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THE

**WORLD
ECONOMIC
CRISIS**

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O. Piatnitsky

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THE WORLD
ECONOMIC
CRISIS

THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE
AND THE TASKS OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTIES

By

O. PIATNITSKY

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CRISIS

THE REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE
AND THE TASKS OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTIES

OF ITALY

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION: The World Economic Crisis, the End of Capitalist Stabilization and the Danger of Imperialist Wars	7
§ ONE: The Capitalist World in the Throes of the Crisis and the Land of Socialist Construction ...	22
§ TWO: The Revolutionary Upsurge of the Workers' and Peasants' Movement	34
§ THREE: What the Communist Parties have Achieved Between the Eleventh and Twelfth Plenums of the E.C.C.I.	58
§ FOUR: The Failure of the Communist Parties to Keep Pace with the Advance of the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Movement. The Tasks of the Communist Parties	71
POSTSCRIPT: The Situation in Germany in Connection with the Changed Conditions, the New Tasks of the Communist Party of Germany in the Field of Party Construction and the Utilization of Legal Possibilities in Work Among the Masses	107

INTRODUCTION.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS, THE END OF CAPITALIST STABILISATION, AND THE DANGER OF IMPERIALIST WAR.

THE Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. was held at the time when the third year of the economic crisis in the capitalist countries was coming to an end. The world economic crisis, which has intensified the general crisis of capitalism, has brought about a number of great changes in the world situation and led to the *end of the relative stabilization of capitalism*. The correlation of forces as between the socialist and the capitalist world has undergone a tremendous change.

In the U.S.S.R. the victory of socialism has been secured and the economic and political power of the country is increasing; while in the capitalist world there is growing disintegration, the crisis develops, the contradictions between the various imperialist nations and between the "mother-countries" and colonies are becoming more acute, the class struggle within the imperialist countries is intensifying, and the revolutionary upsurge is maturing.

"All these facts taken together," the theses of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. state, "reveal, in the course of the development of the general crisis of capitalism, a definite *change*, a peculiar swaying of the antagonistic forces, very rapid in some places and slow in others. In certain extremely important key points, the antagonistic forces are already becoming unleashed for the conflict. The end of relative capitalist stabilization has come."

The post-war crisis, coinciding in time with the victory of the Soviets in former Russia, was accompanied, chiefly, in Europe, by economic collapse, decline of production, disorganization of foreign trade and of the world's currency

system. The temporary relative stabilization, which was to be noted in 1923-24, meant a certain relative recovery and a rise in capitalist industry for the capitalist world, this being accompanied by a comparatively rapid development of technique, a certain recovery of agriculture, a growth of foreign trade (although the latter lagged behind the increase in production) and the stabilization of currency. Taking the level of production of 1913 as 100, the index of world production of pig-iron in 1920 was 62.2, rising in 1929 to 96. For steel, the respective figures are 90.6 and 154.1. For coal, 75.1 and 95.9. During the period 1923-29, production of pig-iron in all the capitalist countries increased by 28 per cent., production of steel by 33 per cent., of electric machinery by 50 per cent., of automobiles by 29 per cent., and so forth. Industrial production in individual countries increased between 1924 and 1929 as follows: in the United States by 26 per cent., thus surpassing the pré-war level, in Britain by 16 per cent., in Germany by 42 per cent., in France by 27 per cent., in Japan by 42 per cent. Changes have also occurred in agriculture, resulting in increased output, although this increase did not keep pace with the increase in population. In European countries the currency was stabilized, principally with the aid of American credits. World trade has increased during the period of stabilization by 19 per cent. and European trade by 22 per cent., although trade has not kept pace with the growth in production.

The period of the relative stabilization of capitalist economy was reflected in the domain of politics, in the domain of inter-State relations. In these fields the relative stabilization of capitalism found its expression in the following way:—

“First, in the fact that, for the time being, the United States of America, Britain and France have succeeded in coming to an understanding as to how and to what extent they will despoil Germany. In other words, they have

succeeded in concluding an agreement, which they call the Dawes-ization of Germany.

“Second, the stabilization of capitalism found its expression in the fact that British, American and Japanese capitalists have temporarily succeeded in coming to an agreement as to the allotment of their spheres of influence in China, as to the best methods for the plundering of this vast market for international capital.

“Thirdly, the stabilization of capitalism found expression in the fact that the imperialist groups of the advanced countries have succeeded in coming to an understanding for the time being, not to interfere with each other in the exploitation and oppression of ‘their’ colonies.”*

The world crisis, which commenced in the fall of 1929, has dealt a severe blow at this relative stabilization of capitalism and, in its further development, has brought this stabilization to naught. Capitalist production has declined considerably below the pre-war level; in many branches it has sunk to the level reached at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. By the end of 1932, world production had declined 38.7 per cent. in comparison with 1928, while in individual countries the decline was expressed in the following figures: Germany 45.2 per cent., the U.S.A. 41.2 per cent., Great Britain 22.1 per cent., France 22.9 per cent. Wholesale prices of industrial products on the world market declined by approximately one-third. The decline in production has resulted in unprecedented and continually increasing unemployment. At the end of 1932 the number of unemployed was estimated by the Labour Office of the League of Nations at thirty millions, but even the Commission set up to prepare for the World Economic Conference was forced to admit that this figure represents an under-estimation. In agriculture, the agrarian crisis, in spite of the curtailed output,

* Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Volume I., Part 1.

has resulted in the stocks of raw materials being doubled since 1929; this has been accompanied by an unprecedented decline in the wholesale prices, amounting on the average to 50-60 per cent. for grain produce, and 25-30 per cent. in the case of meat. As a result of this, the disparity between the retail prices of industrial products on the one hand and the prices at which the peasant sells his produce on the other, has assumed exceptionally large proportions. This fact, coupled with increased taxation and the burden of rent and mortgages and other forms of debt, has greatly accelerated the ruin and pauperization of the toiling peasantry.

The credit crisis has reduced a number of countries to bankruptcy—not to mention Germany, which is not in a position to make any payments either on reparations, or on foreign loans. Payments on foreign loans have also been suspended by South American countries, by Austria, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria, etc., while even such a creditor-country as France has refused to remit the instalment that fell due at the end of 1932 on its war debts to the U.S.A., and Britain has demanded a revision of these debts. The export of capital has been discontinued. The principal creditor-countries, the U.S.A. and Britain, stopped granting foreign loans in 1932. There is very little left of the stabilization of currency, there are only a very few capitalist countries (Switzerland, Holland, France, Belgium) which still maintain the gold standard, while in some others (e.g., Germany and Austria) it is only nominally in force, in view of the many restrictions on foreign currency. Nearly half the countries in the capitalist world, including Britain, the entire South American continent and the whole of Scandinavia, have abandoned the gold standard officially, as well as in fact.

The economic crisis has greatly accentuated the contradictions between the various imperialist powers. The new

INTRODUCTION

correlation of forces between the various imperialist powers in the post-war period found its expression in the Versailles system. While the contradictions between them continued to exist, this system nevertheless defined for a certain period the share which each of the victorious countries was to have in the plunder and in the post-war partition of the world. The basis of this agreement was the spoliation of Germany. A whole system of reparations, debts and payments was created, on the basis of which Germany became the principal debtor, while Europe as a whole became the debtor of the U.S.A. And now the Versailles system is collapsing. Its main foundation, the possibility of plundering Germany by collecting the reparations payments, has been undermined. And after the expiration of the Hoover moratorium, which was declared for the term of one year, Germany is not remitting any reparation payments. The Young Plan has thus been obliterated by the crisis. Germany cannot pay on its obligations, and the European countries are refusing to pay the United States. The agreement between the victorious powers (the U.S.A., Britain, France) regarding the spoliation of Germany no longer exists. Germany has openly raised the question of "equality in armaments," of the repudiation of the Versailles system, the revision of its eastern boundaries (*i.e.*, the return of its former territories which were given to Poland), and so forth.

This has resulted in a considerable accentuation of Franco-German and of German-Polish relations, since France and Poland are more interested than are the other victorious countries, in upholding the Versailles "peace" treaty. In the economic field, too, the struggle between the victors is becoming day by day more accentuated; evidence of this is the customs duties, import quotas, restrictions on foreign currency and similar measures, which have assumed, as even the bourgeois economists admit, the character of an economic war.

The Washington Pact was a sequel to the Versailles Treaty. The Washington Pact not only determined the correlation of forces between the various navies to the advantage of the U.S.A. (its navy being brought up to the level of the British fleet, which had heretofore been the strongest). It also had the effect of breaking up the Anglo-Japanese alliance and of establishing the principle of the "open door" in China and (in the so-called Nine Power Pact) its "territorial integrity," since in view of the existing correlation of forces in the Far East and the economic and technical superiority of the U.S.A. over its rivals, these principles are most advantageous for the U.S.A. in plundering China.

At the present time the Washington Pact adopted by the imperialists regarding the mode of plundering China and the division of spheres of influence between them has been virtually annulled. Japan has seized Manchuria. In this it has the support of Britain and France, who are also reckoning on the part which Japan might play in an attack on the Soviet Union in the Far East. Simultaneously Britain, whose antagonisms with Japan are severe and which encounters intensive competition from that country both in China itself, and in India (textiles), is striving to strengthen its position in South China by subjecting the provinces adjoining Hong-Kong (Kwantung, Kiangsi) to its influence, consolidating its naval base at Singapore, etc. All this, however, does not preclude the possibility of Britain and Japan combining for a struggle against the U.S.A. France is openly supporting Japan; she has concluded a military-political alliance with the latter and, by way of "compensation" for this, is encroaching upon the Chinese provinces which are adjacent to Indo-China (Hunan, Kwangsi). The support of Britain and France forms the basis for the virtual support which the League of Nations is extending to the Japanese in their spoilation of China. The U.S.A. has refused to recognize the Japanese seizure

INTRODUCTION

of Chinese territory, denouncing it as a violation of the Nine Power Pact, and is feverishly engaged in strengthening its influence in China (*cf.* the attempts to find support in Nanking, etc.). The transfer of the U.S. navy to the Pacific Ocean shows, incidentally, how accentuated relations in the Far East have become.

This tense atmosphere of antagonisms and the clash of interests between the various imperialist powers in the Far East constitutes a direct threat of a new imperialist war. Japan has been forced to postpone its plans for an attack on the U.S.S.R., but it still continues persistent preparations for putting them into effect, striving to make use of Manchuria as a base for military operations against the U.S.S.R. This is shown, among other things, by its repeated refusals to sign a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, by the provocative declarations made by representatives of the Japanese government, and so forth. And it gives grounds for believing that both France and Britain have made their support of Japan in the Far Eastern conflict conditional upon the participation of Japan in an attack on the Soviet Union. Has this situation undergone any essential change since France concluded a non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.? France has concluded this pact because it has taken stock of the unfavourable changes in the international situation (the rapidly developing economic and political disintegration in the camp of her vassals, Poland, Yugoslavia, Rumania, on the one hand, and the open aggressiveness of Hitlerite Germany, on the other), and also with the aim of mitigating the growing alarm of the toiling masses, both in France itself and in the countries which are its vassals, at the threat of an attack on the Soviet Union. But this, of course, does not hinder the French militarists from continuing their preparations for an intervention against the Soviet Union.

Anglo-American contradictions are also growing more

acute in other parts of the world. The Ottawa Conference reflected with especial clarity the struggle for markets which is going on between Britain and the U.S.A. In South America the struggle between Britain and the U.S.A. has already taken concrete shape in the form of wars between the various South American nations (Paraguay and Bolivia, Colombia and Peru), which are backed by the U.S.A. or Britain, as the case may be.

Simultaneously with this, the antagonism between Britain and France in Europe is growing more acute. Although Britain has been forced to avoid open conflicts with France, in view of the necessity of a joint struggle against the U.S.A., it nevertheless persists in its policy of not permitting French hegemony in Europe. This finds its expression in the efforts which are being made to weaken France, to diminish France's pressure upon Germany and to hinder the realization of all French projects for the establishment of France's hegemony in Europe (the Danube Federation, etc.). We may add to this enumeration of the most important imperialist contradictions between European nations by mentioning the antagonism between France and Italy—an antagonism which makes itself particularly apparent in the sharp clashes between Italy and Yugo-slavia, one of France's vassals, on the basis of a struggle for Albania. Italian imperialism clashes with French influence in Hungary and in the Balkans. Italy is with ever greater insistence claiming a share in France's colonial possessions on the African continent.

Particular note must be taken of the growing resistance which is being offered to the imperialists by the colonies—a resistance which more and more frequently assumes the character of an armed uprising (*cf.* India, Indo-China, Indonesia, Morocco, Syria and Palestine). Of paramount importance is the anti-imperialist struggle of the toiling masses of China, not to mention the heroic and successful

struggle of Soviet China against the imperialists and their aides, the Nanking government and the Kuomintang.

Under the conditions which characterize the end of capitalist stabilization, the fundamental contradiction becomes more apparent than ever before, the contradiction between the imperialist world and the U.S.S.R., where socialism is securing victories of universal historical significance. The achievements of socialist construction, the tremendous growth of the international importance of the Soviet Union, which has carried out a task unprecedented in history, the task of the technical reconstruction of industry and the collectivization of agriculture along with the liquidation of unemployment and the continual improvement in the material conditions of the working class and the peasantry, have demonstrated to the toilers of the capitalist countries the advantages of socialism as against capitalism. For this reason the very existence of the Soviet Union, which offers a living example of what the working class can achieve as a result of the socialist revolution, is regarded by the capitalists as a constant menace to their domination, as a stimulus to revolution in the capitalist countries. The fact that a number of capitalist nations have accepted the invitation of the U.S.S.R., which is steadfastly pursuing its policy of peace, and have concluded non-aggression pacts with the U.S.S.R., expresses the recognition of the growing strength of the Soviet Union, but does not abolish the danger of military provocations and attacks on the U.S.S.R. A war against the Soviet Union is being held up, on the one hand, by the contradictions between the imperialists themselves, which hinder them from launching such a war; and, on the other hand, by the fact that tremendous sympathy for the country of socialist construction is felt among the wide working class and toiling masses in the capitalist countries; and, finally, by the military preparedness of the Soviet state itself.

There are also the *internal* contradictions between various groups of the bourgeoisie within the imperialist countries. The capitalists who use imported raw materials, fuel and semi-manufactured articles are opposed to the exclusion of these commodities, while the capitalists who are interested in maintaining high prices on such raw materials and semi-manufactured goods favour their exclusion. The factory owners who are interested in developing foreign trade are opposed to the establishment of import quotas on agricultural produce, and object to the claims of the agrarians who want to introduce prohibitive duties on such commodities.

The contradictions are sharpening in general between the various individual trusts and between banking and industrial capital. The heavy industry trusts and the associations of manufacturers of light industry are engaged in a struggle for the division of the government subsidies (U.S.A., Germany). A struggle for the subsidies is also going on between the large landowners and industry.

Simultaneously with this, there is an extreme accentuation of the class contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in all capitalist countries.

