats, and then a Government of the Communists—and all this without the necessity for severe and bloody fights. This frame of mind was a by-product of our policy, but that of course could not be avoided.

It would have been childish to say that since these dangers and difficulties must arise we must not pursue this policy. We had to attempt to overcome them. And how did we overcome

them? By taking the Social-Democratic workers by the scruff of the neck, by destroying their illusions with facts. Their hopes for an easy path were destroyed by practice and in the course of events.

A rising revolutionary wave began. We saw only one side of it—its good side. What was the Cuno strike? The Cuno strike was in Berlin nothing but a continuation of the revolutionary wages fights in the Ruhr, in Upper Silesia, and Saxony. But such a fight in Berlin has an entirely different political significance from a fight in the Ruhr, in Saxony, or in Upper Silesia. The strike took place during a Government crisis and precipitated the fall of the Cuno Government. But, comrades, it was only a political strike in its effects and in the given situation. In the sense of a conscious revolutionary aim, the Cuno strike was not a political strike, it had no elemental force behind it.

Serious preparations for civil war were begun by the Party in many, in fact in nearly all places, only after the manifesto of July 11. This inadequate preparation was due to objective weaknesses, since the anti-Fascist Day, with its tremendous possibilities for agitation among the petty-bourgeoisie and the workers, created a situation in which it was almost universally believed that on the 29th the Communists would begin the attack.

There were signs of a rising revolutionary movement. We had temporarily the majority of the workers behind us, and in this situation believed that under favourable circumstances we could proceed immediately to attack. In my opinion we were mistaken. The unfortunate thing was that we over-estimated the fighting power of the majority in the Ruhr, in Saxony, and in Berlin, we could not organise it and consolidate it. As we grew stronger the Government retaliated. It retaliated by prohibiting the Factory Councils.

This situation, which was pregnant of any possibility, we as the Communist Party were unable to drive forward into a storm attack, as we have imagined. And I believe—I must say this quite plainly and bluntly—that had we, as Radek states, recognised this then, and had we in good time, as a Party and as an Executive, taken the necessary measures, had we begun the decisive fight, then the final victory perhaps may not have come in October, but certainly we should not have suffered the defeat we did suffer during the retreat. When we undertook to take advantage of the favourable situation in Central Germany and Saxony for a storm attack against the bourgeoisie, we overlooked the fact that the enemy had already long had the initiative, and that we were unable when the enemy struck first and took the offensive to organise serious resistance.

If I had not wasted the time at my disposal for my report by a too lengthy introduction I should proceed to point out what made the attack of the enemy easy, and how we duped ourselves,

how we saw the situation in a false light. The enemy was able by means of petty-bourgeois Fascism in Bavaria to draw off attention from their open and secret preparations for the seizure of power through Fascism in its heavy industrial and agrarian capitalist form—in the form of Seeckt. As in 1914, 1918, and in the Kapp Putsch, so here too, the victory of Fascism without a fight was possible only because it was covered by the Social-Democrats; Fascism, like the Noske military dictatorship and the November Republic in 1918, acted so to speak from behind the backs of the Social-Democrats. The preparations for the victory of Fascism were concealed by the Coalition Government, by the empowering laws, and by the consent of the Social-Democrats. The belief arose among the masses, not in the Communist Party, but among the elements influenced by the Social-Democrats, in the trade unions, and among the unorganised working-class masses, that the enemy was in Bavaria, and that all these preparations for the seizure of power by Fascism was not intended for a fight against the proletariat, as they really were, but for a fight against the petty-bourgeois Fascist clique, Hitler, Ludendorff, &c.

Comrades, if after the many years of war policy of the German Social-Democrats, if after five years of their post-war policy, it was possible for them to deceive and influence wide sections of the workers by such obvious manœuvres, and for the united front to be shattered by the facts which I have been unable to describe as well as I wished, then we were faced by a situation in which we as Communists had in spite of a shattered united front, either to take up the fight or reject it. That is the situation we were faced with. And I assert that had we, in October, after the manœuvres of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the Social-Democrats succeeded, taken up the fight we should have been forced on from a position of defence against the Reich Executive immediately to the decisive struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. The March action then would have been mere child's play, a poor jest in comparison with the defeat which we would have suffered in that situation. The Central Committee of the German Communist Party, but also the Executive, in drawing their fighting plans, considered only the Party and the proletariat. We overlooked the possibilities and chances and the capacity for manœuvring of the bourgeoisie. It is true that we one-sidedly concentrated our attention only upon Central Germany—the Executive was acquainted with our point of view and did not correct it. I assert that a decisive fight for power was in October and November possible only in Central Germany, and then only under favourable circumstances. These favourable circumstances did not present themselves, partly because of the errors of the Party committed during the decisive weeks, while we were in Moscow. The Party failed to undertake a rousing political campaign. Not sufficient use was made of the empowering law and the temporary prohibitions. But the plan was

drawn up in conjunction with the Executive Committee. If we want to learn, we must criticise the false plan and its mistaken realisation. The great error which resulted in a depression of a part of the working class masses, we considered only one possible form of struggle, namely, the fight for the proletarian power ; had only the dictatorship of the proletariat in mind and no other situation. Therefore we were unable to direct the retreat successfully, and could offer no resistance, as we did during the Cuno strike. Had we not staked all or nothing, we might have undertaken a defensive action, which, of course, would not have ended in victory but would certainly have saved us from decisive defeat. The representative of the Executive in his report stated that comrades during the defeat declared that it was undertaken without a fight. That is not true. From the very first we conducted retiring actions—demonstrations and strikes—and in the very first circulars and instructions. The Party did not act so rapidly. By its victory without a fight Fascism temporarily greatly affected the influence of the Communist Party over the masses. We were consequently not in a position to resist Fascism, to place the Party on an illegal basis, and to take up the struggle anew. It is for this and not a false tactic in the past we have to thank the defeat of October. In the circumstances which existed in 1921 during the March action, I declare that if the decision again lay with me I would pursue the same policy and tactics. No other policy was possible. What the comrades of the opposition desire will lead to the enfeeblement of the German revolution, in spite of their burning love for revolutionary fights, expressed by Thälmann. Speeches such as Thälmann made are easy, but if you are unable to rally the masses, you will be unable to carry out the tasks you set yourself. If we can bring the masses into the struggle, then in the struggle we shall overcome our weaknesses. By increasing our aims and intensifying the struggle we shall be able to secure victory. This time the necessary pre-requisites were lacking. In common with the Executive Committee, we over-estimated our strength and underestimated the strength of the enemy. We were therefore compelled to retreat.

In conclusion let me deal with the prospects for the future.

As far as they are concerned, there are no great differences between us and the opposition. Victory has placed State power completely into the hands of the Fascists. As far as it still tolerates the November Republic, Fascism may either embellish it or abolish it as it wishes. The Fascist dictatorship rests upon the alliance between industry and the agrarians. They can keep the proletariat under for some length of time, and give Fascism a breathing space only if they succeed : (1) in emerging from financial bankruptcy : (2) in winning over and subordinating petty-bourgeoisie Fascism by repressions and concessions : and (3) in splitting the working class by maintaining the appearance of democracy using the Social-Democrats as auxiliary troops, using repressive measures

against the Communist Party, and by playing off the unemployed against the employed. The power of the State and militarism which Fascism has at its disposal, have enabled it to force the ten-hour day upon the proletariat with little resistance. Defensive fights of any importance began only in January. In spite of the reports of the resistance of the workers to the lengthening of the working day, it must be said that the proletariat is in such a state of depression that it accepted the ten-hour day without a fight. The attempts of the Communists to organise resistance against the ten-hour day have met with no great practical results.

What is the reason? In this present economic crisis the proletariat is split. The unemployed is in such a situation that they must fight or be crushed, and their fight will be a fight of despair if the workers leave them in the lurch. There are over three million unemployed in Germany, and they are in such a situation that they must fight. Alone they have no chance of victory. What is the position of the other sections of the working class? There are three million short-time workers in Germany. Depression prevails among the full-time workers also for they are afraid of becoming unemployed or short-time workers. Among the full-time workers and the short-time workers there are sections who, if it were a question of at once entering upon a decisive struggle, weapon in hand, would be prepared for it, but who hesitate to undertake the necessary preliminary small fights, demonstrations, strikes, &c. This is a fact we have to face boldly. If the bourgeoisie succeeds in extending the breach between the unemployed and the full-time workers and short-time workers, it will gain for itself a longer breathing space. This, of course, depends upon the possibility of restoring a temporary economic balance.

Such are the prospects. Lamentations are useless. All the conditions exist to permit us shortly, if we are able, to rally the masses again and to fight. If the Party, as a result of the October defeat, and in the process of self-examination, reaches a crisis, if it is split, then we have lost five years of work. The October defeat was a severe defeat. It has disintegrated the Social-Democrats as never before. The Social-Democrats are faced with a split. This means that if we are not capable of assimilating this section of the working class, a new centrist party will arise. If we cannot assimilate it, if the new party manages to exist more than half-a-year, if we pursue a policy of phrases, as the opposition does, we shall become a sect. We shall then have a new centrist party which will grow not only from elements split off from the Social-Democrats, but also from losses from the Communist Party. This will mean the defeat of the German Revolution for many years, and what is more, the defeat of the world revolution. It is therefore a question of the greatest importance. In spite of the October defeat, there is no need for pessimism. Never before was the activity of the German party of such great importance as it is at the present moment.

III

REPORT OF COMRADE REMMELE

What do the October events prove? They prove that a Workers' Government can be formed only if the revolutionary forces are so disposed that at the very next moment the Workers' Government gives place to the fight for the dictatorship.

(From the Left: The Leipsic Congress!)

Comrades, I say emphatically that this applies particularly to Germany. What the situation is in other countries I cannot judge. Perhaps under certain circumstances things might be quite different from Germany. But in the conditions existing in Germany there can be no question of a Workers' Government except at the moment of direct transition to the fight for power.

Comrades, the resolution of the Fourth Congress envisages other possibilities. It is an international decision. But I believe that in the problem we are now considering it must be definitely stated that if a similar combination of circumstances again occurs in Saxony, the experiment must only be attempted if the necessary conditions making the fight possible have been created; then only can it be undertaken.

These are the experiences we have learned from the October events.

I will now consider the problems arising out of the events which occurred in Germany. One of the most important was the problem of the relation of forces. Let me briefly describe the situation as it existed at that time. In January, when the fight in the Ruhr began, the International quite rightly foresaw that the fight in the Ruhr would produce similar results—if not on quite the same scale, nevertheless quite similar political results—in Germany, as the war has produced. Let me remind you here of the decisions which were taken in Essen in January and in Frankfort in March. In these resolutions it was already clearly recognised that the fight in the Ruhr must lead to an extraordinarily difficult economic and political crisis in Germany, and that it will lead us into quite serious fights. This view was very soon confirmed. The fight in the Ruhr produced exactly similar situations in Germany as existed after or towards the end of the war—acts of desperation, great uprisings. There were not only large strikes, as has been repeatedly pointed out, but throughout large areas of Germany a chaotic state of affairs existed, in which locally and provincially the organisations of the workers to some extent had power in their hands. I must point out that very often in large strike areas, political power was in the hands of the workers, and the various State Governments were not able to carry out a policy of preventing the uprising of the workers. In other words, the movement has reached the pitch which we would very much have desired at the moment when the state of siege was decreed in the Reich.

Let me point out that during the time of the Fascist Movement demonstrations were carried out in spite of the prohibition, not only in the Stuttgart but also in Central Germany, in the north, in the west, and the east of the Reich. We had then in Thuringia and in Central Germany in July and in August a situation in which the workers had the food supplies in their hands: they seized motor trucks and drove into the country to get supplies directly from the peasants, and nobody had the least doubt that we were on the eve of great events. Undoubtedly, the Cuno strike was the apex of the movement, but it is my profound conviction that it was also the turning point of the movement. When the Social-Democrats entered into the great coalition, the Social-Democratic workers were again filled with illusions.

In the middle of August, as a result of the entry of the Social-Democrats into the Government, a certain ebbing of the revolutionary flood set in. When we came to discuss with the Social-Democrats it appeared that they had set fresh hopes upon the entry of Hilferding into the Government. Social-Democrats who had spontaneously come into our camp, who had taken part in the Cuno strike, became filled with new illusions. The kernel of the problem is to win over the Social-Democratic majority.

Now as to what occurred within the Party. What was the attitude of the Party towards the situation? I remember that we held a session of the Central Committee in September to discuss what our attitude should be towards the situation. A member of the Central Committee expressed the point of view that if conditions were ripe in Saxony we should attack. This the Central Committee at that time rejected, on the ground that they were opposed to this Putschist outlook. On the next day arrived the resolution adopted by the Executive here. And so the whole policy of the Party was directed to that which they had rejected the day before. A plan of attack was adopted which made Central Germany the point of concentration. The Party and the whole Party machinery was then mobilised for the armed uprising. All other Party work, the mobilisation of the masses, the organisation of the Factory Councils, was neglected, since the whole Party machine and all the Party officials were employed exclusively on the problem of arming and organising the fight. And so it came about that all other bridges leading to the proletariat were neglected. In our opinion, one of the greatest errors, which must be attributed to the weakness of the Party, was that the problem moved upon us very rapidly and that we concentrated all the efforts of the Party upon the question of arming.

Comrades, once we were compelled to take part in the formation of the Government, the definite moment for the attack could not be delayed. When the instructions of the Executive arrived to the effect that we should enter the Saxon Government, the comrades at first hesitated to carry this decision into effect.

Even before the Communists were in the Government, the Reich Government threatened the Saxon Social Democratic Government that the Reich Executive would take proceedings against it. Our comrades therefore hesitated to carry the resolution into effect. Negotiations were carried on with them; they were obliged to enter the Government, and they did enter the Government.

As events developed the Saxon question of necessity occupied the chief role in the whole International. In my opinion the Saxon problem was not at all faced correctly. We shall very sharply criticise the Saxon Ministers for what they neglected to do. The belief that the Ministers could do a great deal was based upon illusions. The decision that our comrades should participate in the Saxon Government was taken on the basis of reports and representations which were without foundation. The decision was taken in the belief that the arming and mobilisation of the Party and the masses had reached such a stage that this move could be attempted. It was presumed that the defeat of the enemy had gone much further than was actually the case.

Thus we arrived in the position in which the enemy took the offensive and dictated the time of attack. The enemy struck, and we were obliged to say, either there will be a White Dictatorship or we must set up the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. In the first moment of deliberation it was decided to attack and to carry out the plan adopted.

Just previous to October 20 movements which were already in action were checked, so that forces might be preserved in order to be brought into play at the moment decided upon.

Consequently, everything was concentrated upon the armed attack, and only the decisive attack for the decisive fight came into question.

After the fight in Hamburg and after the failure of the Saxon Experiment, the Party could once more rally itself. Very shortly after the session of the Central Committee took place, which attempted to perform a given task, to give a foundation for, or to crystallise the point of view upon which we were at the moment setting. The Central Committee neglected to make a retrospect, to examine what was wrong and what was right. This, of course, led to considerable differences of opinion within the Central Committee and in the districts. Confusion and differences arose because the problem was not clarified by the Central Committee, and this found expression at the sessions of the Central Committee. Since what had already occurred was not explained and clarified, a clear policy could not be thought out.

These differences later, when the Executive sent its letter, gave rise to the attempt to secure clarity on the basis of this letter. The discussion showed that within the Central Committee there were in the main three points of view represented: that of the left—comrades Fischer and Thälmann—that represented

by Brandler and Thalheimer, and that represented by Koenen and myself.

Comrades, the point of view represented by us was expressed in the examination of what had occurred roughly as follows: was it true that in the stage in which we then were, we could arm ourselves for a decisive struggle? This we denied. On the grounds of the particular structure of Germany and the particular class relationships and class forces in Germany, we declared that we had not yet reached the stage when we could fix the period for the decisive struggle. We declared that before the decisive struggles would come about, we should have first to pass through a period of numerous and powerful armed partial struggles. We should have to pass through a stage in which the relations of forces in Germany would vary extremely. And therefore we declared that we should have foreseen what had still not occurred before the October days, and to the recognition of which we came only because of the October days, namely, that, as Brandler has already declared, we should have to pass through a period of armed demonstrations and armed individual actions before we reached the decisive struggle.

Therefore, comrades, we represent the point of view that the method or the theory pursued in October, namely, that in the practical circumstances as they would arise in Germany, to jump out of a period of agitation and propagandist activity immediately into an armed uprising, was false. And this was one of the essential reasons why we were opposed to the preparations for the October action.

I now come to the problems of future developments in Germany and what our main task must be. Here again, the breaking up of the counter-revolutionary bloc within the working class occupies the front place. Only when it is broken up will the way remain clear for the possibility of the armed decisive struggle.