To the offensive of the bourgeoisie and large landowners who strive to place the entire burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers and peasants, the proletariat responds with strikes and demonstrations and by strengthening its revolutionary organizations; the poor and middle peasantry respond by refusing to pay taxes, by fighting against the monopolist middlemen for higher prices on agricultural produce, by fighting against the distraint of their property, and so forth. The revolutionary upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movement in the capitalist countries is developing. It is the task of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries to make use of the situation

INTRODUCTION

created by the crisis, to develop, to activize and to organize the discontent of the great toiling masses, to strengthen their influence over them, to develop strikes and demonstrations to the higher stage of political and general strikes, to win over the majority of the working class.

The world economic crisis of the last three and a half years, coupled with the general crisis of capitalism, has accentuated all the external and internal contradictions between the imperialists as well as the contradictions between the imperialists on the one hand and the working class and toiling peasantry on the other.

All this has brought about the end of the relative stabilization of capitalism.

“But a directly revolutionary situation has not yet arisen in the important and decisive capitalist countries. What is taking place at the present moment is the transition to a new round of big clashes between classes and between states, a new round of wars and revolutions.*

* * *

Both during and since the World War, the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals, the Social-Democratic Party and the reformist trade union bureaucrats of every country have tried their very hardest to help their bourgeoisie escape revolution. They have not shrunk from employing any means in order to prevent the working class from following the example of the workers of former Russia and overthrowing the bourgeoisie. Immediately after the war there were powerful mass actions, demonstrations and strikes in Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Czecho-slovakia, the demands put forward being that the promises which the bourgeoisie had made to the workers during the war should be carried out.

In Germany and Austria, a proletarian revolution broke

* From the theses of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

out with workers' and soldiers' soviets. The Social-Democratic Parties, however, succeeded in getting the leadership of the movement into their hands owing to the fact that there had, as yet, been no large mass Communist Parties in these countries. On the one hand, by means of concessions to the working class in the shape of social legislation, "equality" in the political field (proportional representation, coalition governments), and on the other hand through the physical extermination of the active revolutionary forces and the bloody suppression of the mass actions of the workers (in Germany), the Social-Democratic Parties and reformist trade union officials succeeded in saving capitalism in Germany and Austria. They also betrayed the proletarian revolution in Hungary and Finland, although in these countries they were not directly at the head of the revolution.

From 1921 to 1924 the Social-Democratic Parties and the reformist trade union bureaucrats, in some countries participating in the bourgeois coalition government, but in the majority of cases supporting these bourgeois governments from the outside, have helped the capitalists by every means in their power to take away from the working class what it has won since the war. The proposal of the Communist International to the Second International to establish a united proletarian front of struggle against the offensive of the bourgeoisie was officially accepted by the Second International at the conference held in April, 1922, but was immediately violated by the Social-Democratic Parties in practice. The Social-Democrats have persisted in doing all they can to break up the united front of struggle which has been formed by the workers themselves from below.

From 1925 to 1928, during the period of temporary relative stabilization, the Social-Democrats and reformist trade union officials have heralded the formation of powerful trusts, the fixing of prices by monopolist combines, and the

INTRODUCTION

new forms of the exploitation to which the workers are subjected on the basis of rationalization, as manifestations of "organized capitalism" and the "peaceful growing of capitalism into socialism."

The Social-Democratic Parties and reformist trade union officials have not only carried on venomous, lying, and calumniating campaigns against the Land of Soviets ("forced labour," "dumping," "persecution of religion"), have not only predicted the inevitable fall of the Soviet government, but have taken part in different ways and various forms in the organization and in the carrying out of military intervention, and other hostile actions against the U.S.S.R.

During the world economic crisis, the Social-Democrats at first attempted to make the workers believe that the crisis would soon pass, and that capitalism would return to new prosperity. In proportion as the crisis grew more acute, they began ever more insistently to urge the workers to make sacrifices "equally with other sections of the population" for the cause of "economic recovery." At the same time they have actually aided the bourgeoisie, in every way, to transfer the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the toilers. And when the workers, together with the lower strata of the employees, began to understand the deception of the Social-Democratic Parties and reformist trade union officials; when wide sections of the toilers and working masses became convinced that the U.S.S.R. was building socialism, that on the basis of the industrialization of the country, the collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the last vestiges of capitalism in town and country, the situation of the toilers in the U.S.S.R. was continually improving; when the workers in the capitalist countries, acting over the heads of the Social-Democrats and trade union officials, began to fight against capitalism and against the preparations for anti-Soviet intervention and

imperialist wars—then the Social-Democratic Parties and trade union officials once again begin to trot out their old hypocritical plans of “socialization,” by means of which they had succeeded in deceiving the working masses in the post-war period.

The Social-Democratic Parties have once again started to formulate projects to be mooted in the bourgeois Parliaments for the “socialization of the mines, metallurgical industry and large chemical enterprises,” for the “nationalization of the large banks,” for the “expropriation of the large landed estates,” and so forth. It is under cover of these specious phrases about “socialism” that they vote for the nationalization of the debts of insolvent banks and trusts. When the workers who still adhered to the Social-Democratic Parties and the trade union bureaucrats began to realize that the reformists do not defend either the economic or the political interests of the proletariat, and to form a united front from below with the Communist and revolutionary workers in the struggle against the fascists and the bourgeoisie, the Social-Democratic Parties and trade union bureaucrats started to talk about the conclusion of a “non-aggression pact” between the Social-Democrats and the Communist Parties, about forgetting the past (*i.e.*, forgetting the treachery of the Social-Democrats), about renouncing “mutual criticism,” and so forth. By these manœuvres, the Social-Democrats are, of course, only striving to hoodwink the masses, and retain their influence over them.

During the first round of wars and revolutions, the Social-Democratic Parties and trade union officials succeeded in deceiving and disarming the broad, working masses, in smashing their mass actions and saving capitalism. The Communist Parties were then only in their inception, and the U.S.S.R. (which was in a state of economic collapse) was struggling for its very existence, against internal coun-

INTRODUCTION

ter-revolution and military intervention. But in the second round of wars and revolutions they will not again succeed in deceiving the working masses. The U.S.S.R. has entered the period of socialism, and completed the foundation of socialist economy. The achievements of the Soviet Union are well known to the broad masses in the capitalist countries. The Communist International and all of its sections will see to it that the Social-Democrats and trade union bureaucrats do not succeed a second time, in saving the bourgeoisie from the Proletarian Revolution.

§ ONE.

THE CAPITALIST WORLD IN THE THROES OF THE CRISIS AND THE LAND OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

NEVER before, during all the fifteen years of the existence of the U.S.S.R., has the difference between the two economic and political systems appeared so clearly and saliently as now to the great masses of the toilers throughout the entire world: on the one hand—socialism under construction in the U.S.S.R.—and, on the other hand—decaying capitalism. Never before did the superiority of socialism over capitalism appear so clearly as it has done during the past three years, 1930-31-32.

This difference and this superiority can no longer be concealed from the masses. The successful completion of the first Five-Year Plan, the failure of which was so persistently predicted by the bourgeoisie and social-democratic politicians and journalists, is an achievement of universal historical import. These people can no longer conceal or hush up this fact. The most far-sighted among them have been constrained to acknowledge the superiority of the Soviet socialist economy over capitalist economy.

Let us cite some of the most important facts for purposes of comparison, as, for instance, the index of industrial production of the chief capitalist countries.

INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

(1928 equals 100)

	1929	1931	Aug., 1932	% of decline
U.S.A. ...	110.1	71.0	52.4	52.4
Germany ...	108.4	67.5	54.5	49.7
France ...	113.4	95.3	72.4	36.2

In all capitalist countries heavy industry has fared worst. And it should be noted that the heavy industries in some

CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

of the large capitalist countries, as, for instance, in Germany and to some extent also in Great Britain, work to a considerable degree on orders from the U.S.S.R.

In the weekly review of the German Institute of Economic Research (beginning of August, 1932) we find the following statistical data on the volume of the average monthly production of the world's industry.

From January to July, 1932, the average monthly index of world industrial production declined from 76.1 to 67, or, if the Soviet Union be excluded, to 61 (the average monthly industrial production of 1928 being taken as 100).

By August, 1932, the total production of the world's industry had declined by 40 per cent. in comparison with the middle of 1929.

Only in the U.S.S.R. did the index of industrial production rise. It rose to 384 in comparison with 1913.

Matters are just as bad with respect to the world's foreign trade. In *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, organ of the German statistical department, of October, 1932, we find the following highly significant data on world trade:—

VOLUME IN BILLION GERMAN MARKS				THE SAME DATA IN PERCENTAGES			
(1928 equals 100)							
1st half				1st half			
1929	1930	1931	1932	1929	1930	1931	1932
TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE							
126.3	108.6	77.8	51.2	104.2	89.6	64.2	42.2
IMPORTS							
66.5	57.8	41.6	27.5	103.9	90.3	65.0	42.9
EXPORTS							
59.8	50.8	36.2	23.7	104.6	88.8	63.8	41.5

From 1929 to 1931 the volume of world trade has declined by 120,000,000,000 marks, or by 42 per cent.

The industrial crisis is deepening more and more, causing the disintegration of the entire capitalist system (the aban-

doning of the gold standard, the collapse of the credit system, chaos in the price policy). In close connection with all this is the colossal increase in the number of bankruptcies. Between January and June, 1932, there were 15,869 bankruptcies reported in the U.S.A., with total liabilities of 1,081,000,000 dollars.* In 1931 and 1932 there was not even any seasonal improvement in the building industry during the spring months.

In the U.S.S.R. all industry is working at full pressure.

The world industrial crisis and the decline in production have had a marked effect on the position of the broad working masses in all capitalist countries. In the last three and a half years, tens of millions of working men and women have been thrown out of work.

In *England* there were 1,165,000 unemployed in 1929, while in August, 1932, the total rose to 2,970,000; this is not counting those unemployed, about 800,000 in number, who have been removed from the registration lists of the labour exchanges as a result of the Means Test, which deprives them of the right to receive unemployment benefit.

Last year, the unemployment benefit in England was reduced by 10 per cent. The "National" Government is applying the Means Test with such zeal that hundreds of thousands of unemployed are being removed from the unemployment benefit lists, even in such cases as, for instance, when the unemployed person happens to make a little by casual work, or if anybody in his family is employed.

In *the U.S.A.* there are no statistics of unemployment. There are only statistics of the number of workers employed. In 1929 the index of employment was 105 (with the average for 1923-25 taken as 100). In 1931 the index of employment declined to 74 and in July, 1932, to 57.

* This figure underwent a considerable increase later on as a result of other large concerns going bankrupt, e.g., the Insull Trust.

According to a statement by the president of the reactionary American Federation of Labour (which has even refused to join the reformist Amsterdam International, deeming it too "revolutionary"), there were 11,600,000 unemployed in the U.S.A. in August, 1932. In reality there are at present no less than eighteen million unemployed in the U.S.A., since the employment statistics only cover industry, excluding agriculture completely, and the lumber industry also, to some extent.

In the U.S.A. there is no social insurance legislation. The unemployed receive no relief from the state or the employers. Relief to the unemployed is furnished in some places in the form of bread and soup by the charitable organizations, these being aided in some states by the municipalities by means of "voluntary" contributions collected from those workers who are still employed. The destitution of the American unemployed is very great indeed.

In *France*, according to a report based on official data and published in *La Vie Ouvrière*, on June 1, 1932, the number of workers working only part time reached 5,618,800, *i.e.*, 51 per cent. of the total number of workers, while the number of totally unemployed amounted to 2,300,000. There is no unemployment insurance in France. Unemployment relief is provided by a small number of municipalities, and only about 200,000 unemployed get the benefit of such relief. In order to weaken the movement of the unemployed, who were demanding insurance legislation, the French government and employers did not, at the beginning of the industrial crisis, discharge superfluous workers, but transferred them to part-time work. For this reason, about half of the workers in France are now working only a few days per week.

In *Japan*, there are 2,840,000 unemployed. They receive no relief either from the government or from the employers.

In *Germany*, the number of registered unemployed in 1929 totalled 1,252,000, rising in August, 1931, to 4,215,000 and in August, 1932, to 5,225,000. In actual fact, however, there are at least seven million unemployed in Germany. The recent emergency decrees have not only lowered the scale of unemployment benefits, but reduced the period during which such benefits are paid to six weeks, after which the unemployed are subjected to a "Means Test." This "test" results in large numbers of unemployed being struck off the lists of those entitled to relief. There are three kinds of unemployment relief in Germany: basic, crisis and charity relief. The basic unemployment benefit is larger than the crisis relief, while the latter is larger than the charity relief. After a certain period, the unemployed are transferred from the basic unemployment benefit to the crisis relief and then to charity relief. In 1931, 39 per cent. of the unemployed were receiving the basic benefit, but by May, 1932, this percentage had declined to 19. Meanwhile, in June, 1928, 38.2 per cent. of the total number of workers employed in industry were still working full time, while by June, 1932, this percentage had dropped to 34.4. The percentage of those working part time was 55.2 in 1928 and 22.6 in 1932. And the percentage of unemployed was 6.6 in 1928 and 43 in 1932.

The *Abend* (evening paper of the German Social-Democratic Party) of June 16, 1932, in an article entitled "Are the German People Starving?" writes: "At the present time there is a total of seventeen million persons in Germany subsisting on one kind or another of unemployment relief. The average amount of relief received by one of these seventeen million persons varies from 16.50 marks to 13.50 marks a month,* depending upon his former earnings and the place of residence." However, the *Abend*, which, as an organ of the German Social-Democrats, has helped to

* 1 mark equals about 25 cents, or 1s. 1d.

bring the German working class to its present situation, has painted things in too favourable a light. Not every one of the seventeen millions is getting relief; even as little as 13 marks a month.

The position of the unemployed is desperate. There are only nine countries where they get relief at all, and even in these countries the amount of relief is being reduced from year to year; at the same time the contributions which workers have to pay to the unemployment funds are constantly increasing. The unemployed have their gas and electric light shut off. The unemployed are evicted from their homes. They are forced to find shelter in shacks and shanties, under bridges, on the pavements, etc. Poverty and starvation are playing havoc among the unemployed. Suicides of whole families among the unemployed are no infrequent occurrences.

Only in the U.S.S.R. is there no unemployment.

Not much better is the situation of those workers in capitalist countries who still have work, particularly those of them who work part time. In spite of the fact that millions of workers in these countries no longer have employment in the mills and factories, there is no cessation in the introduction of such rationalization measures as result in fresh dismissals of workers. At the same time the workers in many industries are forced to toil ten and eleven hours a day.

Wages in all capitalist countries have been greatly reduced. We will give the figures for just four of the largest capitalist countries.

(1) In *England* during 1931 the wages of 3,000,000 workers were reduced by a total of 405,000 pounds sterling a week. The losses of the British working class in wages during 1931 amounted to approximately six or seven hundred million pounds.