I affirm that the bloc will be best broken up during the course of the struggle; but that should not prevent us from clearly envisaging what has to be done as long as the fight cannot be started and still does not exist. We believe that the defeat of the counter-revolutionary bloc, that appendix of social democracy within the working class, is a most urgent and important matter and one which has still to be accomplished in Germany. It must be done, while bearing in mind the actual possibilities as they exist in Germany. It has been frequently repeated here that one of the most important problems of our revolutionary ideology is to create, to mobilise, and to make use of the Factory Councils. This is absolutely true, but the question must be put thus: What are the Factory Councils, and what possibilities do they represent?

In Germany there are 370,000 factories employing over twenty workers, which the law obliges to elect factory councils. In spite of all measures we have taken in this sphere—we have sent special secretaries to the various districts to organise these factory

councils, we have carried on a tremendous propaganda on behalf of the factory councils and have issued a newspaper—in spite of all this work, we have so far succeeded in mobilising only 5,000 Factory Councils in the 370,000 factories that exist. Yes, comrades, when one hears such figures one cannot help asking: is it indeed possible to seize as many as 370,000? It appears to me that the essential thing is to seize the heavy industries. It is certain that if the factory councils become a true revolutionary element striving forward, the whole working masses will stand behind them. To-day the working masses no longer stand entirely behind the factory councils. But if we succeed in winning almost the whole of the factory councils, in the elections, at least in the heavy industries, then we shall also have the working masses on the side of the revolutionary struggle.

(WARSKI: And how many of the 2,000 heavy industries have we in our hands?)

That I cannot say exactly, but I believe that we have at least in every factory council one or two comrades on our side who are working with us.

Well, comrades, the question is not that we can perform all our tasks through the factory councils alone or, as Comrade Fischer erroneously stated recently, that the strike in Ludwigs-haven was carried on by the factory councils. No. Even the wildest strikes are led by the trade union representatives in the factories concerned. Only large strikes covering considerable areas are led by the factory councils, but the isolated strikes are led by the trade union representatives of the workers.

It is, of course, essential that we should have a perfectly clear policy with regard to the trade union workers.

Comrades, to me it is perfectly clear that the situation as it now stands must lead to a great catastrophe. In October the bourgeoisie had still an extraordinarily powerful force on their side, the official class, which hitherto has been the strongest support of its power. Meanwhile, however, attempts have been made to consolidate the capitalist system at the expense of the officials. We have now a much broader foundation than in August and October.

I represent the point of view that in the next three months there will be many conflicts between the proletariat and the ruling class. The party must be prepared and arm for this. The armed preparation, the armed partial actions as a method of the class struggle must be added to our previous work. It is only in the course of these struggles that the moment for the decisive blow will be determined. Of course, no one can deny that it is possible that bourgeois society will be able to extricate itself from the present situation. It may happen that in the next three months temporary situations such as now exist will arise which will enable the bourgeoisie to extricate themselves from the noose which now hangs about their necks. This possibility

exists, but we cannot bank upon two possibilities. The Party must be so directed as to make it possible during this period to do what has to be done, so that the possibility of a fight should not arise while we have a party which is not capable of action and which has a leadership that must itself be led. The subjective forces of the movement will then grow of themselves. For this it is necessary to have a strong hand at the head of the Party, capable of taking advantage of the existing situation, and to lead it into a victorious fight. For this a brief discussion of the differences is necessary, and of the situation as it is and as it should be. Then the strength of the Party must be directed outwards. As long as we dissipate our forces in struggles within the Party, we shall have no strength to fight and to exert influence outside.

The comrades who have developed themselves in the course of the struggle should work together in co-operation, and the leadership should not be left to a single individual. There are many comrades amongst our leaders who have been in the Party for many years, but have only just, in the course of the struggle, found themselves fighting by each other's side.

The Russian comrades say that it is the tradition of the old Bolsheviks that keeps them together, but we cannot speak of an old tradition within the Communist Party in Germany. We can, however, speak of an old tradition of the opposition in the Social-Democratic Party who have been working together for many years. That the bond between these comrades is closer than the bond between them and the comrades who have just come over to us is, of course, only natural.

We have come to the point of view that Brandler, in leading the Party, often acted too independently, so that many things occurred which the comrades did not desire. We have expressed the opinion that it is desirable, if Brandler is to lead the Party, that there should be strong collective action in the leadership of the Party. As to the situation within the Party and as to the Left, I repeat what I said yesterday. The opposition must come into the Central Committee, since Thälmann represents an opposition which arises from a proletarian feeling, from a good proletarian tradition, which Thälmann himself possesses. But the opposition represented by Ruth Fischer and Maslov is not an opposition which has grown out of real situations, but which was born out of theories. That is the criticism which I have to direct against this opposition; they do not represent reality, they believe that the world is created out of their own heads.

I think it is essential that this dispute should now come to an end, that it is our duty to return from Moscow with a strong hand and a strong leadership for the forthcoming struggles. This is essential above all in the period of illegality. If in such a period we have not the absolute confidence in one another, nothing can be done.

REPORT OF COMRADE RUTH FISCHER

The October defeat was no defeat, for there was no fight. It was rather a collapse, a complete rejection of the Party.

When one compares the three reports, one sees that the first report of the Central Executive and Brandler's report belong together. You can judge them as you like, they have a consistent line of policy, and this consistent theory is accompanied by a bad German practice.

What Remmele said amounts to an attempt on the part of certain very good people to depose of things, which they cannot otherwise explain, by regarding them as errors, as the results of a definite, and to them dangerous, policy. And consequently the fact that for a year and a half Remmele had been holding himself back, that he reacted during the Friesland and the Levi crises, and is now again reacting, is an indication that a reaction is setting in within the Party against a very typical liquidationism and revisionism. Comrades, if we oppose this revisionism so vigorously it is because in the development of our Party the Levi and the Friesland crises were the first severe liquidation crises we passed through. In those crises we learned to look behind the masks and formulas for causes and theoretical foundations which must lead to practical consequences.

What was here expressed by the Executive representative and by Brandler, denotes the beginning of a liquidation crisis, not only within the German Communist Party, but within the whole Communist International. There was such a crisis after the Third World Congress. It is to be explained by the backwash of the revolution in Europe, and in Germany particularly by the defeat in the March action.

The Third Congress met the backwash of the revolutionary wave with the slogan for the winning over and rallying of the masses for the seizure of power. And this correct change of position the liquidators of the German Party transformed into the revision of Communism, the rejection of the Communist Party as such; they derived from it such conclusions as that we must return to the methods of the Social-Democratic Party. And, comrades, they did return, and every Berlin worker who reads *Vorwärts* sees the signature "Ediot, Ernst Reuter," and thinks of the bitter experience we have passed through.

Comrades, the crisis in the Communist International was never completely overcome. It is true that we made certain expulsions, drove out Fossard, or perhaps he left of his own accord; we also expelled a few in Germany. But the theoretical analysis was never made which is essential if our workers are to understand that a breach of discipline is meant not in the sense of organisation but in the sense of policy. An attempt was made to formulate the matter a little more carefully in order to restrain the working class

elements. And the result was that the poison was not driven out of the German Communist Party, nor, I fear, out of the Communist International.

The tactic of the united front was a consistent deduction from the slogan "To the Masses." This tactic had with us a very remarkable history, which I beg all foreign comrades to study carefully, for it is an illustration of how the attempt is made to transform the correct idea of the united front as a method of agitation into revisionism. Out of the open letter on the Rathenau campaign, out of the meeting of the Executives of the three Internationals, out of the thousand details develops the attempt to fuse the German Communist Party and the German Socialist Party organisationally. When, for instance, in the last few years our German comrades discovered that the finest thing about the Russian Revolution is the New Economic Policy, that it is the true meaning of Socialism, when they go further and declare that the New Economic Policy must come before the conquest of power, and that it is the one thing needful—this is a symptom of an attempt to carry the policy to the end.

The October situation began to evince itself with the beginning of the occupation of the Ruhr. But it now appears to be unanimously agreed that the course of the German revolution was rather interrupted by the occupation of the Ruhr, that the German bourgeoisie were disturbed in their attempts at consolidation and subjection to foreign capitalism and that an internal political crisis arose. But it is not by chance that the Leipsic Party Congress by a fractional vote refused to hear a report and speech on the Ruhr occupation. We all value Comrade Zetkin extremely, but a mere report by Comrade Zetkin and the adoption of a manifesto cannot be regarded as an examination of the Ruhr question.

It is most important to remember that regarding the theses of the Leipsic Party Congress, which were emphatically disavowed by the Executive, the Executive representative more than once declared that he had read through the majority theses, pencil in hand, and had not found the least trace of a false formulation. This is a part of the policy of a common platform which he, in competition with Brandler, to-day developed.

Comrades, the Leipsic Congress came very near to a split, and no purpose is served by concealing the fact. The factional warfare and mutual hatred of the two groups was so acute that it was only by the intervention of the Executive at the last minute that a split was prevented. We made practically no preparations for the Leipsic Congress. We were in the situation of people who have not even the right to oppose the old party leaders. Nevertheless, we obtained the votes of a quite considerable number of workers from the most important industrial areas, although the situation was far from being clear and definite.

Every single action which the party conducted in the period from the Leipsic Congress to October, had a double aspect. The

rise of the revolutionary wave, the impulse forward of the workers, the mood of the workers on the one hand and of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party on the other. Every single action proved this. We attempted in each case to develop our own standpoint, to make it clear from February to October that the Ruhr fight was the introduction of a new period, and that the question of power was on the order of the day. At the Wasserkante District Congress Brandler called us idiots, because we failed to understand that the next stage in Germany was a Left Social-Democratic and trade union workers' government, and that there was time enough for bringing the question of power to the fore. In his opinion the latter ought to be *avoided*.

The Executive of Comintern realised that historically the possibility of the seizure of power was on the order of the day and that the bourgeoisie were attempting a decisive attack against the working class, and not against the November Republic.

The contradiction between the fact that the Executive of Comintern somewhat differently from the German Communist Party understood the united front tactic as a method of winning the masses to Communism, and what we actually experienced in Germany, led to the fact that we had later to reproach ourselves for the collapse.

When the Party representatives returned from Moscow, one of them spoke in Berlin and declared that in three days we should have power in Saxony, and then we should march on Berlin.

Comrades, this characteristic distortion in practice of the decisions of the Communist International proved that the Party had not the strength to fight as a revolutionary party, let alone to fight for power. The characteristic feature of the policy of the German Communist Party, according to Brandler, was that it over-rated the revolutionary forces in October. The more the Reich fell asunder and the more the inflation crisis developed into economic disruption, the more it was declared that the relation of forces was against us. Yet so much was talked of civil war in August. When, however, we were obliged to fight, the Central Committee suddenly discovered that the forces at its disposal were not sufficient for a fight.

That is typical opportunism: when the time comes for attacking, it is discovered that forces are not sufficient. After the opportunity has passed the revolution is promised in three months. This is typical German trade union tactics.

Comrades, the October defeat culminated in two points—in Hamburg and in Saxony. The contrast between the Chemnitz Conference and the fight of the Hamburgers is so great that the Party was unable to pass it over. As regards Saxony, the situation was systematically and deliberately misrepresented to the Party and to the International. Comrades, I say that whoever thinks that Brandler did not know that weapons were not to be secured in Saxony, does not understand him. He consciously carried on

his activities there so as to carry out the tactic of the united front from beginning to end, as he imagined.

I should like to take the example of the Chemnitz Conference. When a responsible politician sees that the Party is faced with an immediate armed struggle he must attempt to prepare the masses ideologically for it. The Party cannot be led into an armed conflict unless the masses are ideologically prepared for it.

At Chemnitz, however, it was intended to discuss economic industrial questions and not to call upon and mobilise the masses for the fight. When Graupe, at the moment of the civil war, declared that the masses could not be called upon to fight then but later, his method was the same as that employed by Brandler. At the decisive moment they declined because they cherished the theory of a constitutional transition from the Workers' Government to the paradise of Socialism.

The Hamburg fight is a proof that the Party, even as a minority, can win the masses for the fight, that it is not necessary to take up the ground of Social Democracy in order to secure an adequate relation of forces. I can hardly describe to you how the Hamburg fight affected the working class in Berlin. When the news reached Berlin that the Hamburg workers were fighting weapon in hand, the Berlin workers were moved, but they hardly reacted at all to the Saxon question. That shows that we shall win the workers for the struggle and be able to mobilise them if we have the courage as a Communist Party to enter the fight even without the Social-Democrats. This lesson of the Hamburg fight leads us back to the same problem of the German revolution, namely, that we must win over the masses.

There are two answers.

Shall we win the masses by wrapping ourselves in the cloak of Social Democracy by appearing to be constitutional? Or shall we win them by showing a clear Communist face, by acting as a Communist Party, and by displaying a clear Communist practice and theory.

Comrades, I say that only when we remember that we have made it easy for the Social-Democratic workers to remain in the Social-Democratic Party can we conceive what the present strength of the United Socialist Party of Germany is. The Left Social-Democratic workers who were beginning to understand that the Social-Democratic Party was a bad party, we have by our united front tactic, again united to their party.

I am of the opinion that the workers will be gradually driven towards Communism if our Party stands forth boldly and conscious of its aim, and by the strength of the International. If, however, we offer the Left Social-Democratic workers the outlet of the united front, then even the dissatisfied Social-Democratic workers will remain with the S.P.G. The talk about the split of the

Social-Democratic Party is incorrect. The Social-Democratic Party will not split. The disruptive process was disturbed by the tactics of our Party and by the October collapse. I can prove by figures that the Left Social-Democrats are not in the majority. If they finally split off it will be in order to unite with the Right Communists, and then they will attempt to form a Centrist Party. Comrades, I have had letters distributed among you in which the same point of view is expressed by working-class circles.

(Laughter.)

I should like to ask the comrades of the Right to consider seriously the mood of the Leipsic comrades and how much confidence they still have in Böettcher and Brandler. You are playing with the mood of the workers. And indeed, it was only the existence of the Communist International which prevented large sections from passing over to the Communist Labour Party because of the attitude of the Party in October. If you continue to behave in this way you will disgust good workers and drive them out of the Party. Not Ruth Fischer: she is too clever to be caught in a breach of discipline.

Comrades, the collapse is therefore not to be explained by technicalities, by small errors. We shall not abandon this platform and we will fight it through to the end, for it is the only means of saving the Party—which consists of good workers—from opportunism. The representative of the E.C.C.I. pursued a tactic in Germany which was very good for its own purposes, but which nevertheless was a political masquerade. Now he comes forward and declares that he has changed his point of view completely since October: one need not always say A, one may also say B. We have read an article of his written before October in which he says that Fascism must first triumph in Germany before the workers will fight. He has the same fiery perspective as Brandler, declaring in the midst of the defeat: "We need not fight now; it would be light-minded and inexcusable to suggest fighting now, for the situation improves for us every day." This is the prospect which the comrades dared to put forward after Chemnitz and Hamburg. Brandler, as a responsible person, declared that the situation would get better every day; he added that it would perhaps require only four weeks in order to undertake the fight for power. This produced a burst of indignation in the Central Committee; it must take place in ten days, it was declared. Brandler fixed four weeks as the minimum. The following is characteristic of all these accusations: when action was possible—as for instance when on the Anti-Fascist Day we demanded that we should demonstrate—it was not done, and Brandler, in order to make the demonstration impossible, declared that if we demonstrated the world would collapse as the result of armed collisions. And to avoid this, and to avoid the suppression of the Party, he forbade

the demonstration. It is a characteristic method to roar oneself hoarse in order to make a thing impossible.

Consequently, it was decided not to demonstrate on the anti-Fascist day, in spite of the fact that the whole of Berlin was tensely expecting it and had prepared itself for it. At the lowest estimate 250,000 workers assembled at our meetings. That was the mood of the masses. And yet we were not to demonstrate, because Brandler demanded of me a guarantee that no armed collisions would take place. And since I could not, and would not, give such a guarantee, the demonstrations were forbidden. But in October, when the Party was in its most difficult crisis, when our workers were being restrained with difficulty from leaving the Party, the representative of the Executive Committee demanded an armed demonstration, merely on political grounds, so to speak. We carried through the demonstration and gave it armed protection; we carried through what the Executive had demanded, for that we shall always do.

I will now deal with the state of the Party and what is bound to take place. Many comrades think that it is an insult to the Communist Party to say it is not a good party. Comrades, it is nevertheless a fact that leadership is not understood in our Party. That illusion has collapsed in Germany.

A profound process is going on in the membership of the Party itself. Within the Party there are tendencies to go over to the Social Democrats. It would be folly not to recognise that this mood exists.

The crisis in the Party cannot be healed by a compromise, by swallowing all stupidities without a murmur. The crisis can be solved only by brutally declaring that there is revisionism in the Party. If we declare this, we may be able to cure the Party. If not, the Centre will form a coalition with the Social-Democrats and at the next Party congress there will be a split.

Our immediate duty is to rearrange and regroup the Party. Without such a regrouping, the Party will be incapable of action.