(2) In *the U.S.A.*, the workers and employees, according

to an estimate by the American Federation of Labour, have lost 36,667,000,000 dollars during 1930 and 1931 as a result of unemployment and wage reductions.

According to the data of the National Industrial Conference Board, the average weekly wages of factory workers between July, 1931, and July, 1932, dropped from 22 dollars 34 cents to 15 dollars 43 cents, *i.e.*, by about 31 per cent.

(3) In *France* the average monthly wages per worker in 1930 amounted to 130 pre-war francs, *i.e.*, 30 francs less than in 1914. Since 1930 there has been a great cut in wages. In April, 1932, the wage reduction amounted to 20 per cent.

(4) In *Germany* the average weekly earnings per worker in 1929 amounted to 42.2 marks. By October, 1932, the average weekly earnings had declined to 21.05 marks, while the minimum required for subsistence is estimated at 38.4 marks a week,

In the various branches of industry the weekly wages have been reduced as follows:—

Branch of Industry	WEEKLY EARNINGS IN MARKS		
	Sept., 1931	Jan., 1932	Oct., 1932
Metal	25.70	20.05	18.20
Chemical	29.45	22.65	22.45
Textile	18.70	16.15	15.60
Construction	22.45	13.85	12.05
Printing	33.35	27.75	25.40

In spite of the fact that the wages have been reduced to such a beggarly level even for those who work full time, those who work part time receive even less. The emergency decree issued by the Von Papen government last June imposed additional taxes amounting to 400,000,000 marks on the workers and employees, while another decree issued by the same government and which took effect on September 15 last year, gives the employers the right to carry through fresh wage cuts. In spite of the fact that there is tremendous unemployment in Germany and that wages have been so heavily reduced, the productivity of labour

of the German workers has increased. In 1924 the index of the productivity of labour stood at 84 (taking the average for 1913-14 as 100). In 1928 it rose to 113, in 1929 to 120, in 1930 to 121, and in 1931 to 127. Wages have been reduced in all capitalist countries. The bourgeoisie is trying to shift all the burdens of the industrial crisis on to the shoulders of the working class.

Only in the U.S.S.R. is there a constant rise in wages. More and more money is being spent on insurance, on housing construction for the workers, public catering, day nurseries, rest homes, etc.

The world industrial crisis is accompanied by a world agrarian crisis, the burden of which falls entirely on the poor and middle peasantry and on the agricultural proletariat. The industrial crisis, the decline in wages, and the vast number of unemployed have resulted in an unprecedented shrinkage of consumption, in the demand for articles of mass consumption and food products. Prices of agricultural products have undergone a sharp decline. The poor and middle peasantry are not only unable to pay their debts to the banks and usurers and to pay taxes, which, along with rent, have risen during the crisis, but they cannot even subsist on what they earn from the sale of their agricultural produce.

Here are a few facts to illustrate this:—

(1) In the U.S.A. the price of wheat, rye and corn in January, 1932, had declined by 58-63 per cent., as compared with the prices of 1929. According to other calculations, if we take the general index of agricultural prices in the U.S.A. before the war as 100, this figure has now fallen to 54. At the same time the price index of products purchased by the farmers was 106, the index of taxation 250 and the index of the wages of agricultural labourers 54 as compared with pre-war days.

In 1931 the gross value of agricultural produce in the

U.S.A., which was estimated at 11,900,000,000 dollars in 1929, declined to 7,000,000,000 dollars, while in 1932, according to a preliminary estimate of the Department of Agriculture, it fell to 5,200,000,000 dollars. Thus, the gross receipts of agriculture in the U.S.A. declined by about two billion dollars in one year. At the present moment there are 362,000,000 bushels of unsold wheat in the U.S.A. Prices on American cotton have declined by 67 per cent., while the stocks of unsold cotton in the U.S.A. have reached a total of 132,500,000 bales.

INDEX OF AGRICULTURAL PRICES IN THE U.S.A.

(1913 prices equal 100)

	<i>Wholesale Dealers' Prices Paid to Farmers</i>	<i>Wholesale Dealers' Sales Prices to Retailers</i>
In 1930	126	160
In 1931	84	136

According to the data of the *Annalist*, the index representing the subsistence minimum stood at 164 in 1930 and at 149 in 1931 (taking the index in 1913 as 100). The index of prices paid by farmers for industrial commodities stood at 144 in 1930 and at 126 in 1931 (price index of 1913—100).

Thus the losses sustained by the farmers through the decline in the prices at which they sold their produce to the wholesale dealers was expressed by a fall of 52 points in 1931 as compared with 1930. While for the wholesale dealers the difference in profit during the same year was expressed by an increase of 18 points, *i.e.*, the wholesale dealers' profit in 1931 on products purchased from the farmers was 18 points higher than in 1930.

At the present time the wholesale dealers are buying milk from the farmers at 2 cents a quart, its cost of production being 6 cents, and selling it again at 14 cents a quart. In some states of the U.S.A. the farmers' movement has at certain points taken on the character of a bitter struggle, mass pickets being stationed on the roads to the cities to

prevent the delivery of agricultural produce. This has been caused by the incredibly low prices and the rapacious exploitation to which the farmers are subjected at the hands of the wholesale dealers.

(2) According to the German Institute of Economic Research, the value of the marketable portion of German agricultural produce amounted in 1929-30 to 9,750,000,000 marks, in 1930-31 to 8,890,000,000 marks, in 1931-32 to 7,270,000,000 marks and in 1932-33, according to preliminary estimates, to 6,950,000,000 marks. The decline in the gross receipts of agriculture between 1929-30 and 1930-31 included a decline of 200,000,000 marks, 660,000,000 marks on dairy produce and 170,000,000 marks in poultry farming (sale of eggs).

The deficit of German agriculture in 1932 amounted to 1,500,000,000 marks.

(3) French agriculture is passing through a severe crisis. According to a report published in the *Matin*, the official price of wheat quoted on the large grain market at Chartres, near Paris, and which at the end of June, 1932, stood at 170 francs a hundredweight, had by the beginning of October fallen to 98 francs.

(4) The peasantry of the Danube and Balkan countries are also suffering from the agrarian crisis. In 1929 a centner of wheat sold at an average price of 4 dollars 10 cents, in 1930 at 2 dollars 15 cents and in 1932 at 1 dollar 25 cents.

(5) In Japan 27 per cent. of the peasants do not possess their own land. They rent it from the great landowners. Forty-two per cent. of the peasants own less than one hectare of land. They are forced to rent additional land from the great landowners. The average rent of land, taking the level of 1886 as 100, rose to 113 in 1909-13 and in 1917-21 to 117.

According to the data of the Japanese Imperial Society of Agriculture, the taxes on one hectare of peasant land

amount at present to 79 yen* and interest on mortgages to 178 yen, thus giving a total of 257 yen. The average peasant's income from one hectare of land is 187 yen.

The principal products of Japanese agriculture are rice and silk cocoons. According to official data, while the cost of production of a *kōku*† of rice is 32 yen, its wholesale price is now 17 yen. The price of one *kan*‡ of silk cocoons, which was 7.4 yen in 1929, declined in 1931 to 2.50 yen, while its cost of production is 6.66 yen.

In the U.S.S.R. the majority of the peasant farms have been collectivized. The area under cultivation is being enlarged year by year. The use of machinery in agriculture has grown and continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. The situation of the peasants has greatly improved. The standard of living and the requirements of the peasant population, together with those of the population in general, have undergone a great rise during recent years.

The governments of all capitalist countries are doing everything in their power to shift the entire burden of the economic crisis on to the shoulders of the toilers. They continually resort to increasing both direct and indirect taxation, reducing unemployment benefits, forcible auction of peasant farms for failure to pay taxes, etc., etc.

In the capitalist countries the workers and peasants, who resist these attempts to shift the entire burden of the crisis on to their shoulders and who take part in anti-war demonstrations, are subjected to fascist terrorism of the most savage kind. The prisons are overcrowded. The workers who take part in strikes and demonstrations, the peasants who resist forcible sale of their property for failure to pay

* 1 yen equals about 50 cents.

† A *kōku* equals 4.96 bushels.

‡ A *kan* equals 3.75 kilograms.

taxes, are shot down. The bourgeoisie of all capitalist countries hopes to crush the revolutionary workers' and peasants' movement by White terrorism. The world proletariat, thus brought face to face with the facts of capitalist society, grasps far more clearly than before the significance of the fact that *in the U.S.S.R. the power is in the hands of the proletariat*, that the Soviet power is based on soviets which are elected by all the toilers, that *in the U.S.S.R. proletarian democracy is really being put into effect.*

§ TWO.

THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE OF THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' MOVEMENT.

THE world economic crisis has lasted almost three and a half years, during which time the upsurge of the revolutionary workers' and peasants' movement has found its expression in all capitalist countries in demonstrations (by employed and unemployed workers and by peasants), in strikes, in unrest among the peasantry (peasants have driven away tax collectors, prevented the forcible sale of peasant property, demanded relief for starving peasants, and so forth), and in the new upsurge of the national revolutionary movement in the colonies and in Europe.

In fifteen different countries (Germany, France, England, U.S.A., Belgium, Poland, Czecho-slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Holland, Japan, India and China) no less than 18,794 strikes occurred during the three years between 1929-31, the number of participants in these strikes being 8,515,100, while the number of workdays lost (according to data which are as yet incomplete) was 74,768,700.

In nine countries (Germany, France, England, U.S.A., Poland, Czecho-slovakia, India, Japan and China) 2,968 strikes took place during the first half of 1932, the number of workers participating in these strikes being 1,534,900. And, according to incomplete data, these strikes involved a loss of 9,463,800 workdays. A considerable percentage of the strikes during these three and a half years were won by the workers. According to incomplete data relating to five countries (England, U.S.A., France, Belgium, Poland), out of a total of 1,820 strikes in 1931, 480, or 26.37 per cent., resulted in a victory for the strikers, while 431 strikes, or 23.68 per cent., resulted in a compromise, and 775 strikes,

THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

or 42.89 per cent., resulted in defeat for the strikers; in 134 strikes (7.36 per cent.) the result is unknown.

The development of the strike movement in Great Britain during the three and a half years of the crisis is shown by the following table:—

STRIKES IN BRITAIN

	1929	1930	1931	1st half of 1932
Strikes and lock-outs ...	420	422	420	206
No. of workers involved (in thousands) ...	522	308.7	491.8	72.3
No. of workdays lost (in thousands) ...	8,283	4,399	6,988	651.1

Altogether during these three and a half years 1,468 strikes took place in England, involving 1,404,800 workers and a loss of 20,321,000 workdays.

The strikes in England occurred chiefly in the mining and textile industries. The percentage of miners on strike in relation to the total number of strikers in Great Britain was as follows: in 1929, 14.12 per cent.; in 1930, 43.3; in 1931, 57.2; and in the first half of 1932, 39.2.

The percentage of the textile workers in the total number of strikers was 75.2 in 1929; 41.7 in 1930; 33.3 in 1931; and 34 in the first half of 1932.

The percentage of metal workers on strike was 7.2 in 1929; 3.2 in 1930; 2.4 in 1931; and 3.1 in the first half of 1932.

In other industries the percentage of strikes and the number of workers involved was insignificant.

In England the rank and file members of the trade unions have more than once forced the local trade union bureaucrats to declare a strike, while the latter have brought pressure to bear on the national trade union bureaucrats in order to force them to recognise these strikes. The object of these tactics on the part of the reformist trade union bureaucrats in England is to foster a feeling of trade union

legalism among the masses, so as to be able to prevent economic strikes from developing into political ones. The reformist leaders of the English trade unions, under the pressure from the rank and file and taking into account the state of feeling among them, gave their sanction to the strikes; they did this in order not to let the leadership out of their hands, in order to prevent the strikes from developing into political strikes, in order to betray them and bring them to naught. It is to these tactics of the English trade union leaders that we must attribute the defeat of the great general strike of 1926, which came to an end so unexpectedly and abruptly. But British reformism's chances of resorting to such tactics are becoming more and more slender. In the last few years the rank and file trade union members have, in a number of cases, used their referendum to overrule the agreements which the trade union bureaucrats had concluded with the employers and, once again with the aid of the referendum, have prevented the participation of trade union bureaucrats in the conduct of negotiations with the employers. This has been the case especially in the textile industry. As a result of this energy on the part of the rank and file trade union members, the latter have succeeded in repulsing a number of attacks made on them by the employers. The wage cuts in England have not gone so far as in the U.S.A. and Germany.

Powerful demonstrations of the unemployed occurred in England when the unemployment insurance benefits were reduced by 10 per cent. England has not witnessed demonstrations of such turbulence and vigour since the days of the Chartist movement. At the present time the English unemployed are fighting their hardest against the enforcement of the Means Test.

In 1931 England was the scene of a very notable event. The sailors of the mighty British Navy (who are not conscripted, but volunteers) declared a strike when the govern-

ment threatened to reduce their pay. When beaten up by the police, the calm and stolid English have now resorted to a most "uncivilized" mode of defence. They pelt the police with stones and bottles. The English police have already resorted to special training in the use of firearms. This indicates the embittered character of the class struggles. Until recently the police confined themselves to the use of batons.

In the U.S.A. during the past three and a quarter years there have been 2,700 strikes, involving 761,400 workers and the loss of 20,934,100 workdays.

The chief categories of workers involved in these strikes were miners (27.87 per cent. of the total number of strikers), workers in the building trades (12.15 per cent.), textile workers (10.65 per cent.), and workers in the needle industry (32.97 per cent.). Metal workers, just as in England, have had but a small share in the strike struggles. While the number of workers involved in strikes in England during the last three and a quarter years (1,366,000) exceeded the number involved in the U.S.A., the strikes in the U.S.A. have been of a more militant character. Such an incredible degree of terrorism on the part of the employers (who hire gangsters to terrorize the strikers and shoot them down with impunity) and the authorities, who arrest the strikers, condemn them to unheard-of sentences and evict them from their homes, are things which Europe has not yet witnessed. The employers' gangsters and the police practise provocation on the workers. If the workers defend themselves, troops are called out against them. The strikes are characterized by a spirit of great pertinacity on the part of the workers, in spite of the fact that the American Federation of Labour makes every effort to betray the strikes as soon as they start and that, organizationally speaking, the trade unions embrace only a small percentage

of the proletariat of the U.S.A. with its many different languages.

In the U.S.A. the revolutionary upsurge has also manifested itself in anti-war demonstrations, in unemployed demonstrations, in hunger marches of the unemployed and of the war veterans to Washington. The war veterans' movement assumed such formidable proportions that the authorities were unable to cope with it by ordinary police methods. The police and troops fired on the veterans and a number of them were killed. Only after the authorities had resorted to armed force did they succeed in driving the veterans out of Washington. The powerful and patriotic organization of the American Legion came into conflict with the American government as a result of this.