I should like to add to what the representative of the Executive said about Fascism, namely, that the Fascists had defeated the November Republic. Comrades, what did it mean to say that Fascism had defeated the November Republic? It was sheer demagogic declaration designed to turn the minds of the workers away from the defeat. That was the prime purpose. These theses naturally made the work of our people more difficult.

I must declare (1) that the Party was deceived about the defeat and (2) that the justification was based upon Democratic illusions. This policy can only be justified when one distinguishes between a Fascist, industrial, and a Social-Democratic government, and if one advances the theory that the democratic republic was a non-class structure.

I would like to recommend the comrades of the International to read the last volume of the German *International*. I have

underlined ten quotations from Brandler's article. There you find the revisionist meaning of the theses on the victory of the Fascists over the November Republic. Comrades, the point of view there expressed serves as a theoretical explanation of the policy of our Party in October ; it is the consequence of Radek's analysis.

As to the prospects of future struggles in Germany. When I opposed the three months' perspective, it was because the Party to-day is not in a position to lead great decisive struggles, unless it consolidates itself internally. There will be fights, but they will be of a different nature from those which preceded October. The characteristic feature of the latter were that they were struggles that started over economic questions, but immediately assumed a political form ; they became struggles for power. In the Cuno strike we said to Schlecht, one of our factory leaders : you must tell the people that we are in favour of economic assistance. He, however, stormily declared to the people : we want no economic assistance, we want to overthrow the government. This call to the masses was symbolic of the change which had overtaken the mass movement. We shall again have fights, comrades, but they will be fights in defence of economic interests and for economic demands. We shall have to make the centre of our activity the eight-hour day, which is now smashed, and every penny of wages. We shall have to take care that the breach between the unemployed and the employed does not become too great. We shall have to fight for the Factory Councils—not that they should become Soviets, but they should not be driven out of the factories because the employers are beginning to liquidate them.

Such will be the different nature of the coming conflicts. These conflicts may and will lead to a great union of the Party with the masses, although we must return to old positions. We have won ground, and thanks to the vagueness of our policy, lost it again. It will now be a question of again gaining ground among the masses ; not of conducting a policy among the Social-Democrats which is tearing us to pieces, but of a policy which will consolidate us and will win the masses away from Social-Democracy. Then, perhaps, the conflicts will be transformed into struggles for power sooner than we expected. But without other political lines of policy, we shall conduct also these conflicts only with partial success and shall not be able to become a real revolutionary party. We demand that the Communist International should give a clear decision and that a Party congress should be held at which shall be discussed the question of how the Party is to be conducted. And we shall be on our guard against the oratory of certain comrades. Let us forget the past, a glad and glorious future lies before us. The past has not been in vain.

SPEECH BY COMRADE ZINOVIEV

Comrades, we must examine the situation in which this discussion commenced.

We are all agreed that we have suffered a severe defeat. I think it is an exaggeration to say that we have suffered disaster, but still, the reverse was serious. Our experience is that this is the best test for every revolutionary party and every party policy, and precisely during this defeat must we undergo this test. If we lose heart and paint everything in the darkest colours, then the Party may indeed break up. Now in the time of reverse, every German comrade must show of what he is capable. It is quite easy to be in a good mood during victory, but it is during this period of difficulty that we must show faith in the Party.

Just one word before going into the essentials of the subject. It has been said here that a split in the German Communist Party would mean the collapse of the German Revolution, or at least that the Revolution would be postponed for five years. This is absolutely true. For that reason I think that we must enter into the discussion determined that who ever, irrespective of persons, in the spirit of factionalism, even if out of conviction, threatens the unity of the Party at this particular stage, must be branded as committing a crime against the German working class. Situations arise in which we must be prepared to split, and we have had splits, but situations also arise when we must put up with anything to avoid a split. I assert that we have just such a situation now in Germany. Whoever at this moment is aiming at a split, even from conviction, is objectively aiding the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie, and not the German working class.

And now to the essentials of the discussion.

It is attempted to assert here: October was not a mistake, we have not under-estimated, but it was before that, in the beginning of the Ruhr crisis that the present situation arose.

Of course, had we begun to make preparations at the opening of the Ruhr crisis, we would have been much better prepared, and the earlier we would have made our preparations the better it would have been. But this kind of argument can be stretched quite a long way. It is a sophism to endeavour to conceal the error at the point where it was actually committed. We must be honest to ourselves, and if we are we shall discover the error.

The picture which Comrade Koenig described of the incident between the German women and the French soldiers, was interesting. Indeed, the Ruhr situation was the starting point of the whole business.

I have before me the instructions of the Executive to the Communist Delegation of the Frankfurt Conference of March 17, 1923. What did we say?

“The Essen Conference was mainly a demonstration conference. The conference of March 17 must be a working conference.”

In the circumstances under which the Essen Conference was held even a demonstration was a great political event. The more or less successful co-ordination of the activities of the French and German Communist Parties in connection with the occupation of the Ruhr must not be under-estimated. Merely to repeat the Essen affair at this moment, however, would mean a step backwards. The conference of March 17, and particularly the preliminary conference, have two tasks to perform.

- (a) To draw up a real, common, clear, fixed, and concentrated programme of action for the important sections affected.
- (b) To draw up and actually carry out a number of organisational and partially conspirative measures.

Then follows a whole chapter dealing with the tasks of the French Party.

Consequently, the Executive saw the tasks ahead, and pointed them out to the Conference. That these tasks were badly fulfilled, in spite of the fact that the youth in France are now well trained, can, if you will, now be asserted. We have done this sufficiently, but we must not reduce this to a sophism; that because we did not at that time raise the question of armed revolt, therefore, the mistake was committed at that time.

No, the mistake in October was due to the German Party and partly also due to the Executive.

On the question of fixing a date, Comrade Trotsky wrote an article in which he raised the point of a time-table.

That was a mistake. I must say that Radek was opposed to this.

(BRANDLER: I, too.)

Brandler, too. We decided that the date should be fixed merely for our orientation, and that the question must be settled in Germany. Therefore the question of the date was not a mistake on the part of the Executive or on the part of the Russian Party. We decided in the proper way.

Let me quote to you another document. Our telegram of October 1, 1923, concerning Saxony:—

“As we have estimated that the decisive moment will arrive not later than four, five, or six weeks, we consider it necessary that every position that can bring immediate advantage be occupied. In view of the situation, the question of our entry into the Saxony Government must be raised practically. We must enter on the condition that the Zeigner people are really prepared to defend Saxony against Bavaria and the Fascists, the immediate arming of 50,000 to 60,000, and that General Muller be ignored. The same to apply to Thuringen.”

This is a telegram that was decided on in the presence of Brandler. Was it correct, or not? It was absolutely correct,

if the Zeigner people really desired to fight the Fascists and arm 50,000 to 60,000 workers.

(VARSKI : It was a great mistake.)

The representative of the German Party gave us this figure. 50,000 to 60,000.

(PIECK : The Party was not informed of these conditions.)

This telegram was decided on in the presence of three German and three Russian comrades.

However, how did we present the situation to ourselves ? As an episode in the civil war, and we informed you of this in the text.

I want, thirdly, to make another quotation on the question of our attitude to the Left Social-Democracy and towards the Social-Democracy as a whole." In the presence of the German representatives, we resolved that we have to conduct the campaign, not only *without* the Left Social-Democracy, but even *against* it."

These documents are sufficient to recall to your minds what the Executive had decided.

These documents should also refresh your memories, and you will understand how the Executive was placed, and that the comrades had agreed to its position.

(BRANDLER : I did not agree to the telegram.)

Comrades, I must admit that I and the other comrades bear most of the responsibility for the entry into the Saxony Government. Brandler somewhat hesitated on this. He said : " I do not know whether the situation is ripe for it," but he agreed. I do not wish to shirk any responsibility. It was the general view, and decided upon with you after consultation with the French, with the Polish, and with the Czecho-Slovak Parties, we said, if it was really a question of weeks we must utilise this in the event of civil war.

Well, this was the general view.

Now, comrades, how was it *carried out* ? That is the most important question. Take Saxony. Comrade Remmele said yesterday : " Is it so important to bring up now about the Ministers being too late ? Is not this opportunism ? What can we expect from Ministers ? "

What is right in this statement ? Of course, the most important is what the masses do. But for us, it is a symptom of wrong tendencies in the Party. The main question is, of course, why the civil war did not come, and why the masses could not be mobilised. You must understand, however, why we place so much importance upon the speeches of the Communist ministers : because it was a symptom of the wrong tendency in our Party. Who were the ministers ? Our leading and best comrades. Brandler, Heckert, Boettcher. For us, their speeches were a symptom of decay.

(THÄLMANN : Quite true.)

Compare the ideas contained in our telegram with the style

of the speeches of these ministers. Of course, the most important is, why the masses did not rise, but the conduct of the ministers implied something. It implied an incorrect orientation.

Comrade Fischer undoubtedly exaggerated yesterday when she said that Brandler was playing a deliberate game. One of the greatest defects of Comrade Fischer's otherwise good speeches, is that she exaggerates. Things are reduced to a caricature. This generally is the chief defect of the left wing, and we have frequently said this to our bolshevik left. It is impossible that Brandler should have acted so deliberately.

(WALCHER: It was her only argument.)

But she put forward many good arguments with which we must agree. The reason why we pay so much attention to the speeches of the Communist ministers was that they were the reflection of an incorrect policy. That is why things were reduced to a banal hotch-potch with the Social-Democracy.

We wrongly estimated the situation. We could not arm sixty, let alone 60,000. It turned out that the situation had been over-estimated. But why were we obliged to come out like Social-Democrats? Why should we have talked about the constitutionality of our position? Why was it made to appear that we alone were responsible for the Landtag? This is old-fashioned and, at best, a Bebelist position of the '90's. Bebel in his best period said this. At that time it was right. Now, however, we must appeal to the direct revolutionary forces of the workers, and must say that the Left Social-Democracy is the principal enemy; the Left goes with the Right, with Seckt, Seckt with Ludendorf. But we must never say we stand on the basis of the constitution.

Therefore, the carrying out of the tasks was extraordinarily bad, and threatened greater dangers for our Party than anybody imagined. That is why we unanimously decided to send the critical letter to the German Central Committee. This, too, must not be forgotten. I do not wish to shift the responsibility upon other comrades. I wrote the letter. But it was not my personal letter, as has been stated in Germany. Yes, it is one of the notorious letters. A commission was appointed which included both Comrades Kolarov and Zetkin, who made certain amendments, most of which I accepted.

(ZETKIN: I beg to observe that the letters were written before we had received full information—before we received any information.)

Of course, we were not as well informed as we are now. I am prepared to say that in certain details my decision now is different to what it was before, but in the main we were right. If we can defend what has happened in Germany—in Saxony, we should join the Second International. We do not need elastic formulas, but we must express the facts. We have already expressed much in the theses of the present majority on the Central Committee,

The attitude towards the Social-Democracy as a whole. It

was here decided that the principal enemy is the Left Social Democracy, and that we must fight apart, without and against the Social-Democracy. I must confess that I said in this article, when in Berlin in the middle of October, some of our comrades had sat a week with these rascals, and drew up a programme ; and the next day they said postpone the meeting for two days, we will come with a new programme.

Now, comrades, comes the question of the united front. Speaking generally, are there differences of opinion on this question in the Communist International? Yes, we have shades and nuances. We have not fought them out. Now, however, they must be fought out to the end.

Where is my mistake in having said at the meeting of the Enlarged Executive, that the workers' government is a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. I was attacked by a representative of the majority. It was said : " You are spoiling our agitation, we cannot put forward this motto." I conceded, because I agreed that in practical agitation there is no need to blab at all. Now, however, it is clear that the objection was not made out of consideration for practical agitation, but an error in principle. Absolutely, however, the workers' government is nothing else than a pseudonym for the proletarian dictatorship—or else it is a Social-Democratic opposition.

Radek will assert that, immediately after Leipsic, I said : " Here we have either a great deviation in style or a great political deviation." Soon, I believe a week after, the conference of the Czecho-Slovak Party took place. The same formulations of democracy. It was clear that Brandler had united with them.

My mistake lay in not having fought the matter out. I said to myself wait, the thing is new, perhaps it can be fought out in a friendly way.

Well, the cry about the " pseudonym," the Leipsic decisions, then the decisions of the Czecho-Slovak Party Conference, all these were opportunist deviations. We must watch this carefully and correct it, otherwise we shall corrupt our Party.

What is the united front? In the theses brought in by the Politbureau of our Russian Party, we say : " The united front is a method of revolution and not of evolution, a method of agitating and of mobilising the masses in the present period against the Social-Democracy," and nothing more. He who believes that it implies more is giving a finger to the devil. It is not and cannot mean any more than this. He who believes otherwise, makes a concession to the counter-revolutionary Social-Democracy. This must be fought out to the end.

Well, comrades, we must fight this question out now not nationally but internationally. I stand absolutely on the position of the Fourth Congress. What did the Fourth Congress say? Not every Labour government is a proletarian government. Look at the situation as it is now. In a few days, we shall have the

MacDonald government in England. This will be a Labour government.

(A VOICE : No.)

It is, or else you are against the decisions of the Fourth Congress. At the Fourth Congress we even quoted the case of Australia. Compare Saxony with MacDonald. Saxony is a bagatelle in comparison. But on the eve of the proletarian revolution in Germany it is a great episode. Compare the two. What do we see ? Either the workers' government is a pseudonym for the proletarian dictatorship, or it is what the MacDonald government will be, a translation into English of the Scheidemann government. What did we have in Saxony ? It was said objectively that it was an attempt on the part of the Communists to march together with the Social-Democrats, and objectively it resulted in a banal hotch-potch.

Comrade Fischer quite rightly reminded us yesterday that the news of the entry of the Communists into the Saxony Government came during the Fourth Congress.

(A VOICE : It was rejected.)

Rejected in Germany. The authoritative representatives of the Party, about twenty comrades including Thalheimer, Meier, and others were in Moscow. It is a fact that they favoured entry. We spent a whole evening fighting them, and the Russian Party leaders, including Lenin and Trotsky, unanimously resolved that we could not permit this, it would be opportunism. Why ? I was and am of the opinion that the moment we entered this government, we would lose the practical possibility of utilising this watchword for the purpose of agitation. We take the workers' government as a pseudonym for proletarian dictatorship, and the moment it is achieved, it will damage the possibility of utilising this word agitationaly.

The position with regard to the united front was similar. You will remember at the time the united front was resolved on came the idea of the Executive of the Three Internationals. I was of the opinion that this should be delayed as long as possible, for immediately we came together it would weaken the forces of the united front agitation. Nothing would come of it. Either we would make concessions to the Social-Democrats or nothing would come of it, and the centre of attraction of the united front would be lost. For it is nothing more than a method of agitation.

We must understand to apply it under varying conditions. He who expects more than this, stands on the position of the Social-Democracy. Yesterday Comrade Brandler said something that to me was most interesting. He said : we must admit that as a result of the application of the united front tactics the psychology of the masses has produced something in the nature of an evolutionary theory—first comes the bourgeois coalition, then the Social-Democratic Government supported by the Communists, and perhaps something will come after. Is it true

that this view has arisen among the masses? If it is, then it is a strong argument against your application of the united front tactics.

HESSE: "Brandler's article."

There is something more important than Brandler's article: not merely Brandler's fault or the fault of the Executive, but an important fact, which we must investigate.

KOENEN: "There is no such opinion."

THÄLMANN: "There is, particularly in Saxony."

Brandler was the first to assert this. In his declaration he laid special emphasis on this, for he was the father of the united front tactic in Germany, which is no reflection on him. We did this altogether. When he now says: objectively the position is that the masses conceive it was one government gradually developing out of the other, then we must ponder very deeply over where the fundamental error lies. I think it lies not in the united front tactics as such, but in their application. This must not be overlooked. This is a matter that cannot be taken lightly. It is a more weighty question than any other.

This then, is the position with regard to the united front. I think there is no cause for revising it fundamentally. Fundamentally, it is correct and will remain so. It is similar to the question of revolutionary parliamentarism. We stand with both feet firmly on that ground. How did we fight that question? We said Bombacci is a fool; the parliamentary faction in Germany is weak, so it is in France. But this is not taking up a position on principle. We must understand how to fight for the proper carrying out of an idea. The tactics are determined by the fact that we are a minority in the working class, and that the Social-Democracy has the majority, and that in the main we are still on the defensive and not on the offensive—Capitalism is on the offensive. Consequently, these tactics must apply for several years, throughout the duration of this position of the Communist Labour Movement. But in order to appreciate this idea we must ruthlessly combat any incorrect application of it. Otherwise, comrades, the ordinary workers will indeed say: it cannot be much of an idea; it is carried out badly in France, and also in Czecho-Slovakia and Germany, where they have the best Communist Parties. The united front tactic apparently is not a good idea at all. But the united front cannot be a good idea without flesh and blood.