In a number of states a farmers' movement has been started against the wholesale dealers. This movement is taking on the character of an armed struggle and is spreading to the neighbouring states. In many states the farmers are offering resistance to the forcible sale of their farms for non-payment of loans. The farmers in such cases force the authorities to accept very low bids for the property and then return it to its owner.

Not without reason did the authorities in many states deprive the unemployed and 3,000,000 Negroes of the right to vote. The bourgeoisie in the U.S.A. was not at all so sure of getting the workers' votes as easily as it did at the presidential election in November of last year. To achieve the desired results, the bourgeoisie had to resort to an even greater extent than in the past to the method of bribing the voters. This method was the more effective this time since under the conditions of unprecedented want and reduced wages, such "earnings" constituted a real temptation to a large number of voters. Fraudulent counting of the votes, which was especially glaring in the case

of the Communist candidates, completed this conduct of the "democratic" elections.

Out of the total number of strikes in fifteen countries and the total of 74,768,700 workdays lost, the share of England and the U.S.A. during three and one-quarter years of the crisis (for the U.S.A. no statistical data are available for the second quarter of 1932) amounts to one-sixth of the strikes, one-fourth of the total number of workers involved and 54.86 per cent. of the workdays lost (20,000,000 days for each of these countries). This shows the high level of the strike movement in Great Britain and the U.S.A. Heretofore this fact has not been sufficiently emphasized.

In France there have been 3,601 strikes during these three and one-quarter years, involving 2,108,000 workers (no data available concerning the number of workdays lost). Out of the total number of strikers involved during 1929, 1930 and 1931, striking miners constituted 23.3 per cent., textile workers 29.6 per cent., building trades workers 10.2 per cent., and metal workers 13.5 per cent.

During the past year there has been widespread development of the anti-war movement in France. At the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress the French delegation was the largest, most active and most united delegation. After the congress a mass anti-war campaign was conducted throughout France. In a large number of places the workers interfered with the air manœuvres, not only refusing to put out lights at a given signal, as requested, but even lighting bonfires! Among the peasantry there is also considerable discontent and anti-war feeling.

In Germany there were 1,304 strikes during 1929, 1930 and 1931, involving 637,100 strikers and 10,415,000 workdays lost. The year 1931 brought the smallest number of strikers and of workdays lost, this being the year when the employers increased their pressure on the working class

to the highest degree. During these three years the percentage of metal workers in the total number of strikers was 38.8. In England and the U.S.A., as we have already mentioned, the percentage of metal workers involved in strikes was very low; in France the percentage of metal workers in the total number of strikers during this period was 13.5. In Germany, the percentage of miners to the total number of strikers was 15.8; that of textile workers, 21.9; of workers in the building trades, 6; and of transport workers, 3.9.

In addition to strikes, large mass actions of the unemployed took place in Germany during this period, in the form of demonstrations and marches against the reduction of unemployment benefit. The elections which have taken place in Germany during the last three years have testified to the marked revolutionary movement in the ranks of the working class towards the Communist Party. Compared with 1923, the Communist Party of Germany won over two and a half million (2,607,902) new workers' votes.

Exact statistical data on the strike movement in 1932 are not yet available. But the strike movement has not come to an end during this period. In January there were 280 strikes, while in May their number rose to 525. But at the beginning of 1932 neither the number of strikers nor the number of days lost was very large. Moreover, the strikes occurred in small and medium-sized enterprises. The character of the revolutionary upsurge underwent a sharp change, becoming most acute with the appearance of von Papen's fascist government. The first step taken by this government was to legalize Hitler's Storm Troops of fascist bandits which even the preceding Brüning government had been forced to ban in face of the increasing discontent of the working masses after they had on frequent occasions attacked, beaten up and murdered the workers, including Social-Democratic and Catholic workers, most of

whom supported the Centre Party, to which Brüning belongs.

The von Papen government employed the fascist Storm Troops to provoke the workers in order to get a pretext for carrying out the *coup d'état* in Prussia. The Storm Troops, now legalized, started raiding and sacking workers' houses, trade union institutions, offices of the labour newspapers and co-operatives, and began to murder workers. The Storm Troop detachments attacked and murdered workers, irrespective of their political convictions or of what political party they adhered to. The terrorism and attacks of the Storm Troops, directed as they were against the entire mass of the workers, united the latter and caused the greatest indignation among workers of all political shades. The Communists, under the leadership of their Party organizations, defended the headquarters of the Social-Democratic and reformist organizations, while the Social-Democratic and catholic workers, against the desires and orders of the Social-Democratic leaders and the reformist and catholic trade union officials, came to the aid of the Communists whenever fascist gangs attacked them. In the large industrial centres and cities of Germany a militant united front began to be formed among workers of all political views to fight the fascists on the streets. This united front spread into the mills and factories, where it found its expression in the calling of political strikes and the giving of revolutionary burials to the victims of fascist terror. In the course of only a *couple of months*, there were hundreds of persons murdered and thousands wounded in the fights between workers and fascists. A factor which brought about a marked change in the attitude of large sections of working-class members of the Social-Democratic Party and of the reformist trade unions in favour of the Communist Party of Germany was the surrender of the power in Prussia by the Social-Democratic

ministers to von Papen, who carried through this anti-constitutional *coup* without encountering any resistance, although the Prussian government through its ministers and Grzesinsky, the Social-Democratic police chief of Berlin, had at their disposal a splendidly equipped army of 150,000 Prussian policemen.*

The masses were in a high state of preparedness for a struggle against the *coup*, and the Communist Party of Germany made a proposal to the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party and the leaders of the reformist trade unions to issue a joint appeal to the proletariat for a general strike, demanding that the emergency decrees, the legalization of the Storm Troops, etc., be rescinded. The Social-Democrats and the trade union officials not only rejected this proposal, but even denounced the Communist Party of Germany, and anyone who might call for a strike, as *provocateurs*. This took place on July 20, 1932, and in the elections to the *Reichstag*, held on July 21, the Social-Democratic Party lost 623,803 votes, while the Communist Party of Germany gained 772,559 votes as compared with 1930. These votes came from workers in the principal industrial centres. In the last *Reichstag* elections, in November, 1932, the Social-Democrats lost another 684,568 votes (as against July, 1932), while the Communist Party gained another 690,000 votes. The workers who followed the lead of the Social-Democratic and the reformist trade

* Recently, in the course of the hearing in the Leipzig supreme court of the dispute between the former Social-Democratic Prussian government and the all-German fascist government of von Papen, it was shown that the Social-Democratic Prussian minister, Severing, evidently not without the cognizance of the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, had himself proposed to von Papen the appointment of an all-German commissar for Prussia.

union bureaucrats are already beginning to realize where these persons have been leading the German working class.

All the emergency decrees, which were directed against the workers, were enforced with the aid of the Social-Democratic and trade union bureaucrats. They disrupted the struggle of the Communist Party and revolutionary trade union opposition of Germany against the emergency decrees. In January of last year the wages of all workers and employees were reduced by 10 per cent. by emergency decree. The Social-Democrats, under the pretext that the prices of food products and other articles of mass consumption would also be reduced by 10 per cent., supported this decree (it has now been proved beyond all question that no such decline in prices took place). This conduct of the Social-Democrats offered one more proof to von Papen and made him entirely confident that he would succeed in enforcing the outrageous decree by which employers of individual mills and factories are given the right to reduce the wages up to 50 per cent. on "condition" that they provide work for the unemployed. This decree has thus given the employers the right to change and abrogate the collective agreements, which are concluded for a definite term between the trade unions and employers; those violating the collective agreement were until then liable to legal punishment. The collective agreements were concluded by the central committee of every trade union, without consulting the rank and file members. Moreover, the collective agreements were also binding upon the non-union workers. The existence of the collective agreements prevented the workers of individual mills and factories from demanding a rise in wages when the economic situation was propitious. The reformists, while disorganizing the workers in their struggle, appealed to the "sacredness" of collective agreements. And now, when the fascist government has virtually abrogated the collective agreements at

one stroke, the reformist trade union bureaucrats have not only failed to start any struggle themselves, but even hindered the struggle which the workers of individual mills and factories waged under the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany and the revolutionary trade union opposition. This outrageous decree went into effect on September 15, 1932, and between September 16 and October 3, 1932, there were 286 conflicts in mills and factories, including some large enterprises, the owners of which attempted to enforce von Papen's decree. A struggle was begun in all parts of Germany, chiefly in such industrial centres as Berlin-Brandenburg, the lower and middle Rhine, Hamburg, Halle-Merseburg, Saxony, Silesia, etc.

The conflicts spread to enterprises in the principal industries. There were 60 conflicts in the metal industry, 17 in the chemical, 44 in the textile, 25 in the building trades, 17 in the leather industry, 17 in printing industry, and so forth. Out of a total of 286 conflicts, the workers were victorious in 142, or about 50 per cent.

Strikes resulting from the last decree are still continuing, Between September 16 and the end of October alone, there were nearly 500 conflicts. The distinguishing feature in these strikes consists in the fact that workers who are still following the Social-Democrats, the Catholic Centre Party and Hitler came out on strike shoulder to shoulder with the Communists. Until the von Papen government issued this last impudent decree, the German bourgeoisie (under Brüning and von Papen) encountered little resistance on the part of the German working class to the enforcement of the emergency decrees, with the aid of which, the bourgeoisie was shifting the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the German proletariat. It was on the strength of this that the von Papen government dared to issue this provocative decree, which is unprecedented in its impudence, giving the employers the right to carry through such

unheard of wage cuts. Under the leadership of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition, the working class this time offered united resistance to von Papen. The leading rôle of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition has considerably increased in connection with this. In the November strike of the transport workers in Berlin, which had its repercussions in the election results in a number of places (particularly in Berlin) and in the resignation of the von Papen government, the Communist and revolutionary workers drew into the strike and into its leadership (strike committee) workers of the most various political views, including even National-Socialists. The bourgeois papers had to acknowledge that the reformist trade unions were unable to restrain their members from taking part in the struggle, even in cases where they had signed agreements with the employers, for the workers responded to the call of the revolutionary trade union opposition, and quit work.

The German bourgeoisie did not succeed, even with the aid of the von Papen government and its September decree, in carrying through the savage cuts in the workers' wages or in introducing cleavage between employed and unemployed workers. On the contrary, the von Papen government evoked a most resolute resistance on the part of the working class (under the leadership of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union opposition). Von Papen's plan "to set the economic engine going" failed. At the same time the bourgeoisie found that von Papen's method of solving the question of wage cuts by giving each employer the right to reduce wages arbitrarily has proved inadequate to crush the resistance of the workers. As a result of this, almost all the bourgeois parties, or 95 per cent. of them, unanimously voted against von Papen in the *Reichstag*.

Influential bourgeois circles in Germany preferred to

remove von Papen. How able these bourgeois circles are to manœuvre was later shown by the fact that, having got rid of von Papen, they replaced him after the November elections with the government of the "Social General" Schleicher, with the cabinet almost unchanged and with the same programme as that of the von Papen government only slightly embellished with cheap demagogy. This time the very same parties in the *Reichstag*, including the Social-Democrats and National-Socialists, defeated with just the same unanimity the motion of the Communist fraction for a vote of no-confidence in the government—a government which retained the same programme as von Papen. What von Papen attempted to achieve at one stroke, Schleicher intended to realize in a more circumspect manner, weakening the resistance of the working class and screening its policy behind demagogic "projects" of winter unemployment relief, making work for the unemployed, etc.

Schleicher, by his promises of social benefits, succeeded in making it easier for the Social-Democratic Party and the Catholic Centre Party to shift their ground from one of "opposition" to the von Papen government to one of support for his own government in the *Reichstag*. He actually revoked those parts of the outrageous emergency decree of September, which were so hateful to the entire working class and which had evoked such united resistance on the part of the workers that they could not be enforced. But Schleicher not only did not succeed in deceiving the workers; he even failed to get rid of the contradictions within the camp of the bourgeoisie itself.

The Schleicher government was replaced by the out-and-out fascist government of Hitler, Hugenberg and von Papen. Its first acts in the sphere of home politics were to break up the revolutionary workers' organizations, to prohibit meetings of the Communist Party and of revolutionary organizations, to suppress their newspapers and to

establish the bloody terror of the fascist gangs. In the sphere of foreign policy it indulged in loud-mouthed chauvinist talk about getting back the territories taken away from Germany after the World War and about introducing prohibitive tariffs on agricultural produce for the benefit of the large landed proprietors.*

In Poland the condition of the workers and peasants during the years of the economic crisis has undergone a pronounced change for the worse. There are continual strikes and demonstrations. Strikes of the workers who are still employed are linked up with demonstrations of the unemployed, with peasant disturbances in Poland proper and with peasant and national revolutionary mass actions in western White Russia and the western Ukraine. Discontent with the fascist regime of Pilsudski has already penetrated among the lower government officials and the urban petty bourgeoisie in Poland.

The anti-war campaign in connection with the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress has assumed large dimensions in Poland, spreading also to the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. During the first half-year of 1932 alone there were 213 strikes in Poland, involving 730,500 workers and resulting in the loss of 4,115,800 workdays.

In Czecho-slovakia (according to official data which may be taken as underestimating the real figures) there were 688 strikes during 1929, 1930 and 1931, involving 209,900 workers and resulting in a total loss of 1,740,800 workdays. During four months of 1932 there were 64 strikes, involving

* This work was written before the fascists set fire to the *Reichstag* and before they announced that they had prevented the insurrection alleged to have been prepared by the Communists. Regarding the German situation, in view of the changed conditions, and the new tasks of the C.P.G. in the field of Party organization, the utilization of legal opportunities, etc.—See Postscript.

93,100 workers and 2,523,400 lost workdays. The number of those on strike during these four months was about half the total number of strikers during all the past three years of the crisis. And the number of workdays lost through strikes during these four months was 782,600 more than the total number of days lost through strikes in the preceding three years. Many of the strikes in Czecho-slovakia were most stubbornly contested and had a political character. The miners' strike at Brůx developed into a general strike throughout northern Bohemia.

In Czecho-slovakia there has also been an extensive national revolutionary movement among the peasants in the Transcarpathian Ukraine—a region which has been ruined by the Czecho-slovakian bourgeoisie. In spite of the fact that the peasantry was starving, the bourgeoisie not only failed to furnish them with any form of relief, but also did all it could to squeeze taxes out of them. There were peasant uprisings embracing whole villages. Tax collectors and local authorities were driven out. The peasant movement in the Transcarpathian Ukraine has spread into Slovakia.

Intense discontent was manifested among the broad masses against the government and the parties supporting it.

In Spain the great masses of workers and peasants are fighting by means of economic and political strikes, demonstrations, seizure of large landed estates and armed clashes to transform the bourgeois revolution, which has not benefited either the workers or the peasants, into a workers' and peasants' revolution.

In Japan, according to official data, there have been 6,889 conflicts between labour and capital during the last three and a third years; 42.5 per cent. of these conflicts resulted in strikes, in which 557,400 strikers took part. The strikes in Japan are of a stubborn character, since the entire state apparatus is brought to bear against the strikers. Clashes

between strikers and police are by no means infrequent. In addition to the strikes, there have been a large number of demonstrations by workers, peasants and students. As soon as the Japanese government had seized Manchuria, a broad anti-war campaign was launched under the leadership of the Communist Party of Japan. This campaign penetrated into the army. From information provided by the Communist Party of Japan it is clear that there have been eleven cases of mutiny among the soldiers in Manchuria. There were also anti-war demonstrations of Japanese soldiers at Shanghai. In Japan itself 350 soldiers rebelled in one regiment on March 13, 1932. These soldiers settled accounts with their officers. There was also unrest in the other detachments of the army and arrests took place in the military academies.

All the legal and semi-legal organizations, which are connected with the Communist Party of Japan and which took action against the war, have considerably increased their membership of late—the trade unions, organizations of the unemployed, peasant and other organizations. Not only workers but also large sections of the petty bourgeoisie took part in these anti-war demonstrations.

There is also unrest among the tenant farmers of Japan. One Japanese newspaper reports that there has been a marked increase in the last few years in the number of conflicts between peasants and large landowners, above all during the economic crisis. In 1917, eighty-five conflicts were recorded, while during recent years, according to data which clearly underestimate the true figures, the number of conflicts has risen as follows: in 1928, 1,866; in 1929, 2,443; in 1930, 2,478; and in 1931, 2,689. While 1,523 conflicts are recorded for the first six months of 1931, the number of conflicts rose to 1,621 during the corresponding period of 1932. These conflicts did not always end peaceably. The information given by the Communist Party of

Japan mentions such facts as the following. On September 19, 1931, 500 peasants in the prefecture of Topigo forcibly released a number of peasants who had been arrested by the police. On October 3, 1931, 350 peasants in the prefecture of Ninchata prevented a poor tenant farmer's land from being seized. There are many cases of clashes between the peasants and the police, which defends the large landowners against the peasants.

Of late a great petition campaign has been carried on among the peasants under the leadership of the reformists and landowners, who are trying to take advantage of the discontent among the peasant masses in order to set bounds to the scope of the movement and subject the peasant masses to their influence. However, it may be doubted whether they will succeed in getting this movement under their control.

In India there have been 480 strikes during the last three and a quarter years, involving a total of 973,000 workers and resulting in the loss of 17,167,500 workdays. In addition to this, there have also been large workers' demonstrations. These strikes and demonstrations did not, of course, take place without clashes with the police. Conflicts are occurring between the peasants, on the one hand, and the large landed proprietors together with the police who defend them, on the other. In a number of provinces armed collisions are occurring between the Hindus and the Anglo-Indian troops. British aeroplanes are wiping out entire villages.

The worker, peasant and petty-bourgeois masses are fighting against British imperialism. The bourgeois elements of the Indian National Congress have for a long time succeeded in holding large sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry under their influence, and have thereby succeeded in hindering the revolutionary struggle against British imperialism.

The working class of India is freeing itself from the influence of the reformist National Congress.

In China, according to incomplete data, 1,333 strikes involving 2,216,600 strikers have occurred during the last three and a half years in the provinces controlled by the Kuomintang. The strikes in the Kuomintang China are frequently suppressed by methods of bloody terrorism.

Anti-Kuomintang and anti-imperialist demonstrations of workers and students often take place in the principal towns of Kuomintang China. From the very beginning of the Japanese attack on China a strong anti-Japanese, anti-imperialist and anti-Kuomintang movement has developed throughout China—a movement in which both the broad working and peasant masses and the students and urban petty bourgeoisie are taking part.

It was this movement which forced the 19th Cantonese Army to fight the Japanese against the will of the Kuomintang. It was this movement which brought about the boycott of Japanese goods, resulting in a heavy blow to Japan. And it is this movement also which fosters the partisan movement in Manchuria, directed against Japan.

The Soviet districts of China, covering one-sixth of the country's territory with a population of scores of millions, are located chiefly in the provinces of Hupeh, Kiangsi, Anhowei, Fokien, Honan and Hunan. In these provinces, according to data of the Communist Party of China, 185 sub-districts are controlled by the Soviets, and each of these provinces has its own provincial Soviet government. In view of the impossibility of uniting all the Soviet districts, since they are separated by the Peiping-Hankow railroad and the Yangtse River, which has been strongly fortified (all the great imperialist powers have their warships on the Yangtse), two large continuous Soviet districts have been formed in the Soviet provinces and, in addition to these, several comparatively small districts.

A congress of all the Soviet districts was held, which elected a general Soviet government headed by Mao Tse-tung. This Congress of the Soviets decreed the confiscation of all the lands of the large landed proprietors and churches without compensation and their transfer to the peasants, adopted a labour protection law (providing for the 8-hour day, etc.), emancipated the women from their age-old inequality and oppression, ordered the formation of a centralized Red Army, etc. The decrees of the Congress are being carried into effect.

In the Soviet districts, the peasants have been relieved of their terrible burden of taxation and of the contributions that were exacted by the Kuomintang and the generals. A system of progressive taxes has been introduced for the whole population. Trade unions, Young Communist League and Pioneer organizations have been formed in the Soviet districts. The Communist Party of China has become much stronger and enjoys great authority among the population and in the Red Army. The virtual leader in all the changes which are being wrought in the Soviet districts and in the struggle of the Red Army against the Kuomintang troops is the Communist Party of China.

There is a tremendous and striking difference between Kuomintang China and Soviet China. In Kuomintang China there are five million unemployed workers and artisans. In Soviet China there is no unemployment. The recent floods, which have affected ten of the chief provinces of China, extended also to the Soviet districts of the Hupeh and Hunan provinces. The Soviet government has carried through a tremendous job in constructing a dam to prevent such floods and has furnished aid to the victims. On the other hand, the Kuomintang authorities shot down the starving peasants, who were suffering from the effects of the flood, when they demanded rice.

The Soviet government and the Soviets are fighting to

increase the harvest yield, etc. The existence of the Soviet districts has had a marked effect on the provinces which are still under the power of the Kuomintang. Thus, the Harbin bourgeois newspaper, *Da-Bei-Stilbao*, in its issue of February 16, 1932, publishes a report from Hankow, which states:—

“On January 27 and 28, news was received that the Reds had captured Huanlintsi and Hanlian, not far from Wuhan. The population of Wuhan was seized with panic. There are about 200,000 to 300,000 government troops in Hupeh, but despite this there is not a place in the entire district surrounding Wuhan where “Communist activity” does not make itself felt. In the province of Hupeh the land tax usually amounted to from one to two million Mexican dollars a month, but in the last year or two not more than 100,000 Mexican dollars a month could be collected. Persons arriving from Tianmian (a city located to the west of Hankow) report that in all the rural districts in the vicinity of this city there is a very large number of Communists and their followers.”

How indeed could it be otherwise?

At the beginning of October, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* published quotations from an article written by a prominent Chinese professor, Hu Shi, and which had been published in the Chinese newspapers. The professor writes:—

“When Communist troops enter a village, the landowners disappear at once. After this, all documents relating to land tenure are burned and all land boundaries are obliterated. After destroying the foundations of the old distribution of landed property, the Communists set about distributing the land afresh among the peasants. It is an undisputable fact that in the Communist districts the peasants have received definite economic advantages.”

Were it not for the fact that the peasant population supports the Chinese Red Army heart and soul, the latter could not have grown from small, scattered detachments into the mighty Red Army which during the last year and a half has four times repulsed the attack of the huge Kuomintang forces.

The Red Army in the Soviet districts has grown much both in size and strength during the last two years. It is composed, according to information provided by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, of twenty-six corps, ten independent divisions constituting local garrisons, special political detachments (G.P.U.), partisan detachments, the Red Guard and the Young Guard. Whenever necessary, the entire adult population goes to the front to help the fighters.

The Red Army is directed by a Military Council and a General Staff headed by Comrade Chu Deh. Where does the Red Army get its arms and supplies? All of its modern rifles, field and machine-guns, aeroplanes and radio apparatus, all of this has been captured from the enemy, from the army of Chiang Kai-shek.

Thus, in July, 1932, the Shanghai correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, Victor Kean, wrote as follows:

“Where does the Red Army get its military supplies, rifles, etc.? It gets them almost exclusively from the army of the government. In all the campaigns of the government troops against the Red Armies, certain government forces deserted to the Red Armies, bringing all their arms and equipment with them. In this way, the Reds have obtained about 100,000 rifles, etc.”

Of course, soldiers of the Kuomintang army desert to the Red Army. But it is not only a matter of desertions. The correspondent himself in the same article admits that “the Red Armies have evinced great superiority over the government troops.” The Red forces are good fighters. They

have something to defend. Here is how the deputy chief of the "volunteer forces for the struggle against Communists" explains the unprecedented defeats of the Kuomintang armies in their battles against the Reds:

(1) The tactics of the Reds are mystifying. We do not know where they are located; they make sudden attacks, and it is difficult for us to defend ourselves.

(2) Owing to constant defeats, our soldiers are afraid to go to the front.

(3) When the officers receive pay for the soldiers from Nanking, they pocket 80 per cent. of it themselves.

The Soviet government in the Soviet districts does not concern itself with the affairs of the Soviet districts only. It also devotes attention to questions affecting China as a whole. It has taken a strong stand against Japan and all imperialist governments. The Soviet government renders both moral and material aid to workers on strike. Peasant unrest and peasant uprisings are by no means infrequent in Kuomintang China, in localities far removed from the Soviet districts. There is no power in China which could destroy the Soviet districts. Information about the Soviet districts is reaching an ever wider circle of villages and industrial enterprises, and groups are being formed in the factories to aid the Soviet districts. Only the Soviet government, which has the support of the masses of workers and peasants, will be able, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, to drive out the imperialists, overthrow the Kuomintang, unify China and set up the dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

The bourgeoisie can no longer conceal the fact that the Communist Party of China enjoys great influence among the workers and peasants. In April, 1932, the "*Chunbao*," an influential Chinese paper in Shanghai, wrote as follows:

"Everybody must admit that, of late, the Communist forces in China have spread like wildfire, and everybody

speaks of the Red forces as of a rapidly approaching menace. It is absurd to prohibit the reading of Communist books and the distribution of Communist literature. The Communists are now well organized, have a common ideal, a practical political platform and an international basis. The influence of the Communists is spreading because of the ceaseless internal disorders, heavy taxes, graft, the exploitation by the gentry and the impoverishment of the population. It is now absolutely impossible to destroy the Communists by force. The Communists can be defeated only by purifying the state, by enforcing real democracy, by solving the agrarian problem and establishing a non-capitalist society having as its aim the welfare of the entire people."

No bourgeoisie in the world could actually realize all the conditions enumerated by this newspaper. This will only be done by the Chinese proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

* * *

The workers, unemployed and peasant masses of the capitalist countries and of the dependent countries and colonies have responded to the offensive of the bourgeoisie, of the great landed proprietors and the imperialists. They have answered it with strikes and demonstrations, by refusing to pay taxes, by resisting the eviction of the unemployed from their homes and of the peasants from their land, and all this despite the fact that the reformist and other anti-revolutionary trade unions, the Social-Democrats and petty-bourgeois parties of all kinds have hindered and obstructed this struggle in every possible way.

During the present world economic crisis the objective opportunities and conditions have been and are favourable for the development of extensive activities among the working and peasant masses by the Communist Parties and by the revolutionary trade union movement. The situation

in capitalist countries contains possibilities for great class conflicts. Comparatively small struggles of the workers, sometimes of a purely economic character, develop into clashes with the police and the troops—clashes which assume the character of a pronounced revolutionary and political struggle. The Odalen (Sweden) strike in 1930 was a case in point, but even more noteworthy have been the events of the recent period—the Belgian miners' strike, which resulted in clashes with the troops, the occurrences in Geneva in November, 1932, when the working masses offered resistance to the troops on the streets, and the heroic struggle of the Rumanian railway and oil workers. During the same period, there have been cases of fraternization between soldiers and workers, and even rebellions in the navy (on the Dutch battleship *De Zeven Provinciën* in Indonesia), etc. The Geneva events, the strike in Belgium, the strike of the transport workers in Berlin, the occurrences in Rumania, the unrest in the navy in Australia and Indonesia, the events in China, India, Poland and Spain show that the Communist Parties must reckon with the possibility of very great mass actions and class conflicts. The utmost fighting preparedness of the Communist Parties is a vital duty. But it is just this subjective factor of the revolutionary movement which has hitherto been lagging behind.

The Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movement have not made sufficient use of the conditions obtaining during the crisis to penetrate the great masses of workers and peasants, to free them from the influence of the Social-Democrats and reformists and organize them better in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

§ THREE.

WHAT THE COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE ACHIEVED BETWEEN THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH PLENUMS OF THE E.C.C.I.

A CORRECT analysis of the situation is always of great importance to the proletarian revolutionary parties. It is particularly important during the general crisis of capitalism of the post-war period.

On the correct analysis of the situation depend the tactics and the slogans to be determined upon.

The successes which have been achieved by the Communist Parties between the last two plenums of the E.C.C.I. were facilitated, in no small measure, by the correct appraisal of the political situation given by the Sixth Congress of the Communist International and the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist International was held before the world economic crisis, at a moment when the principal capitalist countries were enjoying a boom. The Right-wingers in the ranks of the Comintern, in their interpretation of the third period of the general crisis which the capitalist system is undergoing, predicted a further strengthening of capitalist stabilization and heralded the growth of technique in capitalist countries as something tantamount to a technical revolution. They did not perceive, but denied, the inevitable further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilization, the inevitable collapse of this stabilization during the third period. The Trotskyists, too, most emphatically disputed the definitions given by the Sixth Congress in characterizing the third period and its essence.

Despite these assertions, however, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern pointed out that the stabilization of capi-

talism was temporary, partial and decaying. The Sixth Congress, while not denying the growth of technique in the principal capitalist countries, pointed out that capitalist stabilization was taking place to a very great extent on the basis of an intensive exploitation of the workers. The analysis of the Sixth Congress has been fully vindicated by the facts.

The Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., which was held a year after this Congress, foresaw the growth and intensification of the revolutionary upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movement. The Rights, on the other hand, contended that there was no upsurge and that the strike movement could not develop during an economic crisis (this was also the argument of the Trotskyists).

Subsequent events have proved that the decisions of the Tenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. were correct. During the three and a half years of the world economic crisis in all capitalist countries, strikes have occupied an outstanding place in the revolutionary upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movement. This was of great significance in determining the tactics and slogans in accordance with the peculiarities of each individual country.

The achievements of the Communist Parties between the last two plenums of the E.C.C.I. found their expression in the following facts:—

1. Most of the sections of the Communist International have, to a greater degree than in the past, independently, through the Red trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition, and against the will of the leaders of the reformist trade unions and Social-Democratic Parties, conducted economic strikes, which, in some places, have developed into great political events.