In view of the formulation which is now given to it, it is most important that the matter be honestly thought out to the very end. On behalf of my party and with the unanimous approval of the Politbureau, I submit the following:—

"The united front is nothing more than a method of agitating and mobilising the proletarian forces in the period in which we at present find ourselves. All else is Social-Democratic." But, comrades, we must have regard to shades and colours. It would

not be difficult to find an elastic formula ; we are all masters of this craft ; “ on the one hand,” “ not only,” “ but,” &c. But we do not see this. When we are a minority on the Executive, we fight gradually to become a majority. We hope we will not become a minority. We must speak right out. A stage of so-called democracy in coalition with the Social-Democracy is out of the question. He who desires this already has one foot in the camp of the Social-Democracy, perhaps he has both feet there already. If so all the better. He who believes that an alliance is possible between the Communists and the Social-Democrats, holds the viewpoint of the Social-Democracy. Really he is a centrist.

Well, comrades, we have had some bad experiences in Germany. The only good thing will be if we can bring clarity into this matter.

I come now to the question of Social-Democracy in Germany and in connection with it to the questions of Fascism, who has won, &c.

Yesterday, comrade Radek rightly said that the first question a political leader asks himself is : who rules in the particular country ? Who rules in Germany ? But this question must not be put in too simple a form. He replies : the Fascists. I ask : Who share in the government of Germany ? And I reply : the Social-Democracy.

(BRANDLER : Quite true.)

Oh, this is quite true, is it ? We will soon see the logic of it.

Since 1918 a “ bloc ” rules in Germany. It is too simple to say the Fascists rule. A “ bloc ” rules. The bourgeois revolution came against the will of the Social-Democracy. Until the very last moment they stood for the monarchy. The bourgeois revolution took place in Germany in spite of the Social-Democracy. Germany described itself as a Socialist Republic. Now they wish to adopt the term November Republic. I ask the German comrades whether this term was really popular. I think we are interested in introducing the old Marxian terminology. When we speak of scientific definitions we should use Marxian terminology.

What have we in Germany ? A bourgeois democracy. It is somewhat different from the French, American and Swiss Democracies, but the type is similar. During the five years of the existence of this bourgeois democracy the Social-Democrats have done everything they could gradually to transfer the whole of the power, or at any rate, the greater part of it, to the bourgeoisie. A “ bloc ” rules in Germany. In this “ bloc ” the relations of forces has somewhat changed recently. This is a fact. Somewhat changed. How easily you forget. You say the situation now is different, the Communist Party is prohibited now, whereas Noske did not prohibit the Communist Party.

(WALCHER : It is much better now.)

Good. We must clearly scrutinise those who share power in Germany. The Social-Democracy. Is not Severing a minister ? Severing is an accomplice.

What does this imply ? That even now we have a bloc. Ebert is president, but that is not so important. We know that thousands and tens of thousands of Social-Democrats are in government offices. They sit in their jobs, and have something to defend. To speak precisely, it is too simple to say that Fascism is in power, Social-Democracy shares power with it. It is a bloc. And that is why the formula that Fascism has conquered—the November Republic—falls to the ground. It is totally wrong. Immediately we try to examine it closely it disappears. First of all, is the term November Republic correct ? If you are Marxists, you must say bourgeois democracy. In principle, is it any other system ? No. Bourgeois democracy is in power and approximately it is the same as in France. Do you think that the generals do not rule in France ? Secondly : the republic cannot be defeated without the working class being defeated. This is a literary flourish, or a piece of opportunism similar to that at Leipsic. It were better if it were merely a literary flourish.

Why is it politically harmful ? Because from it follows an incorrect estimation of the Social-Democracy, which for us is the most important question ; whether there will be any new deviations among us. If it is true that the Social-Democracy is defeated, it follows that there must be an approach to it on our part. Comrade Arvid in a letter writes with a naive gesture : “ Why do we employ this formula ? Because only by this formula can we explain why we now repudiate partial slogans and partial struggles.” But, comrades, this is all topsy-turvy. In order to make the repudiation of partial demands convenient, we employ wrong terminology. No one can deny that if it is true that Social-Democracy has been defeated, an approach to the Social-Democracy follows from this. Marx in his “ Communist Manifesto,” taught us much that when it is a question of reaction or the petty-bourgeoisie, we must go with the latter. In Germany, however, the situation is different. Reaction rules, but it shares power with the Social-Democracy. We must fight both. From your terminology, however, quite a different conclusion follows.

This, then, is the position. We must change the tactics for Germany, for as it is perfectly clear now, the Social-Democracy has become a wing of Fascism. It is a Fascist Social-Democracy. Hence the necessity for modifying our tactics.

(WALCHER : That is what we say.)

No, you did not say that. You abuse them, but you fail to understand yet how to explain this to the masses of the workers in a Marxian manner. It is easy to abuse and call them the accomplices of the bourgeoisie. The Social-Democracy has not been defeated. It is a part of the whole thing, and the whole of international Social-Democracy is developing along the same way. We can see this quite clearly. What is Pilsudsky, and the others ? Fascist Social-Democrats. Were they this ten years ago ? No. Of course, at that time they were potential Fascists, but it is

precisely during this epoch of revolution, that they have become Fascists. What is the Italian Social-Democracy? It is a wing of the Fascists. Turati is a Fascist Social-Democrat. Could we have said this five years ago? No. Do you remember the group of academicians who gradually developed into a bourgeois force, the Italian Social-Democrats, now are a Fascist Social-Democracy. Take Turati, d'Arragona, or the present Bulgarian governmental Socialists. Ten years ago we had opportunists, but could we say then that they were Fascist Social-Democrats? No. It would have been absurd to say that them. Now, however, they are Fascists. They keep repeating: we are from the Second International, we are Social-Democrats. We must understand what is taking place. It is not enough to abuse the Social-Democrats. On the one hand we have MacDonald, chairman of the Second International, coming into power. The British bourgeoisie politely invite him to rule. Of course, it is evidence of the weakness of the bourgeoisie; the working class is growing; it became a factor, but it also shows what has become of the Social-Democrats. The British bourgeoisie places the president of the Second International in the saddle.

We can abuse MacDonald, we may call him traitor and accomplice of the bourgeoisie, but we must understand in what period we are living. The international Social-Democracy has now become a wing of Fascism. This we must explain to the German workers. But this is quite a different view. It will mark a new starting point in policy and agitation and throws a completely new light on the subject.

Here we must place a new construction on the subject. The first was incorrect. I could never defend it on the International. When the International takes up this work objectively and closely scrutinises it, its verdict will be: incorrect. It is a Radek article, and not a Party resolution.

I have written an article on Koltchak, which, to my mind, is far more correct than the Radek article which you have brought up for discussion.

What has the Editorial Board of your Executive Committee done? It published a commentary, which in fact is another Radek article. You have a perfect right to do this, but you have no right to ask where is the Right, where are the nuances? The Right are those who wrote the commentary.

However, it is in the minority. After the International has made its decision it will be in a still smaller minority. Take the Leipsic decision, the clamour over the pseudonym, the resolution of the National Committee, the policy in Saxony, and the Radek article, which you have printed as a commentary of the Editorial Board, it is sufficient to convince any political leader that the system is incorrect.

(RADEK: It is a system then, even if incorrect?)

It is a Menshevist system. What is Menshevism? It is often

said that Radek is a Menshevik, but he is not. Of course, he is a Bolshevik. But frequently he makes mistakes of a Menshevik character. If he were a Menshevik and I were a Bolshevik, our fight would be conducted quite differently. That is the position, comrades. Radek says : Zinoviev would be right if the position in Germany was the same as it was in Russia. Well, comrades, you, as foreigners, are not obliged to recognise this policy, but Radek should be. It is not merely a question of the Mensheviks. There was also Purishkevitch. He was the Russian Hittler. It was a great movement, reactionary—Black Hundreds as they were then called. In fact it was a Russian Fascism with the large addition of social demagoguery. The Black Hundreds were formed from this Party. It was a pillar of the monarchy. It had branches in every village and town, do you know that, Comrade Radek ?

(PETNITSKY : And workers belonged to it.)

House porters, working women and such like belonged to it in large numbers. They utilised religion to a certain extent. It was in some ways a popular, revolutionary movement, with strong propaganda against the Jews. It was a big movement which had a following of tens of thousands. It had the petty bourgeoisie and a following in the villages, in the towns and everywhere. Therefore, if you wish to make this comparison, you must not lose sight of this third tendency. And you have overlooked it.

(RADEK : With regard to the petty bourgeoisie, I stand completely on the ground that Zinoviev has quoted.)

Radek is right. He has emphasised the importance of the petty bourgeoisie. We must help the petty bourgeoisie. In this we are obliged to Radek. It is indeed one of the most important tasks. Your dealings with these small business men was good, it shows that you really have contact with the people. Of course this task still confronts us, and we must understand how to win the petty bourgeoisie to our side. I have not heard that the Left are against this. When, however, a great distinction is made in the resolution of the National Committee between Wittelsbachern and Hohenzollern, we say this is opportunism. If we will construct the working-class policy on this, and regard this as a great factor in the revolution, it will be a great error.

What was the point of the controversy between Lenin and Martov ? Not over taking advantage of the nuances, but over the fact that Martov, absorbed in seeking for these fine nuances, completely forgot the main point. The three divisions of the people : the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. He was a menshevik, and he should serve as a warning example. This must not be overlooked.

And then there is the position taken up by Radek : either a Communist agitation party or a fighting party ; a pure agitational policy ; sect or mass party. This is a very bad position to take up. I do not say that Radek's position is the same as that of Levi, but in the main the error is the same, the starting

point is the same. The controversy is precisely over the question as to whether we shall be a good agitation party; the question as to whether we are a Communist or a Centrist agitation party. It is no use raising the sect bogey here. We know it too well. We in Russia are a mass party. The defect of our parties is that they do not understand how to conduct Communist agitation. Take the British, the French, the Czecho-Slovak, and the German Parties, they do not understand yet how to conduct Communist popular agitation. They do not yet regard themselves as tribune of the people. Why has the speeches of one of our best men, Heckert, annoyed us so? We all like Heckert as a good fellow, we know that he is loyal to the Communist International and would die with it. All the more reason therefore why we were annoyed that he did not look upon himself as a popular tribune.

(A VOICE: Have you read his speeches?)

I have read all that was possible, and I think not less than Walcher. We have not made this judgment in a narrow-minded spirit. When we drew up the letter we were all unanimous, and we read a dozen reports.

(WALCHER: Everybody said it was a good Communist speech.)

Perhaps in normal times it would have been a good speech. But it did not give the impression that it was a speech of one whom the revolutionary wave had carried to the head of the masses of the workers. No, it could not be, when the attitude was: I am responsible to the Landtag, I stand on the Constitution.

(A VOICE: There was no wave.)

It is true there was no wave in Leipsic at that moment, but the wave was there in Germany in October. Remmele has related how the masses remained in the streets the whole night, how they confiscated luxurious automobiles, and what the temper of the women was. Comrades, this, for us, was far more important than the volumes of the theses we wrote. We must have this mass sense. The picture that Remmele described, that Koenig has given, and Thälmann has often drawn, that was the most important thing in Germany. On October 25 it was not in Leipsic, but it was in Germany. Were you the megaphone of this mood?

The masses were acting spontaneously, but members of the Central Committee, like Heckert, were not acting spontaneously. If he is a leader, he must be able to sense what is in the masses. We saw nothing in these Ministers of what was reflected by Thälmann, Remmele, and Koenig, and this was the most terrifying symptom. I will not come forward here like a Shylock and say why did you not have the arms within five days? That could not be done. That is not the charge brought against you. But why did not you become the passionate tribune of the masses? This is what we do not understand—and it is a bad symptom.

We agree that the retreat at the time of the Chemnitz Conference was unavoidable. It is not worth while now to argue about this. Apparently it was unavoidable in view of the situation then prevailing. But the attitude during the Saxony affair is evidence of the fact that semi-conscious right tendencies exist in the Party, and that hitherto there has not been a sufficiently well organised opposition in the Party. We have not opposed sufficiently, and we shall do so more in the future.

I come now to the situation in the Party. It has often been asked: do we require ten men like Remmele and Thälmann? That was the Central Committee which should have drawn fresh political and organisational forces to its aid. It was a Central Committee, it was the best and most valuable that we had in the Party. Of course I will not put forward the theory of Faust, but, comrades, it is the material we have. The greatest reproach that can be made against the Central Committee is that it did not know how to employ this, we may say, gold of the working class, but instead argued over theses and every Radek article was taken for discussion. You do not understand how to lend an ear to the working-class groups I referred to. This by no means implies that we can dispense with intellectuals—that would be demagoguery. We need all our comrades from the intelligentsia, but we must once and for all adopt a firm basis.

What should be done now? A change in the leadership must be made now. What change? That the present majority on the Central Committee work with the Left wing of the Party, with the support and control of the Communist International: this is the advice we give you. The Poles say that on the German question we have sought a middle course. The Polish Party has never made any other proposal. They can always make their proposals. I do not think it becomes a party like the Polish Party to shed tears when we have suffered defeat.

(WALSKY: We do not shed tears.)

You have decided on the letter to the Russian Communist Party without hearing us. You described this as a Solomon policy without making any proposals. It is to be hoped that you will make some proposal. All you propose in your letter is that people should not quarrel.

We hope that up till now we have acted correctly. You frequently say Muslov and Fischer are bad, Thälmann is good. Comrades, I have witnessed such things in our Party. But such methods are rarely successful. I know the worker not less well than you, and they resolutely protest against such attempts at splitting. There are shades of differences between Thälmann and Muslov, political and personal. That is clear. Thälmann comes out of the very heart of the working class, Muslov comes from the intelligentsia.

(WALCHER: Thälmann gave of his best on the Central Committee.)

(PIECK : He tried to co-operate.)

But, comrades, if you think that we would so readily agree to a split, you are wrong. Muslov and Fischer have their failings, but we have always said we must have patience.

(PIECK : Until the Party is shattered.)

The Party is not going to be shattered. Radek runs around among the students' meetings in Moscow where the discussions are taking place. At these meetings Radek says that the Executive, and I particularly, have corrupted the German Party. I do not fear this charge. It would be a very pretty German Party if it could be corrupted from Moscow.

(RADEK : I have never said that. I said that you broke up the Central Committee.)

A nice Central Committee if it allows itself to be broken up.

(RADEK : Yes, if it was a Russian Committee.)

I have never broken up the Central Committee. It is true that a few days after the departure of the representatives of the Communist International from Germany, the majority on the Central Committee found a correct and independent policy. How did I break it up? I can assert that I have not written a word either to Rammele or anyone else, although I had a right to do it. But it is true that the Central Committee, which was broken up from Moscow, found approximately the right policy without our having anything to do with it. What is the matter with the majority on the Central Committee? Between ourselves, it is that it lacks determination, the will to power in the Party. It is necessary to have that in order to govern a Party. One must have the conviction that "I am right; I will lead the Party; I will convince it." The majority is somewhat anæmic. It is still seeking words and formula that will suit Jacob Walcher. Of course we like Walcher. We will march with him, but the revolutionary policy of the Party is dearer to us than Jacob, and it would be good for him to understand that indefinite formulæ "on the one hand," "on the other hand," &c., are no use. The time for them has gone by.

Comrades, we have this majority on the Central Committee. In general we will march with it. A new attitude must be adopted towards the Left, different from that of Radek and Brandler. Radek's attitude towards the Left recently has been wrong. He has allowed his temperament to carry him away, and he is labouring under a false impression.

You say that the Left represents only a quarter, but you cannot lead the Party without this quarter. You speak of the bad people in Berlin, of the officials, &c. Comrades, I am at the head of the Leningrad organisation, and I know what it means to lead 25,000 to 35,000 men. This cannot be done mechanically, or by compulsion.

(PIECK : Muslov.)

However fallible Muslov may be, there are the tens of thousands

of workers. I have been connected with the Leningrad workers for twenty years. But if I had attempted to apply compulsion do you think they would have carried out the great cause merely for the sake of our beautiful eyes? This is not an accident, one must know how to compromise. You have possession of the newspapers and the whole apparatus. Why have you not won in Berlin and Hamburg? Moreover, you over-estimate the role of individuals in history.

(RADEK: Quite right.)

(PIECK: You are always relying on persons in Germany.)

Never. Certainly with regard to the policy in October, we believed that Brandler personified this best. We asked ourselves: Who will do this? And we said Brandler. We do not think that Brandler will never do anything any more. We believe that he will do much good. We know perfectly well that we must suffer twenty defeats before we achieve one victory. World history is so badly arranged. We say you have made great mistakes with us; we, too, have made mistakes.

(BRANDLER: I have made mistakes, but not those you refer to.)

What you said yesterday about the masses understanding the united front tactics as evolutionary tactics indicates your deviations.

(BRANDLER: Are there any tactics that have not their dangers and deviations?)

Do you know what Lenin once wrote? "The leader is responsible not for what he does, but what the masses do under his leadership." When, after two years, we come and say that the masses think in a certain way, it is proof that there is something rotten in the leadership.

The conclusion to be drawn is that we must have a change in the leadership. Under no circumstances do we wish to undertake a crusade against the so-called Right. To speak of the *Kag* spirit is an exaggeration. Exaggeration is the greatest enemy of Comrade Ruth Fischer. We must stand on the exact truth, and exaggeration is untrue. The *Kag* crisis, I must say, gives one to think. After having read all your letters, after having discussed the thing for days, these people come to you with petitions: "How can we on the Central Committee discuss the question of whether we can surrender the Party, or not?" That was the opinion also of Comrade Radek.

(RADEK: Until to-day.)

But the Central Committee for weeks discussed the question of surrendering the Party. Until this very day, Radek has the impression that there are Right Wing tendencies in the Party. And now when I read to you the draft resolution of the Russian Party, you ask where are the Right tendencies? Is it Brandler, Pieck? Why do you mention these names? The tendencies do exist; it is a fact.

But I do not speak of the Party as a whole, but of the Central Committee. The Party's attitude on the *Kag* crisis is better than that of the Central Committee. The latter discussed whether it should surrender the Party. This is a proof that all is not well. I believe that we have traces of Social-Democracy, not only in the German Party, but in the whole Communist International. That is because it has developed out of the Second International. Last year I said to Comrade Lenin: "In looking at the Communist International I cannot say with certainty whether we can establish a real Communist International without experiencing a crisis." One sometimes has the feeling that in our ranks we have considerable remnants of the Social-Democracy. Would we be the leaders of the Communist International if we did not see this weakness? The discussion in our Party has shown that we have remnants of the Social-Democracy in our ranks.

(RADEK: Quite right.)

Not on our side, but on your side. We all love the Communist Party. I can quite understand Pieck and Walcher saying indignantly: "What! Our Party a Social-Democratic Party?" We Russians have never thought so. In spite of all you are one of the best sections of the Communist International.

(RADEK: Not one of the best, but the best.)

But remnants of Social-Democracy are present. I will reveal another secret. Some of the younger element among you, Muslov, for example, have the advantages of not being burdened by Social-Democratic traditions. On the other hand, this is a weakness in that they have not grown up with the workers. Muslov himself recognises this quite well. It is a disadvantage in that you have not been so well grafted to the masses, but on the other hand, it is an advantage that you have not come with traces of Social-Democracy.

We must bear in mind that the Party is in a difficult situation, and the factional spirit must cease. In order to achieve victory, we must have a united leadership, otherwise we shall fail. We must see the position as it is. When we fight for the revolution, and desire to save the Party, then we must abandon the spirit of passivity, factionalism, &c. We must investigate a number of questions like the trade-union question, the organisation question, and objectively decide them. And no doubt we shall have to decide the question of calling a Party conference. I say here quite frankly: we, the Executive and the Russian Communist Party, cannot now undertake the responsibility to establish a new combination in the leadership of the German Communist Party. Sometimes this can be done, but at the present moment the situation is too involved. The Party must reveal its true character and show what leadership it desires. The Communist International may intervene later, but the Party must speak. When the moment arrives we must deal with it from the standpoint of the interests

of the Party. We would desire that the matter be settled without a factional fight. We believe that the political preparations for the Party congress are already being made in Moscow. I believe that if co-operation is achieved between the present majority on the Central Committee and the Left, upon a definite political policy, they will have ninety-nine per cent. in the Party behind them.

(PIECK : You have not yet heard the majority masses of the Party.)

But you represent them. I admit that one can easily fall into error on the question of the relation of forces in the Party.

There are three tendencies on the Central Committee : the majority, who have brought their theses here and which is somewhat weakly represented by Remmele and Koenen ; we have a Left, which you know, and we have a minority which you have heard.

(BRANDLER : Where are Pieck and Walcher ?)

(ZETKIN : And where do you include me ?)

Please do not be angry with me. The case of comrade Zetkin is very difficult. There is no need for me to say that we stand by her personally. You know that she signed the letter of the Executive. If she stands on this position, then I cherish and respect her. But what can I do when she stands for the other policy ? I hope that Comrade Zetkin will be with the majority.

Comrades, the Central Committee has adopted a draft with which you are acquainted. We sat down with the majority of the delegation and attempted to draw up a draft. The comrades revised and improved my draft ; in the main the spirit is the same. The work in this small commission—Comrade Pieck, Koenen and Remmele were present—showed that we can march 99 per cent. of the road together with Pieck. He was not present on the Central Committee when the voting took place. Something new happened there, and within a short time there were fresh events. Pieck was here at that time, and the work, which in the last few days we have carried out with him, has shown that we can come to an understanding. When however, difficulties between him and the Left arise, Pieck, who is as passionate as we all are, permits himself to do things in the fight against the Berliners of which I cannot approve.

I think our task here is not to employ strategy and to conduct manœuvres inside our own Party, but to say this is a mistake. When you ask : is the Russian Party with the Berliners ? I say, No. It is of the opinion that the installation of the new majority in the main is right. It must bring about honest co-operation with the Left. The "civil war" must cease. The comrades must abandon the factional spirit if it desires to save the Party. Good (to the Left), you have made serious mistakes. You know that. Sometimes it is said that the majority represents the backward section of the workers, and that the Left represents the impatient

section of the workers. But can we bring about the revolution entirely without the backward section of the workers? And the right say: impatience. The time comes, however, when impatience is the most important thing we require. Take Thälmann. Speaking quite frankly, all the comrades say that when they hear him speak, they get the conviction that the German revolution will come one day. Therefore, comrades, we must have this. The two are complementary and we must unite them on the policy which we propose to you.

What will the minority do? Many say, they will form a new faction. Brandler perhaps will not form a new faction, but will wait a while. Every one of us knows how to appreciate comrade Brandler personally. He will yet do important work in the Party. To come and say now, turn them out, slaughter them, we think it is frivolous, it is not right.

I want to point out one or two other prospects. I believe, however, that we are almost agreed, we do not know how things will go further. In the first draft, we said, we must have both possibilities in mind on the question of the tempo, we erred. There is some consolation in that Lenin and Trotsky sometimes erred on this point. But our estimation remains correct. Then it is said everything will come within three months, I say wait and see, I am not so sceptical. But everything depends upon the driving power of the Party. We say that, as the Communist International, we are prepared to stake everything in order to hasten the development. Further preparations, further illegal organisations, further instructions to our brother sections, the French, &c. We have drawn up a letter to the French Party. Comrade Zetkin, who was a member of the commission, was convinced that the prospects in the German question were the old prospects, *i.e.*, a new revolution. We will say the same thing to the other sections, and here, in Russia, also prepare for a speedy decision. But as leaders of the Party, we must see now that there is a danger of the process being slower. We must see this after the experiences we have had. Only eighteen months after 1905 were we able to see clearly whither things were leading. Three times Lenin fixed the revolt for 1906, then in the spring, then in the late summer after the peasants had gathered in the harvest, &c. The Mensheviks laughed at him, but there was nothing to laugh about. We erred in our estimation of the rapidity of development. After eighteen months, we saw that things will move more slowly. Our duty is now to see the thing as it now is; for the spring, for the summer—we shall see, for a short time perhaps.

If we agree on this point, then the heated struggle will not have been in vain. We have thrown off many illusions and gained much realist understanding.

VI

THE COMMISSION AND THE DECISIONS

At the session of January 12, after the speech of Comrade Zinoviev, it was proposed not to continue the discussion in the Plenum of the Presidium but to set up a commission. Comrade Zinoviev proposed that the commission should be composed of representatives of the majority (Centre) and the Left of the German Communist Party, and of one representative of the Communist International. The Commission should aim at arriving at a project for a common resolution which would thus be the first attempt at collaboration by the majority and the Left.

This proposal gave rise to a debate, in which Comrades Radek, Pieck, and Clara Zetkin demanded that representatives of the Right and Comrade Radek should also take part in the Commission.

On a vote, the proposal of Comrade Zinoviev was adopted, all voting in favour, with the exception of Comrades Radek and Zetkin. The following were selected as members of the Commission: Kuusinen, Pieck, Remmele, Koenen, Maslov, Thälmann.

In the vote on the resolution *in principle* only Comrades Radek and Zetkin, and of the German comrades, Brandler and Walcher voted against; Pieck refrained from voting.

A supplementary resolution by Comrade Walsky on the united front was rejected.

The resolution *as a whole* was voted on by the Presidium and was adopted against the votes of Comrades Radek and Zetkin. The representative of the Young Communist International voted in favour. Of the German comrades, the following voted for the resolution: Remmele, Koenen, Fischer, Maslov, Hesse, Thälmann, König; and the following against: Brandler, Pieck, Walcher, Jannack, Hammer, Eisenberger.

The final session of the Presidium was held on January 21. The resolution on organisation and the theses on the trade union question were adopted unanimously. Comrade Hesse refrained from voting on the trade union theses.

In voting on the instructions for the organisation of factory nuclei in Germany, Comrades Maslov, Fischer, Hesse, König, and Thälmann at first voted against Point 4, but in the general vote, the instructions were adopted unanimously.

Comrade Zinoviev then made a final declaration, which was followed by declarations by a number of other comrades.

COMRADE ZINOVIEV: Comrades, we have now reached the end. It would perhaps be useful, now that the complete work is before us—not only the political resolution but also the resolution on the trade unions and the organisations—to make another summary vote, a vote upon the whole result of the discussion. In my opinion this would be desirable. I should like, however, to say a very few words beforehand.

In my opinion, comrades, the most important question is whether we are confronted by a rising or a falling wave: This, of course, is still uncertain; nobody can be a prophet in such a situation. A mistake may be easily made. We must be prepared for the worse alternative. And I think that our decisions are right just because they hold the worse alternative in view.

The resolution has brought clarity into many questions; in others not entirely. For instance, on the question of the united front, I think the resolutions have already brought sufficient clarity. In other questions, especially the question of the October crisis, complete clarity has not yet been attained. We can now see clearer than we did a month ago, and in three months we shall see clearer still. Opinions have clashed on the question as to whether the retreat was absolutely necessary or not; whether it arose out of a real situation, or whether it was a mistake. I can understand that in the given situation opinions were bound to clash. But I think that in our resolution everything that needed to be said was said clearly. The retreat was absolutely essential, not only because of errors and weaknesses in the party, but also because of the weakness of the working class. Of course, there will always be a number of workers who will say that the moment had been lost.

As to the factional conflict, I must say quite honestly that I do not know whether we have put an end to it, or whether a new conflagration will break out. I have seen such things often in our own Party leadership: a resolution is adopted unanimously, and then the crises and factional conflicts really begin. I sincerely hope that such will not happen in this case. All sides have learnt something; even the Left has much to learn and has learned much. We have here recognised its strong side. If a factional strife now breaks out, I believe that in the present situation in Germany, no good will come of it for any faction. The working class masses—and you must remember that we are a mass party—do not want factional fights. They are too depressed by the reverse. The situation is too difficult. What is now required is that after the errors of all sides have been recognised, the decisions of the International here taken shall be carried into effect as quickly as possible.

I will therefore not prophesy as to whether the conflict has been really settled or not. One thing, however, is clear. The faction that begins a conflict now will gain no advantage from it even from a factional point of view.

(A VOICE: Quite right!)

We have here made a change of attitude against the Right, against the relics of Social-Democracy in the German Party. We are trying in this way to pull the Party together. We must now pass from words to deeds. We shall follow events very carefully, and shall be happy if not need arises for us to interfere before the Party Congress. It is in the composition of the Central Committee particularly that we are anxious to see what the Party decided for

itself. Let it for once decide upon its Central Committee itself. You have the material for a very good Central Committee. But, of course, if things do not go right, we shall most certainly, however unwillingly, intervene. We shall assume full responsibility, in order to save the working class of Germany from a fight between tendencies. Social democracy, I believe, is historically lost; that will be clear in a very short time. But if crises begin again in our Party, we shall be lending it fresh blood.

Well comrades, if you think it desirable I shall now take a summary vote.

When the political resolutions are published, I propose to write a very brief introduction.

COMRADE ZETKIN : I have to make a statement in the name of all the members of the majority delegation.

If a vote is to be taken upon the total work of the Commission, we are prepared to vote in favour of the three theses together as one whole. The important thing for us is the fact that in the two resolutions on the trade union questions and on organisation, our point of view, the point of view of the majority of the Party, is completely expressed. Further, there is the statement of Comrade Zinoviev that he intends to write an introduction to the theses in which he will describe what in his opinion the situation is. According to his statement, the introduction will meet our point of view on two important points : firstly, the assertion, in Comrade Zinoviev's opinion, as frequently expressed, that the retreat was necessary, and, secondly, that mistakes were also made by, and great defects exist in, the so-called Left opposition. On these grounds we are prepared in the summary vote to vote in favour of the total work of the Commission. But naturally we shall at the same time retain all our views regarding the political theses.

Comrades, although we maintain our views on the political theses and, as we have stated, will explain in a written declaration why we rejected the political theses, nevertheless in the summary voting we shall vote in favour of all the theses as one whole. This we are doing from conviction that it is extremely essential, that the Party ideologically and organisationally should be a firm block, a block of granite, against which our enemies will break their heads. We need unity, harmony, and resoluteness. I can assure you that in spite of our differing opinions on certain subjects we, for our part, are prepared to exercise the strictest discipline and to support with all our might the Central Committee in leading the Party unitedly and resolutely along a clear political line.

Because we are of the opinion that it must be remembered more than ever before that the masses will bring the struggle about, and not party actions alone, however valuable and indispensable party actions are, they cannot displace mass action; we are penetrated with the consciousness of the mighty world-shattering and world-renewing power of mass actions--mass actions inspired by the highest activities of the Party as

the leader of the masses. For this reason and to this end we shall in the summary vote, vote in favour of the total work of the session.

COMRADE LAUER (Poland): We shall vote for all the resolutions. We shall later hand in a written declaration to be included in the protocol.

COMRADE MASLOV: The speech of Comrade Zetkin has in my mind made many things clear and left many things unclear. It may be that a man may vote against a resolution on one day, and for certain reasons in favour of the resolution on the next. That may happen. In justification Comrade Zetkin pleads a new state of affairs. There is no new state of affairs. The resolution is exactly the same as it was. A second reason is that Comrade Zinoviev will write a foreword to the material, and therefore she will vote for the resolution. I make note of that, but I should like to ask Comrade Zinoviev whether the comrade may vote in principle for a resolution she has rejected.

COMRADE REMMELE: The German comrades who sent me and Kienen here are of the opinion that the draft of Comrade Zinoviev on the question of the united front has drawn such a clear and unambiguous line that it must at all costs be supported. They object, however, that in the later theses which were drawn up without collaboration this clear line is not maintained.

The comrades in Germany have been engaged on two problems, the Russian and the German, and they have arrived at the conclusion that both in the Russian and in the German the attitude of the Russian Central Committee was correct, and therefore they support it. For this reason Comrade G was sent here to emphasise and vigorously to support this line of policy.

What has here been accepted as the basis for the policy both of the Russian Central Committee and of the Executive, this turn to the Left, we shall carry into effect in Germany with all our strength, by our activities, at the Party discussions, and by thorough explanations.

COMRADE RADEK: We have always acted as a united Executive externally. Therefore I shall vote at the summary vote for the decisions of the Executive. Comrade Zinoviev has said that perhaps in three months' time we shall see things differently. I make that my claim. Externally, I regard it as my duty in German matters not to make the work of the Party difficult. Therefore I will vote for.

COMRADE KLEINE: I must say that the Party is now addressing itself very seriously to these questions, not only the officials but also the rank and file members. When we spoke yesterday in the Commission on the question of the Party Congress, it was not our intention that the discussion should in any way be discouraged. There can be no doubt that the German Party can make a successful revolution only if it ruthlessly clarifies every question. But it is a fact that there is to-day another danger,

namely, that in spite of the decisions, and in spite of the very useful discussions we shall have discussions in Germany which will not help matters forward but will rather put them back. The differences within the party have remained. The majority of the party holds the point of view of what is here called the Centre. The Centre has only just arisen. The comrades here have often departed from their point of view. They have become crystallised in the course of the last few weeks. And it is no chance that in Germany all the comrades of the Central Committee, all the leaders who hold this point of view, have taken up a more consistent attitude towards the theses than has been the case in Moscow. It is a fact that there has been no hesitation on this question. The theses of Radek and Brandler were rejected.

If all the three groups return to Germany with the will and belief that the German Party needs a swing to the left as it does bread and air—

(RADEK : Quite right.)

(BRANDLER : Quite right.)

(RADEK : Brandler says, quite right !)

That the theses formulated by Zinoviev are correct and give a foundation for the struggle ; if they do not act as factions, tendencies and groups ; if all groups are prepared to take up new positions in view of the new facts, and if we are able to bring the party up to the proper political level, then I think the Moscow consultation will help us forward.

The resolutions were then voted on jointly and were carried unanimously, without abstentions.

VII.

DOCUMENTS

DECLARATION OF THE MINORITY

Bearing in mind that the unity, harmony, and solidarity of the German Communist Party must be maintained in all its work and struggles, the undersigned have considered it their duty to vote against the political theses of the Executive Committee on the lessons of the October events in Germany.