During the last year and a half, strikes have been led by: (a) the Communist Parties, Red trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition; (b) revolutionary workers,

who took the leadership of the strike into their own hands; and (c) reformist and other anti-revolutionary trade unions under the pressure of the rank and file. In the strikes which were led by revolutionary workers (as in Belgium) and reformists under the pressure of the rank and file (Great Britain, U.S.A.), the Communists, members of Red trade unions and the revolutionary trade union opposition played no small part.

2. Thanks to the fact that many Communist Parties have opportunely formulated the demands of the unemployed and organized them for struggle, the latter have not only obtained material aid from the municipalities in some places (Poland, Czecho-slovakia, U.S.A., France, Germany), but also fought side by side with striking workers. It is, indeed, an outstanding fact that tens of millions of unemployed and their families, who are being evicted from their homes, who are starving and suffering the cold, refuse to act as strike-breakers and to take the jobs of strikers, but, on the contrary, participate in the strike struggles (acting as pickets, distributing literature, visiting homes, etc.). The September decree of von Papen, which offered the employers a premium of 400 marks for every unemployed worker who was given a job (and which, at the same time, gave the employers the right to violate the collective agreements and reduce the wages of the employed workers by 50 per cent.) was based, among other factors, on the assumption that the unemployed would show the utmost readiness to take a job, even though it should mean worsening the situation and working conditions of the employed workers, and that this would bring about a cleavage within the working class as between employed and unemployed workers. Several months have already passed since then, but there is no struggle between these two categories of workers, nor is there likely to be one.

3. For the first time during the last two years, the

THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

Communist Parties of Germany, France, U.S.A., Czechoslovakia, Japan, Holland, Hungary, Spain, Greece and China have undertaken systematic work among the peasantry. The Communist Party of Poland formerly carried on work among the peasants in the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia through the medium of the Communist Parties of these regions, which are inhabited by national minorities. In addition to this, the Communist Party of Poland has of late started successful work among the peasants of Poland proper. The Communist Party of China has started work among the peasants, even in Kuomintang China. The Communist Party of Bulgaria has of late achieved exceptional successes in the rural regions. In the recent parliamentary and municipal elections the vote cast for the Communist Parties in the rural sections of Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia has increased, a fact which testifies to the success of Communist work among the rural population.

4. The Communist Parties, as a result of good work on the part of individual members and of the Communist fractions, have succeeded in a number of countries in winning the leading rôle in certain mass non-party labour organizations (I.R.A., W.I.R., sport organizations, free-thinkers' organizations, war veterans, tenants' leagues, anti-fascist organizations (in Germany) and the solidarity movement (in England).

5. All these achievements could not fail to have their effect in increasing the vote cast for the Communist Parties in the elections of factory committees, parliaments and municipal councils, and in increasing the membership of the Communist Parties.

According to the data of the organizational department of the E.C.C.I., the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries have increased their membership between the Eleventh and Twelfth Plenums of the E.C.C.I. by 363,000

(at the time of the Eleventh Plenum the total membership, in round numbers, was 550,000, while by June, 1932, it had risen to 913,300).

6. The following facts show what has been achieved by individual parties:—

The *Communist Party of Japan*, even before the opening of the Japanese campaign in Shanghai and Manchuria, took the correct Leninist course of commencing a vigorous struggle against war. Despite the fact that owing to frequent arrests and the strictly underground character of its activities, the Communist Party of Japan has only a small number of members, it yet enjoys great influence among the workers, peasants, soldiers and petty bourgeoisie (intellectuals, students, etc.). It publishes a great deal of illegal, semi-legal and even legal literature. The best revolutionary elements of the Japanese people have united around the Communist Party of Japan.

The *Communist Party of China* is leading the Red Army in its struggle against the Kuomintang troops and directing the work of reorganization in the Soviet districts. It is taking an active part in the movement to boycott Japanese goods, and during the Japanese attack on Shanghai it made itself the virtual leader of a widespread popular movement against the Japanese. The Communist Party of China at that time organized a broad movement for providing the 19th Army with material assistance. It also organized the sending of volunteers to the front to fight against the Japanese together with the 19th Army. The anti-Japanese partisan movement, which has developed and held its own in Manchuria, has not lacked the aid of the Communist Party of China. Through the medium of the Red trade unions, the Communist Party of China has conducted a number of powerful strikes. Despite the White terror of the counter-revolution—and the Kuomintang hangmen are beheading people for printing and distributing revolutionary

literature—the Communist Party of China is publishing leaflets in large numbers on all important economic and political questions. It publishes illegal newspapers and a theoretical organ, *The Bolshevik*. The Communist Party of China has increased its membership in one and a half years from 192,300 to 280,000.

The *Communist Party of Spain* had only a few hundred members at the time when the Spanish republic was proclaimed in April, 1931. Its influence in the trade unions was insignificant. In many cities incorrect tactics were employed by the Party organization and by individual Communists. When the masses came out on the streets to celebrate the proclamation of the republic, the Communists shouted “Down with the republic,” just as did the monarchists. The Communists thus isolated themselves from the masses. With the aid of the Comintern, the Communist Party of Spain has rectified its mistakes. It has become a major factor in the revolution which is now taking place. The Communist Party of Spain has organized and led mass actions of the workers and peasants (strikes, demonstrations, armed struggles, seizures of land, of crops and of the great landed estates). At the present time the Party already has 17,500 members, while the trade union organizations which are under the influence of the Party have a membership of 200,000. The Congress of the Party has condemned sectarianism and unreservedly accepted the position adopted by the Communist International in its open letter. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain is fighting vigorously against those who employ sectarian methods of work within the Party and who are hindering the Party from putting into effect “the policy calculated to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in the form of soviets.”

The *Communist Party of Poland* has succeeded, more than any other Communist Party in Europe, in organizing

and heading all forms of the struggle of the working and peasant masses of its country. It is in close connection with the workers in the mills and factories, the unemployed and the peasant masses. The Communist Party of Western White Russia and the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine, which are affiliated to the Communist Party of Poland, are leading the national revolutionary struggle of the Ukrainian and White Russian masses against Polish imperialism. Only a few years ago the Communist Party of Poland was quite isolated from the urban petty bourgeoisie, from the government, municipal and office employees and from free-lance and professional workers. Until quite lately all of these sections of the population were ardent supporters of Polish chauvinism, but now the Communist Party of Poland enjoys great prestige and influence among them.

In the elections to the railwaymen's union, a mass union adhering to the Polish Socialist Party, the Communist Party of Poland won a majority of the delegates. It should be borne in mind that, when the railways of Poland were taken over by the government, the former railway employees were replaced by fully "reliable" elements. The Communist Party of Poland has increased its membership during the period between the two Plenums of the E.C.C.I. by 10,000 (from 7,000 the membership has grown to 17,000), exclusive of members of the Party who are confined in Polish prisons (10,000 to 12,000).

The *Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia* has of late had great achievements to its credit. After the split with the Rights (Jilek, Skalicky and Co.) and after the split of the Red trade unions with their former Right leader (Hais) and the expulsion of the "Left" Trotskyists (Neurath and Co.), the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia has gained tens of thousands of new members in the Party and Red trade unions. The Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia,

having thus rid itself of the Right capitulators, who did not differ in their work from the Czech Social-Democrats employing "Left" phraseology, has now become a real revolutionary Communist Party. It has begun a struggle against the offensive of capital and the large landed proprietors. This offensive was actively supported by the Social-Democratic Party (both Czech and German) and the Czech National-Socialist Party (the Party of Benes and Klofac—a party of a social-fascist type), which still enjoyed the support of the working and peasant masses. The Communist Party has thus united around itself all the active and revolutionary elements among the workers and peasants. It has organized demonstrations in the cities and villages. It has led strikes. It has headed the peasant movements against the sale of peasant property in payment of debts and taxes. In this struggle the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia has at times succeeded in uniting workers of all tendencies. In this struggle the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia has made use of all opportunities, all means and methods of work—the press, meetings, activities of the Red trade unions, meetings of unemployed, elections of factory committees, parliamentary and municipal elections and the parliaments and municipal councils themselves, demonstrations, economic and political strikes. These activities and struggles have produced considerable results. The Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia, which had a membership of 22,000 after the split, now has a membership of 75,000. The membership of the Red trade unions, which declined sharply after the split, had already risen in 1931 to 60,234 and in February of 1932 to 75,000.

The Czech coalition government, which includes representatives of the Social-Democratic Party, is waging a furious campaign against the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia. The press of the Communist Party is either being confiscated or subjected to censorship. The Communist

Party papers appear with blank spaces on their pages. The government has dissolved the Young Communist League, the International Red Aid, the Friends of the Soviet Union, the Workers' International Relief, and the national and Prague committees of the Red trade unions. It thinks in this way to paralyze the influence of the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia and of the Red trade unions. But it is not succeeding in this.

The *Communist Party of Italy*, which is working under conditions of fascist terror, has of late succeeded in penetrating into the mass organizations of the fascists and organizing and extending its work there.

For the first time in many years strikes and demonstrations of employed and unemployed workers have taken place in the industrial centres of the country (Turin, Milan, etc.). During the period between the Eleventh and Twelfth Plenums of the E.C.C.I. the Communist Party of Italy has more than doubled its membership in the country (from 3,000 the membership has increased to 8,000).

The *Communist Party of the U.S.A.* has succeeded, during the last year and a half, in organizing and giving leadership to large strikes of miners and textile workers. In some cities it has organized powerful demonstrations of the unemployed. About one million workers throughout the country took part in the demonstrations called by the Communist Party of the United States for May 1 and August 1. Unfortunately, however, the Communist Party of the U.S.A. is not strengthening its ideological influence by organizational means.

The *Communist Party of Great Britain* until recently appeared as an outsider in time of strikes, which in most cases were led by the reformists under the pressure of the rank and file trade union members. It appeared on the scene only after the strikes had already commenced. In most cases the strikers did not know the Communists who

came to their aid. Until the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. the sole more or less broad organization of unemployed, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, which was formed by the Communists in 1921, constituted a closed union of unemployed which served the interests of its own members first and foremost, and not those of the great unemployed masses. Now, however, the situation has changed. The Communist Party of Great Britain took an active part in the strike of the textile workers. About 5,000 workers attended the mass meeting which was called by the Communist Party prior to the Burnley strike. The Communist Party organized a night march of 15,000 textile workers from Burnley to Nelson, to bring pressure to bear on the district executive of the trade union. The workers, 15,000 strong, demanded the calling of a general strike of the textile workers. During this strike, in which more than 100,000 workers were involved, the Communist Party of Great Britain organized a broad movement of solidarity. Following this, the Communist Party of Great Britain took part in the Lancashire spinners' strike. As to the unemployed movement, it may be said, that in this respect also, the work of the Communist Party has undergone a change for the better and that the movement of the unemployed has already assumed an entirely different character. Even before the 10 per cent. cut in the unemployment benefit had been put into effect, all the British unemployed organizations began a struggle against this measure. The demonstrations which were organized by the Party before and after the parliamentary elections were of a mass character. Hundreds of thousands of employed and unemployed workers took part in these demonstrations. These demonstrations, as well as those of the most recent period, and the marches and mass meetings which were organized by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement under the slogan, "Down with the Means Test,"

were of a militant character, frequently resulting in clashes with the police, barricade fighting, etc. The National Unemployed Workers' Movement collected over a million signatures for a petition demanding the abolition of the Means Test.

The Communist Party of Great Britain possesses all the pre-requisites for becoming a mass party.

The *Communist Party of France* succeeded in carrying through a great and widespread campaign against the Russian whiteguards in connection with the murder of the president of the republic by the whiteguardist, Gorgulov. During this campaign, in May, the number of readers of the central organ of the Communist Party of France increased, judging by the daily circulation of the paper, by more than 100,000. The Communist Party has carried on and is still carrying on a successful struggle against war and the war preparations of French imperialism. The campaign against the whiteguardists was correctly linked up by the Communist Party of France with the preparations of the French imperialists for war and intervention against the U.S.S.R. Large numbers of workers of all political shades were drawn into this struggle. The Communist Party of France and the Unitary Trade Unions have succeeded in penetrating deeply into the anti-wage-cut movement which is going on among the government and municipal workers and employees. This movement had already resulted in one demonstration strike carried out in many cities of France on February 20, 1923, and involving post office, telegraph, telephone and radio workers, motor bus drivers, teachers and workers employed in the gas plants and electric power stations.

The *Communist Party of Germany* has a tremendous hold over the masses. Several hundred thousand new members have joined the Communist Party of Germany during the last few years—though, unfortunately, not all

of them have remained in the Party. During last year the membership of the Communist Party of Germany increased from 246,000 to 332,000. At the *Reichstag* elections held on July 31, 1932, when, as we have already pointed out, the circumstances were especially difficult as compared with the elections of September, 1930, it nevertheless received an additional 770,000 votes (4,590,000 in September, 1930, and 5,360,000 on July 31, 1932). At the elections on November 6, 1932, it gained another 690,000 votes (5,972,702). Out of the 1,460,000 workers' votes which the Communist Party of Germany has gained during this period, 1,150,000 votes were won from the Social-Democratic Party. At the elections to the factory committees which commenced in January, 1933, despite the fact that the revolutionary workers had been the first to be discharged from the mills and factories, the Communist Party of Germany nevertheless won substantial gains at the expense of the reformists. Despite the resistance of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union officials, the Communist Party of Germany has developed a united front of the workers from below in the struggle against fascism. It was the only party which organized a struggle against the fascist government of von Papen. It was the only party in Germany which organized and gave leadership to strike struggles against the outrageous and provocative September decree of von Papen. It exposed the government of the "Social General" Schleicher, with which the Social-Democratic Party and reformist trade union bureaucrats developed friendly relations.

The Communist Party of Germany carries on a successful struggle against the treacherous Social-Democratic Party and against the leaders of the reformist trade unions, against fascism and the fascist governments of von Papen, Schleicher and Hitler. Since the appointment of the out-and-out fascist government of Hitler, Hugenberg and von Papen, all of its blows have fallen on the Communist Party

of Germany. Meetings called by the Party are broken up and fired upon (Dresden); its demonstrations have been banned and its papers suppressed. Those found distributing leaflets issued by the Communist Party of Germany are arrested. Throughout the whole of Germany the active members of the Communist Party of Germany and of the revolutionary organizations are being arrested and their homes searched. The fascist terrorist gangs direct their main offensive against the Communists. It was under these difficult circumstances that the C.P.G. had to wage the electoral campaign for the March 5 elections to the *Reichstag* and Prussian *Landtag* and carry on its activities among the masses in Germany.*

The working class masses in all capitalist countries, as a result of the persistent work of the Communist Parties and because they have been able to test with their own experience the tactics, the words and the deeds of the social-democratic parties, are beginning more rapidly to break away from the latter and are uniting around the Communist International. The task of the Communist Parties consists in increasing more and more the tempo of this process and in consolidating it organizationally.

* See note on p. 47.

§ FOUR.

THE FAILURE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES TO KEEP PACE WITH THE ADVANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' MOVEMENT. THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES.