The basis for unity, harmony, and solidarity in the party must be complete clarity in the attitude to be adopted to the disputed questions arising out of the October events. A clear and definite recognition of the errors committed by the party and the defects it has betrayed, and their causes and consequences, is an indispensable preliminary if the party is to make good its errors and correct its defects and if it is to go forward to the forthcoming decisive struggle as well-prepared as possible to be the leader of the revolutionary proletariat. The political theses lack a certain clearness and definiteness. They have not cleared up the contradiction in opinions, and have therefore not removed the con-

tradition, but have rather concealed it by lengthy phrases, and have thus opened the door for misinterpretations. We think that the political theses betray the following very serious defects :

They give an incomplete and partly incorrect presentation of the causes which led to the October defeat.

They have not explained why the " Saxon experiment " miscarried : what in reality were the mistakes committed ; and what were the effects of the experiment as a whole.

They fail to declare in an unambiguous manner whether under the existing circumstances the party was right in not taking up the armed struggle. They say nothing as to what mass actions the party should have taken in order to cover the retreat.

They do not contain the necessary criticism of the errors and defects of the policy of the so-called " left party opposition " and thereby make it extraordinarily difficult to get the opposition to abandon their errors and to secure co-operation between the party majority and the opposition.

The political theses are not calculated to put an end to the differences within the German Communist Party, and they give the sections of the Communist International no adequate picture of the October events and their consequences and lessons.

The undersigned therefore expect that the Enlarged Executive will devote its attention to the October events and revise the theses which have been adopted.

On the other hand, the theses on the trade unions and on organisation correspond with the views of the majority of the party, and the Central Committee and the undersigned were able to vote in favour of them.

Although the undersigned earnestly maintain views above set forth regarding the political theses, nevertheless in the summary vote of the three theses on the German Question, they voted in favour of the decision of the Executive as a whole, because the theses adopted on the trade unions and on organisation are of the greatest importance for the practical work of the party. The undersigned acted in the conviction that, in view of the forthcoming difficult struggles of the proletariat against fascism, unity in the leadership and the membership of the German Communist Party is urgently necessary. The Party can become the revolutionary leader in these struggles of the working class and of all sections of the population, whose interests have come to clash sharply with those of the bourgeoisie only if it comes forward in agitation, propoganda, and action, in the clearest and most resolute manner as a united communist party displaying maximum revolutionary activity, and calling forth maximum activity on the part of the masses in the fight for power and for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The undersigned regard it as their clear duty, and the duty of all comrades who share their point of view, to maintain iron discipline and to help the leaders to mobilise the Party and the

working class masses for the coming struggles. The differences still remaining in the party must be removed in the process of party organisation and by avoiding the formation of factions ; the need of the hour is to obtain the solid co-operation of all party comrades as quickly as possible. It is with this object in view that we voted in favour of the total results of the consultation.

ZETKIN, PIECK, JANNECK, WALCHER, BRANDLER,
HAMMER, ELSENBERGER.

DECLARATION OF THE POLISH DELEGATION

We have voted for the political theses mainly because they confirm fundamentally the tactics hitherto pursued by Comintern and which the so-called Left in Germany wished definitely to break with. We were able all the more easily to vote for them because they were supplemented by correct theses on organisation and on the trade unions which will furnish a decisive reply to certain very important practical questions. Nevertheless, we are aware that the political theses are not clear of certain vaguenesses, and that, in particular, they have quite falsely apportioned responsibility for the errors which have been committed. A part of the responsibility for the October events must fall upon the Executive Committee, which judged the situation too optimistically, and gave the German comrades one-sided directions, without providing for a line of retreat.

For us there can be no doubt that the so-called Right (Clara Zetkin, Brandler, Thalheimer, Walcher, Pieck, &c.), whose errors and omissions have been so fully criticised in the theses, and to some extent with justice, are the oldest, best-tried, and most experienced soldiers in the party. Against this Old Guard of the Party the Left has been for some time carrying on a persistent persecution of leaders, which was in direct contradiction to the spirit of Bolshevism, and was always demagogic and anarchistic. We believe that to discredit this group in the eyes of the German proletariat would be a heavy blow to the German Communist Party. The axiom of Lenin should be remembered by the German Communist Party : —

“ No revolutionary movement can be a permanent one unless it has a stable organisation of leaders which is able to maintain cohesion when necessary. The broader the masses who are brought into the struggle and who form the basis of the movement, the more urgent becomes the necessity for such an organisation and the more solid must it be.”

Therefore, it was the duty of the Executive, when criticising the errors committed, also to condemn the attack upon the leaders, which has broken out with redoubled vigour since the October events, and which is charging the leaders who ordered the retreat with treachery. The inevitability of the retreat in the given situation was admitted by the Chairman of the Executive Com-

mittee in his concluding speech to the Presidium. We miss this declaration, a declaration which would give a check to the irresponsible attack, in the theses which are to be published.

We welcome every step which will lead to the actual removal of the split between the organisations of Berlin-Wasserkante, &c., on the one hand, and Merseburg-Halle, Saxony, Thuringia, &c., on the other. But we must openly declare that such a step cannot take the form of an outward agreement between the leaders. The aim desired can be obtained only by a clear and definite policy on the part of the Communist International which will endeavour to put an end not only to the defects and errors of the so-called Right, but also to the infantile sicknesses of the so-called Left.

The second point, which is of more international significance, but which is directly bound up with the fate of the German Party, is the danger arising out of the crisis to the authority both of the Communist International and of the German Communist Party.

Since the time that Lenin, the greatest and most authoritative leader of the world revolutionary proletariat, ceased to take part in the leadership of the Communist International, and since the time that the authority of Trotsky, one of the recognised leaders of the world proletariat, was placed in doubt by the Russian Central Committee, the danger has arisen that the authority of the leadership of the Communist International may be destroyed.

It is therefore our common duty not only to devote all our energies to maintaining the authority of the Executive Committee and of its Presidium, but also to avoid every step that may make this task difficult.

Under these circumstances we regard the charge of opportunism levelled against Radek, a leader who has performed great services for the Communist International, not only as unjustified, but also as in the highest degree harmful to the authority of all the leaders of the Communist International. We can see no ground for such a charge; for however important the question is to as who was victorious in Germany in October, it is clear that no side was guilty of drawing opportunist tactical conclusions. The differences of opinion that have arisen on the German question between some of the best known leaders of the Communist International are such as are inevitable in a live revolutionary Party, particularly when the Party is in so difficult a situation. Such differences of opinion have arisen in the past within the leadership of the Executive Committee without giving rise to mutual accusations of opportunism.

We refuse to see in this the seed of tendencies foreign to Communism.

Since we were repeatedly attacked by Comrade Zinoviev at the last meeting of the Presidium, and did not have the opportunity to reply, we are obliged to reply now in writing.

As regards the letter of the Polish Central Committee, we declare that as far as it deals with German matters, it takes up in essence

the same attitude as our declaration. As far as it deals with the Russian Party, we declare that this so-called whining letter (as Comrade Zinoviev called it) demanded of the Russian Central Committee exactly what it was itself obliged to do, namely, to declare publicly (December 18) that nobody even entertained the thought that Comrade Trotsky would be forced out of leading Party and State posts.

When the Polish Central Committee demanded that the Russian Central Committee should make such a public declaration, it was not aware that this had already been done.

As to the reproaches of Comrade Zinoviev regarding our alleged factional attitude, we declare that Comrade Zinoviev should know that we ourselves are zealous in introducing Bolshevik principles of organisation into the Polish Party. It was self-evident to the Polish comrades that the attack of Comrade Trotsky upon the Party machine was a very serious error.

As regards the repeated assertions of Comrade Zinoviev that Polish comrades took part in various German commissions and could have there given expression to their point of view, we declare that, without desiring to deny a part of the responsibility for the October events, it must be placed on record that no Polish comrade took part in a German commission. Comrade Walski was once elected to the commission appointed to draw up the November letter to the German Central Committee, but was never invited to its sessions, and was therefore unable to take part in its work.

E. PROCHNIAK.

For the Polish Delegation.

Moscow, January 21, 1924.

THE LESSONS OF THE GERMAN EVENTS

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY E.C.C.I. ON JANUARY 19, 1924.

The present document, which is of extreme importance for the whole of the Comintern, was drawn up at a recent conference of the E.C.C.I. with representatives of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party.

A serious regrouping of political forces within the Central Committee of the German Communist Party has taken place, as the result of the political crisis just passed through.

These groups have crystallised out as follows. A right group (Brandler), which however, received an insignificant minority on the Central Committee (2 votes against 27); then a compact group, which at present represents the main body of the Party (17 votes on the Central Committee); and finally, the old left (Berlin and Hamburg).

In the opinion of the E.C.C.I. it is necessary at present to achieve a complete fusion of the central group with the left group against the opportunist errors of the right. The beginning of this

fusion is marked in the present document, on which—with the assistance of the E.C.C.I.—both these tendencies representing together 99 per cent. of the German Communist Party were united.

All the representatives of the Sections of the Comintern now in Moscow (including the Polish Communists) voted for the resolution.

At the last moment even the followers of Comrade Brandler subscribed in principle to the resolution, making a special declaration.

The E.C.C.I. is convinced that the fusion of the central main body with the left against the opportunist errors of the right will assist the German Communist Party in carrying out correctly the great tasks now confronting it. The E.C.C.I. will take the most severe measures against any manifestation of factionism, from whatever side it comes.

G. Z.

The events which took place in Germany, Poland and Bulgaria in the period from May to November, 1923, marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the international movement.

In Germany, along with the development of the crisis in the Ruhr, the proletarian class war passed from the phase of gradual accumulation of revolutionary forces into a new phase concerning the fight for power.

In view of the great significance of the German revolutionary movement, the historical change which took place in August and September and the events of the autumn are of great importance to the Communist International. The lessons and the conclusions to be derived from these experiences must be taken advantage of to the greatest detail by the whole of the Communist International.

Since a tactical estimate of these events must be made almost entirely of the fundamental principles of the Communist International, the Executive desires once more to give a fully concrete exposition of the tactical method of the Communist International, which in the present epoch is both theoretically and principally of extreme importance—the tactics of the United Front.

I. THE TACTICS OF THE UNITED FRONT

At the Third World Congress of the Communist International, the tasks of the German Communist Party arising from the March defeat were discussed in the greatest detail and summed up in the slogan: *To the Masses!* In December of the same year, the method by which the masses were to be won over was embodied concretely in the resolution of the Executive on the tactics of the United Front.

In Germany the Communist Party immediately proceeded to carry out the tactics of the United Front with the greatest earnest-

ness. The whole objective situation in Germany favoured these tactics. As a result of its labours the Party achieved great success; it won the increasing sympathy of the masses, and caused disruption in the ranks of the Social-Democrats.

A number of our sections began to employ the tactics of the United Front only slowly, after overcoming much resistance and along with many errors. In France a considerable section of the Party in 1922 failed to understand the tactics of the United Front, and seriously feared that they would be interpreted as an ideological concession to the Social-Democrats. In England a section of the comrades wrongly interpreted the tactics of the United Front in the sense that Communists were not to criticise the opportunist Labour Party in Parliament. In Finland, similar false conclusions were come to. In Roumania, a section of the comrades honestly believed that the tactics of the United Front meant a parliamentary collaboration with the Social-Democrats. In Italy the Communist Party for a long time committed the exact reversed error, and refrained from giving the tactics of the United Front a wide application for fear that the purity of the theory and programme of the Communist Movement might thereby be compromised. A number of other parties made a too mechanical interpretation of these tactics, and thought it was enough to address a stereotyped open letter to the Social-Democrats once a month and then forget all about it. They were not able to employ the tactics of the United Front for the purpose of carrying on a real political fight.

The mistaken application of the tactics of the United Front made in a number of countries, especially at the beginning, does however, not mean that the tactics themselves are wrong. This conclusion would be just as mistaken as the rejection of the revolutionary exploitation of parliamentarism on the grounds that certain parliamentary fractions are only able to learn to make use of it after many errors. The tactics of the United Front were, and are, in themselves, right, in spite of incidental errors connected with them.

The tactics of the United Front have their strong sides and they have their dangers. Although in October, 1923, we did not possess a safe and certain majority in the German proletariat, nevertheless, the very fact that the young Communist Party at that period could seriously ask itself whether it had not already a reliable majority to proceed to seize power, proves that the tactics of the United Front are capable of bringing about the most essential pre-requisite for the seizure of power, namely, the winning over of a majority of the proletariat for the proletarian revolution. If the Communist Parties have to take into consideration the psychology and the mood of the backward masses still remaining under the influence of the Social Democrats, this does not prove the erroneousness of the tactics but merely points to a source of danger in the application of the tactics.

In the first theses of the Executive in December 1921, the dangers connected with the tactics of the United Front were emphatically indicated: "Not all the Communist Parties are sufficiently strengthened and consolidated, not all have finally discarded the centrist and semi-centrist ideologies. Cases of going to the other extreme are possible, of tendencies which, in effect will lead to the dissolution of the Communist Parties and groups into a formless united bloc. If the tactics planned are to be carried out with success for the cause of Communism, then the communist parties themselves which carry out the tactics must be strongly and firmly united and their leadership must be marked by clarity of thought."

The Fourth World Congress also pointed out the dangers concealed both in the whole tactics of the United Front and in the special slogan of the Workers' Government. The Congress declared: "In order to avoid these dangers, and in order to be able to take up immediately the fight against the illusion that a stage of 'democratic coalition' is inevitable the Communist Party must not forget that every bourgeois government is at the same time a capitalist government, but that not every workers' government is in reality a proletarian socialist government."

These warnings of the Communist International must be borne in mind, particularly since the recent events in Germany; for the German Communist Party, which after the Russian Section, is the most mature party in the International, has committed grave errors in the application of the tactics of the United Front.

It is essential that Communists in all countries should now ponder carefully what the tactics of the United Front are and are not. They are tactics of revolution, not of evolution just as the Workers' (and Peasants') Government cannot be for us a marked democratic transitional stage, so the tactics of the United Front are not a democratic coalition nor an alliance with the Social Democrats. They are purely a method of revolutionary agitation and mobilisation. We reject all other interpretations as opportunist.

We must bear this clearly in mind, for only then can the tactics of the United Front have any meaning for the Communist International and contribute to the aim of winning over the bulk of the proletariat for the revolutionary fight for power.

Naturally the tactics of the United Front as a method of agitation among the wide masses of the workers are suited for a definite epoch, namely, the epoch when the Communists in nearly every country which is of decisive importance to the working class movement are still in the minority. In proportion as concrete conditions change, so also will the application of the tactics of the United Front have to be modified. Even to-day application of the tactics must differ in different countries. As the fight becomes sterner and assumes the character of a decisive struggle, we shall more than once have to change the manner of application of the

tactics of the United Front in the various countries. The time will come when entire and now still powerful Social-Democratic parties will collapse, or, if they persist in their treachery, will burst like soap bubbles ; and when whole strata of the Social-Democratic workers will come over to us. The tactics of the United Front further and expedite this process.

2. THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN GERMANY

Shortly after the occupation of the Ruhr by the French Army, the Executive of the Communist International drew the attention of all the Sections to the approaching revolutionary crisis. The International Conferences in Essen and Frankfurt were also devoted to this question.

The beginning of the revolutionary wave in Germany was signalled by the great strikes in the Ruhr and the struggles in May and June, the strike in Upper Silesia, the metal workers strike in Berlin, the fights in the Erzgebirge and the Vogtland and the political mass strike of August, 1923, which brought about the fall of the Cuno Government.

The rapid increase in the acuteness of the situation was expressed in the rise in prices, the depreciation of the currency, inflation, burdensome taxation, the decline of parliament, the increased capitalist offensive following on a feeble offensive of the proletariat, food scarcity, decreases in wages, the abolition of the social conquests of the working class, as well as in the growth of separatist and particularist movements, the increasing impoverishments of the old and the new middle classes, and in the decline of the influence of the democratic middle parties. The whole burden of the war in the Ruhr was laid upon the proletariat and the middle classes, who were being steadily proletarianised. The aggravation of the class antagonisms proceeded step by step with the rapid decline of German capitalist economy, which was severed from its centres of power.

In many provinces, the starving masses armed themselves and marched into the country in order to seize the foodstuffs they lacked. Large sections of the middle classes fell into despair and vacillated between the two poles which indicated a way out of their plight, the Communist and the Fascist groups. In the large towns plundering, hunger demonstrations and rioting became frequent occurrences.

In the months leading up to the winter of 1923 the relation of class power in Germany moved steadily in favour of the proletarian revolution. Before the movement in the Ruhr began, the eighteen to twenty millions of the German proletariat were far removed from any nationalist frame of mind. A profound ferment was taking place among the six to seven million petty bourgeois of the towns and the four to five million small peasants and tenant farmers.

The democratic coalition policy was patently bankrupt. The Social Democrats, who had shared the power of government with the democratic bourgeois parties, had to decide whether they should enter into a firm bloc with the representatives of heavy industry and of reactionary militarism ; and this they finally did.

The task of the German Communist Party was, and is, to take advantage of the period of international complications arising out of the crisis of the Ruhr, the internal and extremely difficult crisis of German capitalism, and the proceeding liquidation of the Ruhr crisis in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To this end, the Party should have mobilised the industrial proletariat for the fight, both against German heavy industry and French imperialism, but at the same time, it should at least have neutralised the middle classes of the town and country, and, if possible, brought them under its leadership.

The first task could be fulfilled only if the Party succeeded in freeing the majority of the proletariat from the influence of the Social Democrats of whatever shade, and in organising them so that they should be prepared for the attack upon the capitalist positions.

This task has not been adequately carried out, the reasons for which will be examined below.

The second task, in essence, involved destroying the Fascist influence and transforming the nationalist frame of mind into the will to fight in alliance with the proletariat, against the German big capitalists and against French imperialism. This task was tackled by the German Communist Party with success, as is best evidenced by the Anti-Fascist Day of July 29, 1923. Large sections of the petty bourgeois population were already in sympathy with the German Communist Party, which had succeeded, in a rather high degree in pointing out to these strata, the hypocrisy of the "social propaganda" of the Fascisti and their objective role as aiders and abettors of the big bourgeoisie, who were betraying the nation, as well as the community of interests of the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie.

The disintegration in the ranks of the bourgeoisie grew from week to week. At the same time confidence in the German Communist Party increased. It was necessary to organise this confidence and to prepare all available forces for the final blow.

In September, the German Communist Party and the Executive of the Comintern, in consultation with the representatives of the five largest parties, came to the conclusion that the revolutionary situation in Germany had so far matured that the question of the decisive struggle was a matter of only a few weeks.

From that time forth the Party mobilised all the forces at its disposal and armed itself with every means for the decisive fight. The Party worked feverishly to make everyone of its members an active fighter, armed for the struggle. In order to

bring the whole proletariat into the revolutionary fighting front, the Party initiated and supported local councils of action everywhere. Intensive agitation was carried on among the railwaymen, electrical workers, and state and municipal workers.

The Executive of the Communist International concentrated the whole of the International, and particularly the sections of the countries adjacent to Germany, and of Soviet Russia on the impending German revolution, and settled the duties of the individual Sections.

3. THE OCTOBER RETREAT AND ITS CAUSES

In October, the German Communist Party, despite its weaknesses, was prepared for the revolutionary fight for power. If, in spite of the revolutionary situation, and in spite of the exertions of the Communist International and the German Communist Party, neither a revolutionary decisive struggle, nor political mass struggles resulted, this was due to a number of errors and defect, and in part, to opportunist deviations.

Defects in Estimating the Revolutionary March of Events

The Party realised too late that the revolutionary situation in Germany had matured. The Executive of the Communist International also failed to draw attention energetically enough to the oncoming crisis, with the result that the necessary fighting measures were not taken in hand in time. Already, with the end of the preceding period (Cuno Government, occupation of the Ruhr), the question of power should have been raised and the technical preparations should have been undertaken. The Party failed to realise in time the significance of the mass struggles in the Ruhr and in Upper Silesia, as a sign of increased consciousness of power and growing political activity, and only after the strike against Cuno was the necessary readjustment of attitude made.

Tactical Errors

The task of intensifying and broadening the numerous isolated actions which took place between July and September and to develop them right up to actions with political slogans, was not fulfilled.

After the Cuno strike the mistake was made of wanting to put off elemental movements until the decisive struggle took place.

One of the most serious errors was that the instinctive rebellion of the masses was not transformed into a conscious revolutionary will to fight by giving it political aims.

The Party failed in making an energetic and vigorous agitation for the tasks of the political workers' councils, and in connecting most closely the transitional demands and the partial struggles with the final aim of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The neglect of the factory councils' movement also made it impossible to place upon them temporarily the functions of workers' councils, so that

when the decisive moment came our authoritative centre around which the vacillating workers who were drawn away from the influence of the Social Democratic Party could rally, was lacking.

Since other united front bodies also (councils of action, control commissions, fighting committees) were not systematically used in order politically to prepare the fight, the fight was almost entirely interpreted as a party affair and not as a united fight of the whole proletariat.

Political-Organisational Weakness and Defects

The Party showed very little ability to consolidate organisationally its growing influence in the mass organisations of the proletariat. It displayed still less ability to concentrate its forces for a protracted period on one fighting aim.

The amount of technical preparation of readjustment of the organisation for the fight for power, of the arming and internal consolidation of the centuries, was at a minimum. The much too brief and feverish technical preparations, practically produced no results ; it is true, they technically prepared the Party members for action, but they did not embrace the wide proletarian masses.

Errors in Estimating the Relation of Forces

The feverishness of the technical preparation during the decisive week, the view that the struggle was only a Party struggle, and the concentration of the " final blow " without preliminary and accumulative partial struggles and mass movements, made it impossible to examine the true relation of forces and to fix proper dates. Therefore the statement as to whether the majority of the working class at the decisive points would follow the lead of the German Communist Party was rendered an absolutely unreal and unsafe calculation. In fact, the only thing that could be asserted was that the Party was on the way to winning over the majority without yet possessing the leadership of them.

The under-estimation of the forces of the counter-revolution, consisted of the fact that the Party under-estimated the power of the Social-Democrats as a hampering force within the proletariat.

The Party also misunderstood the nature and the rôle of the left Social Democratic leaders, and allowed the illusion to be cherished in its own ranks that by exerting the necessary mass pressure, we could compel these leaders to join with us in calling for the fight.

The Mistaken Political-Strategic Orientation on Saxony

The rigid one-sided policy of passing to the decisive struggle only from the defence of the Central German positions was a mistaken one. It resulted in the neglect of other industrial and fighting provinces, and in severe disorientation after the Saxon position was surrendered without a fight. It was a fatal error of the Party to stake all its cards on Saxony, and thereby fail to

provide itself with a line of retreat and defence in case of failure, and a reserve line of attack.

As a result of all these errors and defects of the Party, and of the weakness of the working class, there was a shrinking from the decisive fight for power at the last moment. While in Bulgaria, where the Party had formerly not participated in armed struggles, the defeat can still form the basis for future victories, in Germany, after the defeats of 1919 and of March, 1921, the Communists are in such a position that they must in the fight understand how to lead the masses to victory.

In any case, it was a great mistake of the Party not to have immediately changed its front and proceeded at once to partial struggles, and that in spite of the fact that some partial preparations had been made it retreated without a fight immediately upon the entry of the Reichswehr, the pronouncement of a state of siege throughout the Reich and the suppression of the Party.

4. THE SAXON EXPERIMENT AND THE HAMBURG STRUGGLES

The aggravation of the class antagonisms in Germany, the sharpening of the economic crisis, the concentration of the Party upon the decisive struggle, induced the Executive Committee of the Communist International and of the German Communist Party to undertake the experiment of allowing the Communists to enter the Saxon Government.

The idea of the participation in the Saxon Government was, in the opinion of the Executive, a special military and political task, which was defined in an instruction as follows :

“ Since, as we estimate the situation, the decisive moment will take place not later than four, five or six weeks hence, we consider it necessary that every position that can be directly useful should be immediately occupied. In view of the prevailing situation, the question of entering the Saxon Government must be treated as a practical one. On the condition that Zeigner and his people will be prepared sincerely to defend Saxony against Bavaria and the Fascisti, we must enter the government, immediately arm from fifty to sixty thousand men in an effective manner, and ignore General Muller. The same in Thuringia.”

Under these originally assumed premisses, the participation in the Government conformed to the resolutions of the Fourth Congress. The promotion of revolutionary struggles, the welding of the working masses should have been the pre-conditions for the entry into the Saxon Government : this entry should have been based upon mass movements. Although the direct military task had to be put off in view of the slowing down of the revolutionary process, nevertheless, the Communists could and ought to have carried on a real revolutionary activity. In this however, they showed themselves gravely below expectations.

It was their duty first of all to advance ruthlessly the question

of arming the workers ; from the first moment of their participation in the Workers' Government, the Communists should have known no other basic principle but the arming of the proletariat.

It was further their duty to unfold before the masses their proletarian programme for saving the country, and to carry on an energetic propaganda for the political workers' councils, and thereby to counteract the sabotage of the Left socialist ministers. It was their duty to work in Parliament and in the factory councils for the immediate adoption of the revolutionary measures such as the confiscation of the enterprises of manufactures who were sabotaging production, and the requisition of the houses of rich families for homeless workers and their children.

It was also the duty of the Communists from the first moment of their participation in the government to brand in the eyes of the masses the double-dealing policy of Zeigner, his secret negotiations with the military dictators, as well as the whole counter-revolutionary rôle of the left social democratic leaders.

Owing to this negligence, and to the fact that the Party was not capable of mobilising the masses, the Saxon experiment failed to mark a forward move in the fight : instead of revolutionary strategy we had a non-revolutionary parliamentary co-operation 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.

The Chemnitz Conference could have been a success for the Party only if adequate revolutionary work had been undertaken by all the Party bodies. The Party allowed itself to be caught unprepared by the thrust of the enemy, the Reich-executive* which everyone foresaw. The greater therefore was the error that, although the general strike was to be proposed, no attempt was made to concentrate the conference from the moment of its opening exclusively on the question of defence against the Reich-executive. These were errors, which undoubtedly facilitated the treacherous game of the Left social democratic leaders.

A direct contrast to Saxony was the uprising in Hamburg. Here it was proved that a bold surprise attack of determined fighters could smash the enemy militarily. But it also showed that such an armed struggle, even though, as was the case in Hamburg, it is regarded by the population not without sympathy and is supported by a mass movement, is nevertheless doomed to failure if it remains isolated and is not supported on the spot by a workers' council movement, the absence of which was severely felt in Hamburg.

The fight itself in the Reich was hampered by contradictory orders issued by the centre, and the strike movements which were actually taking place, suffered from lack of news of the fight in

*The expeditionary force of the Reich sent against one of its individual states.

the Reich generally, and by the news which was received of the outcome of the Chemnitz Conference.

Nevertheless, it was possible to call off the fight in Hamburg with exemplary discipline. The lessons to be derived from it are valuable for the Party and for the International. Particularly noteworthy was the villianous conduct of the Hambourg Social Democratic Leaders who supported the military action against the rebels. Their conduct is but the reverse side of the medal, the face of which is the conduct of Zeigner and his "Lefts" in Saxony.

The Saxon experiment has severely discredited the "left" Social Democrats; it has demonstrated that they are in reality the lackeys of the counter-revolution. The Hamburg uprising has considerably strengthened the consciousness of power of the German proletariat, and was at the same time a severe blow for the Social Democrats.

The Communist Party must realise clearly the errors which were committed during the Saxon experiment and in connection with the fight in Hamburg. Without this it will be impossible for the Party to conduct correct tactics in the future.

5. THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE CHANGE IN THE TACTICS OF THE UNITED FRONT IN GERMANY

The leading strata of the German Social Democrats are at the present moment nothing else than a fraction of German Fascism under a socialist mask. They have handed the power of the state over to the representatives of the capitalist dictatorship in order to save Capitalism from the proletarian revolution. Sollmann, the Minister for Internal Affairs, declared a state of siege; Radbruch, the Minister for Justice, has converted "democratic" justice into extraordinary justice against the revolutionary proletariat. Ebert, the President of the Reich, also formally handed over government power to Seckt. The Social Democratic fraction in the Reichstag screened these actions and voted for the Special Powers Act which set aside the constitution and handed over power to the White generals.

The whole international social democracy is gradually becoming the official armour bearer of the Capitalist dictatorship. Men like Turati and Modigliani in Italy, Sakasov in Bulgaria, Pilsudski in Poland, and the Social Democratic leaders of the stamp of Severing in Germany, are direct participators in the government power of the capitalist dictatorship.

For five years the German Social Democrats of all shades had been gradually passing over to the camp of the counter-revolution. The process is now nearing its completion. The legitimate heir of the "revolutionary" Government of Scheidemann and Hasse is the fascist General Seckt.

It is true there are differences even in the camp of the capitalist dictatorship, and these may be of great enough importance to be

exploited for our class fight. There are shades of difference between Ebert, Seeckt and Ludendorff. But, apart, from those differences in the camp of the enemy, the German Communists must not forget that the main thing is to bring the working class to understand what is the essence of the whole affair, namely, that in the fight between capital and labour the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany are irrevocably united with the White generals.

It is not only just now that the German Social Democrats have passed over to the side of capitalism. At bottom, they have always been the class enemies of the proletariat. But it is only now, after they have passed from capitalist democracy to capitalist dictatorship that this has become grossly evident to the masses.

It is this fact which induces us to introduce some modification into the tactics of the United Front as applied to Germany.

No negotiations with the mercenaries of the White dictatorship! This is what every communist in Germany must plainly realise and proclaim loudly and emphatically to the whole German proletariat.

But even more dangerous than the right wing of the Social Democratic Party leaders are the left wing leaders, this last illusion of the deceived workers, these last fig leaves covering the counter-revolutionary policy of Severing, Noske, and Ebert.

The Communist Party of Germany rejects all negotiations not only with the Central Committee of the German Social Democratic Party, but also with the "left" leaders as long as these heroes do not summon up enough manhood to break openly with the counter-revolutionary gang sitting in the Central Committee of the German Social Democratic Party.

The tactic of the United Front to be employed in Germany is now: "Unity from below."

In the first theses of the Executive of the Communist International of December, 1921, we find:

"As a counter-poise to the diplomatic game of the Menshevik leaders, the Russian Bolsheviks put forward the slogan: 'Unity from below!' *i.e.*, the unity of the working classes themselves in the practical fight for the revolutionary demands of the workers against Capitalism. Practice has proved that this was the only correct reply. As a result of this tactic, which was modified according to the circumstances of time and place, a huge section of the best Menshevik workers was gradually won over for Communism!"

The Communist Party of Germany must learn how to realise the slogan of the United Front from below.

A ferment such as had never before existed is going on among the workers who still belong to the German Social Democratic Party. They see the bankruptcy of their leaders and are seeking new paths. There is therefore no reason why we should reject

local negotiations and agreements with the German S.D.P. worker wherever we are faced with honest proletarians who are prepared to prove their devotion to the revolution.

The organs of the United Front, the factory councils, control commissions and committees of action, must be so closely interwoven that they finally become the centrally directed apparatus of the proletarian fight for power.

6. IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY

The main estimate of the situation in Germany, which was made in September by the Executive of the Communist International, remains essentially unchanged. The character of the fighting phase which has begun and the main tasks of the Communist Party remain the same. The German Communist Party must not strike from the agenda the question of uprising and the seizure of power. This question must stand before us as urgent and portentous as ever. However great the partial victories of the German counter-revolution, may be they cannot solve any of the crisis problems of capitalist Germany.

Therefore, in view of its experiences gathered during the last few months, the German Communist Party is faced with a number of immediate tasks.

The Party must organise the fights of the proletariat against the abolition of the eight-hour day and of the workers' rights. The Party must unite the unemployed movement organisationally and politically with the movement of the employed workers and thus avoid the danger of the working class being split into starving unemployed and employed workers who still have a crust of bread. The Party will be best able to fulfil this task if it prepares the impending economic struggles in advance, in such a manner that they will not only be directed against reduction of wages, but will also have a political aim as expressed in the slogan: "Work for the unemployed!"

The Party propaganda must be directed towards making the broadest masses conscious that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can save them. This task must be bound up with the aim of politically annihilating the Social Democratic Party. This demands the organisation of the United Front bodies and that every partial struggle should be given a definite aim.

The Party must seek to win over in addition to the industrial proletariat, the rural proletariat, the clerks and officials, the small peasants, and the proletarianised middle classes, and make them the allies of the working class under the hegemony of the revolutionary workers. This can be done by clear and definite agitation, by propaganda on behalf of the economic programme of the German Communist Party, by fighting against still existing remnants of pacifist orientation in the West, by pointing out the national role of the German revolution and the significance of an

alliance between the German Soviet Republic and Soviet Russia, and by determined and indefatigable work in the organisation of the control commissions and similar organs of the revolutionary movement.

The work of organisation within and without the Party must go hand in hand with agitation and propaganda. The German Communist Party must be not only a good propaganda party, but also a good fighting party. The work of arming the workers and of technically preparing for the decisive struggle must be carried on with tenacity. The proletarian "centuries" must be organised in fact and not merely on paper, and must be supported by the sympathy of the broad masses of the workers, which can only be won by the active leadership on the part of the C.P.G. in all struggles and actions of the proletariat. Only when the working masses can count upon the protection of the "centuries" in their demonstrations and strikes and in all their conflicts, will the "centuries" receive the hearty support of the masses in their arming and training and in securing information as to the forces of the enemy.