How else are we to explain the fact that, during and after the first cycle of wars and revolutions the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats have got off almost scot-free, if we do not attribute it to poor and inadequate mass work on the part of the Communist Parties in capitalist countries? The social-democratic parties and the leaders of the reformist trade unions have deceived the workers and betrayed their interests during the war, during the course of the revolution, during the inflation, during the period of partial, temporary and decaying stabilization and during the world economic crisis in all countries up to the present time. Nevertheless the social-democrats and the trade union bureaucrats are still strongly entrenched in the trade unions, co-operatives, sport, semi-military and other mass labour organizations. The social-democratic parties still receive millions of votes in the parliamentary and municipal elections. This alone is evidence of the inadequacy of the mass work of the Communist Parties and of all revolutionary proletarian organizations, a failing which is indeed present in their work.

The Communist Parties have not only completely neglected work within the mass proletarian organizations which are under the influence of the social-democratic leaders, but have also neglected work in the reformist trade unions which can still number millions of members. Owing to this, the class mass organizations, which might have been converted into real fighting organizations of the

proletariat, have in most cases played the rôle of passive observers of the treachery of their leaders.

The mass basis of the social-democratic parties of Germany, England, Belgium, Austria, Holland and France are the reformist trade unions, which in most countries contain practically no Communists. This statement is, unfortunately, no exaggeration. It is significant that all congresses of the Communist International, the plenums of the E.C.C.I. and many of the decisions of the Central Committees of the Comintern sections themselves, have demanded, and continue to demand, work within the reformist and other mass trade unions. But the absence of Communists carrying on revolutionary work within the trade unions has facilitated the treachery of the reformist leaders; thanks to this fact, they have not encountered the resistance of Communists or of revolutionary workers within the trade unions.

In Germany, England, Belgium, Austria, Holland and other countries there exist revolutionary trade union oppositions. The tasks of these oppositions are as follows:—

a. To carry on work within the reformist and other non-revolutionary mass trade unions;

b. To organize the non-union workers jointly with the members of the reformist and other trade unions;

c. To organize and conduct strikes;

d. To build up their organizations parallel with the non-revolutionary mass trade unions, in order that they may be able, at a necessary and opportune moment of exceptional betrayal on the part of the reformists, to become the leading centre of the economic struggle of the proletariat. Least of all has the trade union opposition carried out the first task, *viz.*, work within the reformist trade unions. Work within the reformist and similar trade unions has been carried on either not at all or to a quite inadequate extent by the trade union opposition and

Communist Parties in such countries as France (none at all), Czecho-slovakia (poor work), China (poor work), Poland (poor work), Japan (poor work), Rumania (poor work), India (almost no work at all), and in other countries where there are Red trade unions existing parallel with reformist and other non-revolutionary mass trade unions.

What are the causes of this? They are to be sought in the crass opportunist and sectarian underestimation of the importance of this work, not only on the part of the rank and file members, but also leading comrades of the Communist Parties.

In order to justify inactivity in the reformist and similar trade unions, the sectarians have concocted a whole "theory" to the effect that "reformist trade unions are part of the state apparatus"; that "the reformist trade unions are fascist and strike-breaking organizations"; that "not only the upper strata, but also the lower ranks of the social-democrats and reformists are reactionary"; that "the social-democratic and reformist officials cannot be transformed" (without discriminating between the higher and lower officials); that "the stronger the reformist trade unions are, the stronger is capitalism and vice versa." This last argument is advanced without any discrimination between the different countries. In the United States, the American Federation of Labour is not very strong, nor is it very much of a mass organization; but capitalism in America is, unfortunately, strong. Evidently, this "aphorism" does not fit the facts in all countries. "The Social-Democratic and reformist trade union bureaucrats are Zörgiebels, and the members of the Social-Democratic and reformist trade unions are petty reactionaries and Zörgiebels." This view does not discriminate between the leaders and the rank and file. "The reformist trade unions do not lead strikes, and betray them if they break out." This statement is

made without any concrete explanation of precisely which strikes were betrayed. And yet the reformists, under pressure from the rank and file, do lead strikes. To be sure, if they lead one strike with any kind of success, they do it in order to be able to betray the strike in scores of other cases. The reformists and Social-Democrats betray the interests of the workers. But although this is a fact, the members of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions cannot be won over if they are approached merely with general denunciations without any concrete evidence. In point of fact, the members of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions have taken part in strikes led by the trade union bureaucrats. Moreover, not all strikes which were headed by the reformists were lost. Hence, when members of these organizations are told that the reformists do not lead strikes and betray them if they occur, without any reference to concrete cases and events, they cease to believe in the Communists at all, even on other occasions and in regard to other questions. "The reformist trade unions are a school of capitalism." But what about the thousands of strikes and millions of participants in these strikes, among whom there were a good many members of the reformist trade unions. Can this be called a school of capitalism?

All of these "theories" of a sectarian type not only discourage revolutionary workers from joining the reformist trade unions, but even encourage the withdrawal of revolutionary members from these trade unions. Moreover, not all Communists join the reformist trade unions, though in this way they weaken the Communist work in them. Not long ago the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia carried out an investigation on the question of the part played by Communists in the trade unions. This investigation covered 26,094 members of the Party. Of this number, 14,753, or 56 per cent., did not

belong to any trade union at all. This state of affairs is not peculiar to the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia. Under cover of "revolutionary" phrases, the sectarians abandon the field of battle, shirk the difficult work in the reformist trade unions.

By withdrawing from, or failing to join, the trade unions, the non-Party revolutionary workers and Communists who have come under the influence of sectarian "theories" are enfeebling those members of the Party who remain within the reformist trade unions. Some of them, being good Party members, hesitate, in view of these "theories," to speak at commissions, meetings, conferences and congresses of the trade unions in order to criticize the treachery of the reformists, to make proposals as to how, where and when a struggle should be waged or to point out what the reformists have failed to do at the expense of the workers' interests. They are afraid this might be interpreted as "making the leaders fight" (*Zwingen die Bonzen*).*

At the elections of trade union officials, they do not in

* This "pressure" differs radically from the *Zwingen die Bonzen* ("Make the Leaders Fight") policy of the renegades and Rights, because the Communists do not confine themselves to exposures, but will strive to carry on and are already carrying on strike struggles over the heads of the reformists and against their will, exposing all their manoeuvres and betrayals and organizing the revolutionary trade union opposition within the trade unions with the program outlined above. The Brandlerists and the Rights, who advocate "making the leaders fight," propose and put into effect nothing but oppositional chattering "against the trade union bureaucrats," while at the same time opposing the organization of the Red trade union opposition and the carrying on of independent struggles. They "criticize" the trade union bureaucrats in order to hinder the organization of a real revolutionary opposition.

most cases fight for every elective office, particularly for trade union representatives in the mills and factories, on the pretext that it will not be possible to win the entire trade union apparatus anyhow. But how is it possible to carry on Communist work within the trade unions if, along with the tedious everyday work, the Communists do not criticize the reformists, do not make proposals and fight for every elective office? Without this, there will be no incentive in the work. Without all this, how can the trade union members and the working masses become convinced that the Communists are not only able to carry on the tedious everyday work better than the reformists, but that they are willing and able to lead struggles, since the reformists betray the interests of the workers? Others among the Communists who belong to the reformist trade unions make mistakes of an opportunist character. These Communists are indistinguishable in their work from the reformists. They inflict great harm on the Communist Party, since the workers take them for real representatives of our Party.

As a result of these sectarian "theories," you may also find outside the trade unions some Party members who could expose the Right opportunists and could thereby show the workers that the Communist Party and the Communists are not at all in solidarity with the Right capitulators. All this may seem simple and easy to understand, and yet the Communist Parties have not hitherto fought hard enough against such manifestations. The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. devoted a great deal of attention to this question.

The question of work in the reformist trade unions is of tremendous significance in Great Britain, where the trade unions are collectively affiliated to the Labour Party, and in Germany. In the Communist Party of Germany this question is already one of long standing. The first Congress of the C.P.G. (that of the Spartacists), which was

held at the end of December, 1918, and the beginning of January, 1919, was opposed to work in the trade unions (and to participation in parliamentary elections), in place of which they proposed work in the factory committees. This decision, as well as the decision against taking part in the parliamentary struggle, was overruled by the Second Congress of the Party. In 1923, when the reformist trade unions lost about five million members, the revolutionary non-Party workers and Communists who held strong positions in them, instead of bringing pressure to bear within the reformist trade unions against the trade union officials, who had lost their heads, and overthrowing them—at this time the inflation had exhausted the trade union treasuries to such a point that there were no funds left to pay salaries to the trade union officials—withdraw from the trade unions along with the other members. In 1924, when the local Party organizations declared themselves against Brandler for his capitulation during the revolutionary crisis in October, 1923, and Ruth Fischer and Maslov became the leaders of the Party, the Comintern delegation to the Party Congress at Frankfurt was compelled itself to print and distribute the chapter from Lenin's *Left Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder* entitled "Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?" since Ruth Fischer and Maslov refused to do it. They were opposed to working in the reformist trade unions. These tendencies have not yet been fully eradicated in the Communist Party of Germany. Those who oppose working in the reformist trade unions are inventing and circulating sectarian "theories" which are still hindering work in these unions.

Besides this tendency to underestimate work in the reformist trade unions we may also encounter here and there in the practice of the Communist Parties the tendency, so distinctive of the Social-Democrats, to separate economic

from political struggles; the Party devotes its attention to the political struggles, and the trade unions to the economic struggles of the proletariat. The Communist Parties here and there still leave the economic struggles too much to the trade union opposition, while the Party itself not only does not control the work of the trade union opposition, but does not even discuss the most important questions of the trade union movement. This again encourages Party members to underrate the value of work in the reformist trade unions. The task of all Communist Parties in the capitalist countries—irrespective of whether or not there exist revolutionary trade unions in the country parallel with the reformist and other trade unions—is to unite and organize within the reformist and other non-revolutionary mass trade unions (and not only in the trade unions, but in all mass proletarian organizations as well) all the oppositional revolutionary elements for the purpose of carrying on revolutionary work in these organizations. Under such conditions it would be possible to win over the members of these organizations to the camp of the revolutionary class struggle, to isolate and even expel the treacherous leaders and officials of the trade unions and other proletarian organizations, to establish a united front of the revolutionary, reformist and other organizations and even to combine with the organizations existing parallel with them.

In those countries where Red trade unions exist parallel with the reformist trade unions, they are not yet of a sufficiently mass character, and have not yet learned to work better and more vigorously than the reformists. For this reason, they have not been able, with a few exceptions, to weaken, much less to absorb, the local reformist trade union organizations existing parallel with them.

It is the task of the Communist Parties to improve the work of the Red trade unions in every way and to bring these unions into closer contact with the factories (until

now they have not possessed their own base in the mills and factories). For this purpose it is necessary to change and improve the methods of leadership employed by the Communists who work in the mass non-Party organizations of the proletariat. It is necessary for the Communist Parties to devote attention to all questions of the class struggle and not only to political questions. And hence it is necessary to put an end to the practice of shifting on to the shoulders of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition the entire task of conducting economic struggles.

When the consequences of capitalist rationalization became apparent, when hundreds of thousands of workers began to swell the ranks of the army of unemployed, which again began to be augmented by the unemployed who lost their jobs as a result of the world economic crisis, the Communist International, as early as 1930, not only instructed its sections as to the necessity of formulating the demands of the unemployed, but also insisted on their being united and organized in order that they might insist on their demands. Moreover, it was decided that the demands of the unemployed must be formulated in accordance with the conditions obtaining in the respective countries, for nine states still had unemployment insurance at that time, in different forms and extent as determined by the laws of these countries (in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, Australia and some of the Swiss cantons), while three countries (Belgium, Czechoslovakia and, to some extent, Norway) had the Ghent system of unemployment insurance, according to which the national or municipal governments add a certain percentage to the unemployment relief which the trade unions pay to their members.

In order that the Communists and members of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition of all countries might pay especial attention to work among the unem-

ployed, an International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment was fixed in 1930, at a time when the number of unemployed was increasing daily. The International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment was a most definite success for the Communist Parties. Only the Communist Parties showed any interest in the plight of the unemployed, while the unemployed themselves warmly responded to the call of the Party, turned towards the Party. The demonstrations on the first International Day of Struggle Against Unemployment were of a mass character. The total number of demonstrators throughout a large number of industrial centres in the U.S.A. was 1,250,000. In the many countries in which there was no unemployment insurance, the unemployed, thanks to the mass character of the struggle and the support given them by the employed workers, won certain relief grants, while in the countries which had insurance, they forced the authorities to abandon their plans to reduce the insurance allowances.

In the very first years of the economic crisis, unemployment assumed unprecedented dimensions. The number of unemployed has increased with every year. Unemployment has affected whole sections of the proletariat, skilled and unskilled workers, organized and unorganized workers alike. Work among them did not present any difficulties. Moreover, owing to the fact that Communists and members of the revolutionary labour organizations were the first to be discharged from the factories, there were plenty of forces for real, good revolutionary work among the unemployed. Besides, in the first years of the crisis, the unemployed gathered at the labour exchanges as a matter of course, in the hope of a job, and to register for unemployment benefit.

However, the revolutionary work among the unemployed did not develop, but, on the contrary, in contrast to the increased poverty and unemployment and the tasks which these circumstances dictated, became gradually weaker.

TASKS OF THE COMMUNISTS

At the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in the spring of 1931, the question of the forms of organization and methods of work to be used among the unemployed was considered in detail. In the summer of 1931, a conference of representatives from the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movement was held at Prague to consider the question of work among the unemployed. The Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I. and the Prague Conference decided that the unemployed should be united into broad non-party organizations which could be joined by unemployed irrespective of their political views, by members of all political parties and trade unions, as well as by non-party workers. This decision was occasioned by the fact that in many countries, organizations of unemployed had been founded under the banner of the Red trade union opposition; this had the effect of deterring unemployed members of reformist, catholic and other non-revolutionary trade unions or members of social-democratic and other political parties from joining these organizations.

The following form of organization was decided upon. The basic organizations were to consist of committees of unemployed elected by the unemployed at the labour exchanges, soup kitchens, social-centres, and other places where the unemployed assembled. Delegates from committees of unemployed from the various districts (in the case of large cities) or from the whole city (in the case of medium-sized cities), etc., were to form unemployed councils in the respective district, city, etc. These unemployed councils, in those countries where they can exist legally, should select commissions: organizational commissions, whose functions should include, among others, the organization of pickets in time of strikes and the organization of demonstrations; social-economic commissions, whose duty should be to see to it that there is no overtime work in the mills and factories and that no rationalization measures

based on increased exploitation are introduced (in spite of the tremendous unemployment the employers resort to both overtime work as well as extreme intensification of labour).