The pre-requisite for all this is that the Party should make a thorough utilisation of all its experiences. Every remnant of democratic illusions and of the notion within the Party that the German Social Democratic Party, or groups of this party which are ideologically and organisationally under its influence, can as such lead revolutionary struggles, must be rooted out. It must be hammered into the heads of the members that the German Communist Party before the victory of the proletarian revolution, is the party of the uprising, the only party for destroying the capitalist system, and that in all the partial struggles its work can only be revolutionary if it aims at smashing the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie, keeps constantly in view the aim of stabilising the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communist Party is the only revolutionary party, it is strong enough to prepare for and achieve the victory of the masses of the proletariat against all other parties—this must be the firm conviction of every Party member.

In order to bring about this orientation within the Party, the C.P.G. must openly discuss throughout its membership the experiences it has passed through. The Party must learn how to carry on discussions without weakening its power of action. In order to consolidate its whole power of action it must, in spite of all difficulties and its position of illegality, not neglect to clear up all its differences and put an end to discussions at a Party Congress.

The Communist International absolutely demands that the unity of the Party should be maintained. The Executive of the Communist International calls upon the whole membership of the German Communist Party to do everything in its power to that

the whole Party on the Party Congress should unitedly put an end to the fractional conflicts and achieve complete power of action.

The Executive of the Communist International calls the attention of every member of the German Communist Party and of all the other Sections of the Communist International to the gigantic tasks of the present revolutionary crisis. The Executive is firmly convinced that the experiences of the last few months have not been in vain, and if they are carefully studied and utilised, will bring the victory of the proletariat nearer.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

VIII

THE WORK OF THE PARTY IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

UNITY IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The Communist Party of Germany, which has assumed the immediate task of freeing the proletarian masses from the influence of reformism, fights with the same determination as heretofore against the slogan "Leave the Trade Unions."

The Communists, who remain and work wherever there are proletarian masses with increased energy, and in view of the disintegration of the ranks of the social-democrats—probably with increased success, form their Communist fractions, which serve as the centres of the revolutionary trade union movement.

At the present moment, when the Party has been declared illegal and is forced to make use of every possibility of legal action, this is of particular importance.

The Communists, as heretofore, are opposed to splits and combat this policy of the Social-Democrats even when the latter exclude them from the trade unions. The preservation of unity in the trade union movement is particularly important during the period of the capitalist offensive and the growth of re-action.

THE ORGANISATION OF EXPELLED MEMBERS AND OTHERS

Those who have been expelled from the trade unions, as well as those sections of the working class which have not yet been organised into trade unions, must be organised by the Communists in accordance with the concrete situation prevailing in each individual trade union. Therefore it is imperative that the Communists understand how to apply various and manifold methods (factory councils, control committees, dual trade unions of expelled members, general worker's committees, committees of unemployed, &c.), without being tied down to any one of the methods and forms of opposition. The General Committee of the

Expelled Members Leagues and the union will work in close co-operation with the National Committee of the Factory Councils. Under these conditions, the party must carry on its work with special care, energy, and system among the unorganised and non-party masses, in order to prevent the break-up of the working class which is the aim of the trade union bureaucrats.

THE UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW

In refusing to negotiate with the leaders of the reformist trade union movement as well as with the leaders of the Social Democrats, who are actually allies of the bourgeoisie and of Fascism, the Communists must understand how to carry out the United Front from below in the trade unions by allying the masses of the proletariat organised in the trade unions with those yet unorganised, on the basis of their every-day struggles, and by winning over to this struggle those sections of the working class which have not yet broken away from the Social Democrats. In this connection, the negotiations and agreements between the Communists and the local trade union organisations (local groups, cartels, &c.) in the interest of the struggle, not only do not contradict the tactics of the United Front from below, but on the contrary, provide an important weapon against the trade union bureaucracy and the reformists.

In those cases where the Communists work in co-operation with the Social Democratic workers in the factories and in the organisations, it is the duty of the Communists, in addition to co-ordinating their practical activities, to advance their fundamental standpoint, and ruthlessly criticise the mistakes, the indecision, and the inconsistency of the demands of the Social Democrats.

The Communist Party must openly and clearly explain to the workers :

- (1) That the crisis through which the trade unions are passing is the logical result of the whole history of reformist trade unionism, and of the tactic and policy of civil peace.
- (2) That the working class can emerge from the present economic situation not by means of the ordinary trade union struggle, but only by the overthrow of the capitalists and by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- (3) The Communist Party must make use of every labour organisation, especially anti-reformist organisations, in the fight against the reformists. In this connection, the Weimar Conference was important from the fact that anti-reformist elements were brought into alliance against the trade union bureaucracy on the basis of a definite programme of action. This was also the case in the leagues of expelled members, in the Union, and others.

THE SLOGAN "SAVE THE TRADE UNIONS."

The slogan, "Save the Trade Unions," as it has often been applied heretofore, is erroneous. The trade unions cannot be saved on the old lines. In order to realise this goal, it will be necessary to effect a fundamental transformation in the trade unions by means of the factory councils, with the object of industrial organisation and the liquidation of reformism by means of revolutionary activity.

THE RÔLE OF THE FACTORY COUNCILS

In view of these facts, the principal task of the Communists is to concentrate all their energy on the work in the factories and the factory councils with the object of establishing the factory councils as starting points and supports for the whole work of the Party among the masses, especially against the reformist trade union leaders.

The factory councils are also confronted with the important task of uniting the organised trade unions masses with the unorganised masses in their ever-increasing elementary struggles.

In this connection the factory councils must be organisationally allied with one another according to industrial groups on a local, district, and general scale, so as to form potential basis of the future organisation of production.

Hence it is necessary at the present time to combat the danger of placing the factory councils in one form or another under the jurisdiction of the reformist trade unions.

THE ECONOMIC STRUGGLE

The decentralisation which is naturally and necessarily developing from the present situation (the unfavourable state of the market, the slump in production, the bankruptcy of the reformist trade unions, &c.), and the spontaneous outbreak of unofficial strikes (against the will of the trade union executives and without the financial support of the latter), *places upon the Communists the duty of leading these strikes.*

The Communists must combine every concrete problem of the economic struggle and trade union tactics with the general historical tasks of the working class, and with the necessity of the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communists must actively participate in the organisation of the strike leadership and the committees of action, and ally them with the factory councils.

But in view of the fact that the factory councils must act as the basis for the general re-grouping of the forces of the working class in its struggle, the entire weight of this economic struggle must not be placed exclusively on the shoulders of the factory councils.

The factory councils must accuse the trade unions of being responsible for the increasing misery of the working class.

THE GENERAL TACTIC IN THE TRADES UNIONS

The Communists will decide upon the tactic and slogans in the trades unions solely on the basis of the general and concrete estimate of the tasks confronting the working class and the party, and of the strength of the various elements participating in the struggle.

(Signed) W. KOLAROV.

IX

RESOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL ON THE ORGANISATION OF FACTORY NUCLEI

The Party organisation must be adapted to the conditions and aims of its work. Under the reformist policy of the Social-Democratic parties, which endeavoured to exert an influence upon the bourgeois government by means of the ballot box, it was natural that attention should be chiefly directed to the organisation of voters. The organisation, therefore, was based upon electoral divisions and residential areas. The Communist Party inherited this form of organisation from the Social-Democratic parties, but it is entirely opposed not only to the final aims of the Communist Party, but also to its immediate tasks. The final aim of our Party is to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, seize power for the working class, and bring Communism into being. Its immediate tasks are to win the majority of the working class by active participation in the everyday struggles of the working masses, and to secure the leadership of these struggles. This can only be achieved by means of the closest contact between our Party organisations and the working masses in the factories.

It was from this point of view that the Third Congress of the Communist International decided that the basis of the Communist Party must be the factory nuclei. In the majority of the Sections of the Communist International this has not yet been carried into effect; and in many, the question of organising factory nuclei has not been even concretely formulated. The experience of the German Revolution (at the end of 1923) once more clearly demonstrated that without factory nuclei and the closest contact with the working masses, it is impossible to draw the latter into the struggle and to lead them, that it is impossible to gauge their moods accurately and thus take advantage of the most favourable moment for our action, and that it is useless to expect victory over the bourgeoisie.

(1) *The Factory Nuclei form the Basis of the Party Organisation.* All Communists working in a factory must be members of the nucleus in that factory.

Note.—Where there are only one or two Party members in a factory and therefore they cannot form a nucleus, they are to be attached to the nucleus of the nearest factory, which must conduct the work in all adjacent factories where there are no nuclei.

(2) Communists who do not work in factories, workshops, shops, &c. (housewives, domestic servants, house porters, &c.) form Residential Party Nuclei.

Note.—Members of factory nuclei who live in other sections are obliged to register with the committee of the section (part of the town) where they reside. The section committee assigns them to residential nuclei. Members of Party nuclei of other sections who are assigned by Section Committees to residential nuclei, vote in these nuclei on questions which they have voted on in the factory nuclei, (question of Party principle, election of Party delegates, &c.).

(3) Unemployed members remain attached to the nucleus of the factory where they were formerly employed. In the event of protracted unemployment, with the consent of the section committee, they may leave their nucleus and be transferred to the sub-section where they live, and be attached to another nucleus.

(4) In small industrial centres, towns and villages, where the workers reside in close proximity to their factories, or farms, uniform nuclei are formed as far as possible around the factory or farm.

(5) Factory nuclei and residential nuclei elect an executive committee consisting of three or, at most, five persons. The elections take place at the general meetings of the nuclei. The executive committee of the nucleus distributes the work amongst its members. Depending upon the size of the nucleus, the executive committee appoints comrades for the distribution of literature, the conduct of propaganda, a comrade for trade union work, one to conduct the work of the fractions in the factory committees, one for co-operation with the young communist nucleus, one to conduct the work among women, &c.

(6) Party members who are members of a factory nucleus pay their dues to that nucleus; Party members who are members of a residential nucleus pay their dues to the latter.

(7) In large towns where there are numerous factory and residential nuclei, they are united into sub-sections. The sub-sections are joined into sections. All the sections of a large town constitute the local organisation. The section committee fixes its own sub-sections. In doing so, the section committee should attempt as far as possible to form the sub-sections around large factories.

In medium sized towns, sub-sections should be formed, uniting the factory and the residential nuclei. The sub-sections constitute the local organisation. In small towns and villages the nuclei are united into local groups. The local organisations in middle-sized towns and the local groups of small towns and of villages are united into sub-districts.

Note.—Sub-sections and local groups, in accordance with local needs and requirements, hold regular meetings of all the members of the factory and residential nuclei of their sub-section.

(8) At the head of each sub-section or local group, is an executive committee consisting of three to five persons, elected at the general meeting of the members of the nuclei of the sub-section or local group, or else, depending upon local conditions (*e.g.*, when the Party is illegal) at delegate conferences. The Secretary of the committee of the sub-section and of the local groups must be confirmed by the section committee (in the country districts, by sub-district (committee) is the section or sub-district committee elected at section or sub-district Party conferences.

(9) At the sub-section and group delegate meetings, and at district and sub-district conferences, the nuclei should be represented in proportion to the size of their membership, but in such a manner that the majority should consist of delegates from the factory nuclei. The number of delegates from each nucleus should be decided by the sub-section or sub-district committee.

In organisations where, owing to the fact that they are illegal, it is impossible to have a large representation at the sections or sub-district conferences, the delegates may be elected not directly by the nuclei, but at sub-section or group delegate meetings.

(10) Local Committees (in large towns) are elected at local conferences consisting of delegates from all the sections elected at section conferences in proportion to the size of the membership of the district.

(11) In order to increase the influence of the factory nuclei, more than half the members, both of the sub-section committees and of the section committees should be members of factory nuclei. The local committees should consist partly of factory workers.

(12) Where the Party is illegal, the higher Party organs in special circumstances (*e.g.*, the arrest of a section committee, &c.) have the right to appoint new members of the section committee, with the understanding that a delegate meeting or conference will be summoned at the first opportunity in order to confirm the appointed committee or elect a new one. Members of a committee who have escaped arrest have the right of co-opting new members to the committee, with the agreement and confirmation of the higher party organs, until a conference is summoned. If the party is illegal, the number of members of the section committee should be as small as possible.

THE TASKS OF THE FACTORY NUCLEI

The political organisational work of the Party should be centred in the factory nuclei. The factory nuclei, by leading the struggles of the working masses for their everyday needs, should direct them into the fight for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. A factory nucleus should, therefore, consider and determine its point of view upon every political or economic question agitating the working masses, and upon every conflict arising in the revolutionary method of settling questions and, as the most conscious and active part of the working class, must assume the leadership of the struggle.

In addition to general Party work, the tasks of the factory nuclei are as follows :—

- (1) To carry on Communist agitation and propaganda among the non-party working masses ; systematic instruction of individual workers in order to draw them into the ranks of the Communist Party ; distribution of political literature in the factories ; discussion of questions affecting the factory and even the publication of a special factory newspaper ; the carrying on of social and agitational work among the factory workers.
- (2) Determined and continual efforts must be made to win elected posts in the shops, trade unions, co-operatives, factory committees, control commissions, &c.
- (3) The nuclei should participate in all the economic conflicts and demands of the workers. The task of the nuclei is to broaden and deepen the movement, to point out to the workers the political consequences of the struggle, and to persuade them to adopt the wider struggle (both economic and political) and to set up a United Front of the workers against the bourgeoisie and against Fascism.
- (4) The nuclei must carry on an obstinate fight in the factories and workshops against the members and followers of other parties, also of the socialist parties and other "labour parties," using for this purpose facts relating to the activities of these parties which can be understood even by the most backward section of the working class.
- (5) They must bring about contact between the employed and unemployed workers in order to avoid a conflict between them.
- (6) Where conditions are ripe, they must carry on a fight for workers' control of the industries, banks, land and transport, and for the supply of the workers with the primary needs of life.
- (7) They must exert an influence upon the youth and working women employed in the factories, and draw them into the struggle. They must assist in the formation of young

communist nuclei in the factories, and support them wherever they already exist.

- (8) Every member of a nucleus must actively participate in every kind of party work in the factory to which he is assigned by the executive committee of the nucleus.

Apart from the special tasks in their factories, the factory nuclei have also to perform *territorial tasks at their places of residence*, since workers employed in factories also have various needs and fulfil various social functions in the places where they reside (housing, food, health, education, elections, &c.).

The chief territorial tasks are as follows :—

- (1) To conduct the political and organisational work of the Party at the place of residence, the carrying on of campaigns of various kinds (electoral, against bad housing, high rents, &c.), to see that the families of workers, clerks, &c., are assured of the primary necessities of life.
- (2) The distribution of Party literature, the recruiting of new readers and new Party members, agitation, propaganda, individual instruction of non-party workers, educational work in the sub-sections (clubs, &c.), inviting sympathisers to participate in workers' demonstrations, and generally carrying on the working class fight.
- (3) House to house propaganda in the sub-sections, the collection of information as to the party affiliations of persons residing in the sub-sections, as to political work, and the activity of Fascists; keeping records of stores of firearms, &c.
- (4) Work among women and children.

These Territorial Tasks apply also to the Residential Nuclei.—

Their work must be carried on under the direct control of the sub-section committee, and be co-ordinated with the work of the factory nuclei.

ESTABLISHING THE FACTORY NUCLEI

In view of the novelty of this question for many sections of the Communist International and the varying conditions in different countries, the Executive Committee of the Communist International proposes that the subject should be widely discussed in the Party press and at Party meetings, and then only should the reorganisation of the Party on the basis of factory nuclei be attempted. Nuclei should first be organised in the larger factories.

The nuclei should in no circumstances be confused with the communist fractions in the trade unions, co-operatives, &c., whose function cannot be replaced by the nuclei. The functions of the fractions are narrower than those of the nuclei. The nucleus, or rather, the executive committee of the nucleus, must direct the work of the factory committee fractions in the factory.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International earnestly requests all Sections of the Communist International

to furnish it with detailed information on the progress of the discussion on the question here touched upon, and of the results achieved in the organisation in the factories.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION OF FACTORY NUCLEI IN GERMANY

Concerning the Communist Party of Germany, the following special instructions were adopted by the Presidium of the E. C. C. I. :—

- (1) In accordance with the resolution on the organisation of factory nuclei (see above) adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the Party must carry out its re-organisation in such a way as to make the factory nuclei the basis of the Party organisation.
- (2) Members of factory nuclei must be in a majority in the section and sub-section committees. Big cities must be divided into sections. The local Party committee must include workers from the bench.
- (3) Factory and residential nuclei are to be amalgamated into sub-sections, which are to be under the control of section committees. Wherever possible, the section committees must form the sub-sections around big factories.
- (4) Local committees (or section committees) must immediately elaborate a program with a time-limit, with the object of carrying out this re-organisation in every locality, and must submit it to the Central Committee of the Party for approval. In the course of two months, the re-organisation must have been carried out throughout the country under the direction of the Central Committee of the Party. The Central Committee must keep the Executive Committee of the Communist International regularly informed on the progress of the re-organisation work.

Consequently the last paragraph of the resolution on the re-organisation of factory nuclei, does not apply to the German Communist Party.