These social-economic commissions were to mobilize the employed and unemployed workers against overtime work and rationalization measures. In addition to this, commissions were also to be formed for work among trade union members. The percentage of unemployment among the members of the reformist trade unions reaches an average of 45 per cent. By organizing the unemployed trade union members, it would be possible to intensify the work in the non-revolutionary trade unions. Through the unemployed members of the reformist, catholic and other trade unions, it would be possible to organize an opposition, and, with its aid, to intensify the struggle against the trade union bureaucrats. The unemployed councils were also to appoint cultural commissions for work among the women and young people; economic commissions to organize dining rooms for the unemployed, or at least for their children; and finally, commissions to procure information and receive complaints concerning evictions, the shutting off of gas and electric light or water supply, the forcible sale of property belonging to the unemployed, etc. In such cases the unemployed councils and commissions were to mobilize the unemployed masses to prevent the evictions and the enforcement of all other measures against the unemployed, to fight for restoring the supply of gas or electric light, etc.

Had all the decisions of the Prague Conference been carried out, the unemployed would have known that they have their own organizations which defend them and fight for all their daily demands. These organizations could not have failed to win prestige and influence among the unemployed. They would have been capable of organizing the struggle of the unemployed, jointly with the employed workers, against the offensive of the capitalists and their

governments. Through the good work of these organizations it would have been possible to free the masses of the workers from the influence of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade union bureaucrats.

Indeed, in those places where the organizations of the unemployed have carried out the decisions regarding the methods and organizational forms of work among the unemployed as outlined above, they have attained great success. But, on the whole, work among the unemployed has been neglected. In proportion as the economic crisis has increased the number of the unemployed, the work of the Communist Parties and revolutionary trade union movement among the unemployed has become weaker. This is a fact, and one which the National-Socialists (fascists) in Germany and other countries have taken advantage of. They have organized dining rooms for the unemployed (in Germany) and are carrying on demagogic agitation among them, promising them that when they come to power, they will feed the unemployed at the expense of the bankers and capitalists and give them work. It cannot be said that they have not met with some success of late among the less class-conscious of the unemployed. A considerable number of the latter have voted for the National-Socialists at the elections, while the unemployed youth have joined their Storm Troops.

The reformists have also started work among the unemployed. The Amsterdam Trade Union International suddenly recalled the existence of the unemployed. In the past, the reformists refused to accept the unemployed into the trade unions, but now they have decided to accept them. They hope in this way to restrain the unemployed from revolutionary struggle. The General Council of the British trade unions has called upon its affiliated organizations to form organizations of the unemployed side by side with the revolutionary unemployed organizations already exist-

ing. This means that they are striving to split the ranks of the unemployed and to weaken that organization, which is really waging a struggle against the Means Test and the reduction of unemployment relief.

Unemployment will not cease in the capitalist countries until the working class seizes power. It is not a mere passing phenomenon. About 50 per cent. of the industrial workers, apart from agricultural labourers and other working elements, are at present unemployed or working only part time. It is therefore the urgent task of the Communist Parties, Red trade unions and trade union opposition and of all revolutionary mass organizations to *intensify* their work and to *create* such organizations of the unemployed as may be able to mobilize the broad masses of the unemployed to fight for unemployment insurance and for all the demands of the unemployed workers. Through the medium of these organizations, it will become possible to penetrate into all parties, trade unions and mass organizations, which are dominated by the rivals of the Communist Parties and revolutionary trade union movement, and to carry on work there. Through the medium of such organizations, provided that they work properly, it will be possible to paralyse the influence of the National-Socialists, reformists, charity workers (in the U.S.A. and France), and of all those who are exploiting the unemployed. Through these organizations, it will be possible to mobilize the unemployed for a joint struggle with the employed workers and all working elements in town and country against the bourgeoisie and for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One most important task of the Communist Parties is to organize Communist work efficiently within the various factories. The workers in the mills and factories constitute a formidable force in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. They have in their hands such a weapon as the suspension of production, capable of paralysing the life of the entire

country. This shows how important it is for the Communists to organize their work in the factories.

The percentage of lost strikes during the three and a half years of the crisis has been very high. The responsibility for this rests, of course, on the trade union bureaucrats of the reformist and other anti-revolutionary trade unions and on the political parties (Social-Democratic, Catholic Centre, National-Socialist) who dominate these trade unions. But in the final analysis, the calling of strikes and their outcome depends on the workers themselves—those who are still employed. It is a fact that in thousands of cases, strikes have been started as a result of decisions adopted by the workers in the factories, in spite of the resistance of the trade union officials (as examples of large strikes of this kind we may mention the miners' strike in Belgium, the transport workers' strike in Berlin, the textile workers' strike in England, etc.). The better the workers in the enterprises are organized, under revolutionary leadership, the better will they be able not only to repulse the offensive of the capitalists, but also to fight successfully for their economic and political demands. This is an axiom with which the members of the Communist Parties in capitalist countries are surely acquainted.

Nevertheless, the mills and factories do not as yet constitute the basis of the work of the Communist Parties and revolutionary trade unions in any of the capitalist countries. And this despite the fact that in many countries there are Party cells in the factories (to be sure, only a few), which are carrying on good work and winning over the majority of the workers in these enterprises to their side. It cannot be said that the Communist Parties have no factory cells at all. They already have them in almost all countries, though not, of course, in all mills and factories, particularly the large ones. But still, in the majority of cases they somehow contrive to do no work at all in the factories,

or at best only to collect membership dues, while individual members of factory cells help in the work of street cells or groups in the living quarters of Party members. This is true, not only of the Party factory cells, but also the groups of the trade union opposition and sections of the Red trade unions.

Although the Comintern and the various Communist Parties have adopted numerous decisions on the need for transferring the centre of gravity of Party and trade union work to the factories, these decisions have, in most cases, remained a dead letter. Social-Democratic traditions have so far proved stronger in this matter than the numerous decisions which have been adopted, stronger even than the parties' own experience, which has demonstrated the superiority of work within the enterprises as against work in the living quarters. The social-democratic parties are still organized on the basis of electoral divisions, on a residential basis. The social-democratic parties, however, are connected with the enterprises through their "free" trade unions, which have their representatives within the enterprises (these representatives being in most cases members of the social-democratic parties). But the Communists have no trade unions in most countries (*e.g.*, in Great Britain and Germany) and the trade union opposition and Red trade unions, where they exist, do not as yet have their representatives or sections (groups) within the enterprises. Where such sections do exist, they either work badly, or not at all, within the enterprises.

In spite of the fact that during the three and a half years of the economic crisis, the Communists and members of the revolutionary organizations were always the first to be discharged, not all of them have been discharged yet. Besides, some of the new members who join the Communist Parties and the revolutionary mass organizations are workers who still have jobs. But the fact is that mem-

bers of the Communist Parties, Red trade unions, trade union opposition, International Red Aid, Workers' International Relief, Red sport organizations, freethinkers' organizations, war veterans' organizations and others, while working in the very same enterprise, do not know each other, are not united within the mills and factories, and therefore do not carry on their work in accordance with a definite plan and under the leadership of the factory cell. Each organization conducts its work according to its own sweet will (if it carries on any work at all, and it may be doubted whether all of them do so). Unfortunately, there have been quite a few cases where Red factory committees* and sections of Red trade unions agreed to wage reductions and the discharge of workers, that is, acted in this regard just as the reformists do, while the Party factory cells, owing to their inactivity, did not repudiate these acts of the Red factory committees or sections of Red trade unions. As a result, not only the Red members of the factory committees and the committees and sections of the Red trade unions, but also the Party organizations and Red trade unions in general, were discredited in the eyes of the workers. In many cases opportunist mistakes would have been avoided if the mills and factories had contained real good Communist cells to give correct leadership to the Communists and Communist fractions in the factory committees, and to the sections of the Red trade unions.

The question of conducting good work along the right lines within the enterprises at the present time—at the end of the relative stabilization of capitalism—has become one of tremendous significance. The events of July 20, 1932, in Germany, during the fascist *coup* in Prussia, have shown that had the large enterprises in Berlin contained

* Lists of candidates for the factory committees have been proposed by the trade union opposition and Red trade unions jointly with the Party factory cells, where such existed.

aggressive cells, sections and groups of the Red trade unions and trade union opposition, there would have been great protests in the form of strikes and demonstrations, for there was a great deal of discontent among the workers; they were only waiting for leadership. The employers are not satisfied with the wage cuts which have already been effected. They are aided by the whole state apparatus, the police, courts, troops, etc. The bourgeoisie has transferred the scene of the struggle—particularly in some countries, as, for instance, in Germany—from entire industries to individual enterprises, to each enterprise separately (*cf.*, von Papen's decree, which gave the employers the right to reduce the wages in their own enterprises without regard to the collective agreement).

Good work within the enterprises and in the trade unions is the first condition which the Communists and revolutionary trade union opposition must fulfil in order successfully to conduct strike struggles. In the last transport workers' strike in Berlin the Communists and revolutionary trade union opposition not only succeeded in getting the strike declared, in spite of the resistance of the reformists, but were able to draw workers of all political shades (including National-Socialists) into the strike and into participation in its leadership. This success was made possible by able work and by the contact established between the Red members of the factory committees and the mass of workers in the enterprises of the Berlin Transport Company. This enabled the Red members of the factory committees to ascertain the state of feeling among the masses. The Red members of the factory committees were able, despite the resistance of the reformists, to organize general meetings of the workers in the enterprises, to explain the essential meaning of the wage scales and the provisions of the new agreement, to have a conference of delegates convened and to mobilize the masses for a referendum. All

this work has made it possible to show the workers the difference between the work of the Communists and supporters of the revolutionary trade union opposition and that of the reformists (who, as a counterbalance to the conference of delegates, called together their trade union representatives and adopted a decision against the strike). In the referendum, 79 per cent. of the workers voted in favour of a strike. Thanks to the good work and able leadership of the Communists and revolutionary trade union opposition in the strike committee, it was possible, in spite of all the efforts of the reformists, their official decisions and appeals, to put an end to the strike, to carry through the strike in an organized fashion. The strike, which was declared on November 2, lasted twelve days. It was only because of terrorism (numerous arrests took place and several workers were killed), because the reformists and police mobilized their forces, that the leaders did not succeed in maintaining the united front of all the workers. The strike committee of the Berlin transport workers was compelled to call upon the workers to resume work. But this resumption of work was carried out in an organized fashion, without any confusion, without any feeling that the struggle had been lost.

A number of strikes in the U.S.A., which took place in 1931 under the leadership of the Communist Party and Red trade unions, have brought to light considerable weaknesses. In the large miners' strike in Pennsylvania the Communists and Red trade union directed the strike through strike committees (centre and local). But they did not have any Party mine cells or sections of the Red trade unions in the mines on which they could have depended, nor did they organize such cells during the process of the struggle. The strike committee was therefore not in a position to carry on the necessary day-to-day work among the miners during the strike. The absence of preliminary work by the Com-

munists and revolutionary trade unions among the miners made it impossible for the strike committee to depend on broad sections of active workers during the strike, and isolated it from the broad masses of the strikers.

In a number of other strikes in the U.S.A. (at Lawrence and Patterson) the strikes were called without sufficient preliminary work in the enterprises. In the enterprises themselves it was possible to draw only a small part of the shops and of the advanced workers into the strike. If in the Berlin transport strike the leadership of the Communists and the revolutionary trade union opposition was successful, this was due to preliminary work in the enterprises and in the reformist trade union. But in the above-mentioned strikes in the U.S.A. (especially at Lawrence and Patterson) it was easy for the reformists to prevent the formation of a united front of all the workers, to isolate the advanced workers, and to break the strikes as soon as they started.

Before the last strike in Belgium, the small Red trade union of the miners called the strike after previously ascertaining the state of feeling among the miners. But owing to its weakness, and the small number of Communists, and also to the fact that the Party and the trade union had no organizations in the mines, the strike broke out without their participation and the leadership of the strike was taken over by the revolutionary workers themselves. And only in the course of the strike itself did the mass of the Belgian miners for the first time come to see the Communists, thanks to their effective and self-sacrificing work, as a revolutionary party which defends the interests of the miners against the employers; only then were they able to see the difference between the Communists and the reformists, who betrayed the strike.

The Communist Parties must ascertain which of their members work in enterprises and then organize them into

factory cells and provide them with correct leadership and assistance. They must see to it that these factory cells assign the various tasks among their members and organize Communist fractions in all non-party organizations in the factories; that these cells, while not exposing their organization to the employers and their spies, energetically develop mass work among the working men and women, among the youth, members of the reformist and similar trade unions and even among the rank and file members of the social-democratic parties. The success of such work will not fail to make itself apparent.

As a general rule, with the exception of the Soviet districts in China, and some provinces in Spain, Poland and Bulgaria, the work of the Communist Parties among the peasants is very weak. This is also true of the work of the Red trade unions and revolutionary trade union opposition among the millions of agricultural labourers.

The situation is still worse with regard to work among the non-industrial proletariat (artisans) and all kinds of office workers (clerks, etc.).

The tendency to disparage work among the peasantry was inherited by the Communist Parties from the Second International and its sections. The social-democratic parties prior to the war did not carry on any work among the peasants, giving as their pretext that they were "labour" parties. The social-democratic parties have, and still do, enjoy influence among the agricultural labourers through the reformists who organized the trade unions of the agricultural labourers. As to the office employees, the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats have carried on activities among them. In Germany, along with the social-democratic "free" trade unions of industrial workers (reformists), which are united in the General Federation of German Trade Unions (A.D.G.B.), there exist also trade unions of office employees which are united into one federation, the

General Federation of Employees. This federation can still number several hundred thousand members, even at the present time. Similar trade unions exist in all countries where the reformists have mass trade unions of the industrial workers. More or less strong trade unions of office employees affiliated to the Red trade unions exist only in France (the Unitary Confederation of Labour). In the other countries the work of the revolutionary trade unions and trade union opposition among the office employees is weak.

For the class struggle of the proletariat, especially for the revolutionary proletarian parties which are faced with the task of seizing political power, it is very important to have contact with the peasant masses and petty-bourgeois strata of the urban population and to exercise an influence over them.

The industrial and agrarian crisis has hit the poor and middle peasantry and the office employees hard. Agricultural produce, although offered for sale at prices which are less than the cost of production, cannot find purchasers, owing to the accumulation of tremendous stocks and to the universal shrinkage of consumption. The wholesale dealers take advantage of this to purchase the products of peasant economy at absurdly low prices. As for the landed aristocracy and rich farmers, the governments in a number of countries have granted them subsidies, lowered their taxes, released them from the payment of interest on their debts and furnished them with cheap credits. At the same time they impose an ever-growing burden of taxes on the poor and middle peasants and distraint their land, cattle and other property for failure to pay their debts. This produces discontent and unrest among the peasantry.

In some countries the office employees and the lower government officials are being discharged wholesale. Those who have held on to their jobs have had their pay cut and

TASKS OF THE COMMUNISTS

sometimes do not receive any wages at all for months at a stretch. It is easy to carry on work among the office employees and peasants at the present time. The slightest efforts in this direction will produce good results. The peasants can be organized, although this is more difficult than organizing the workers, and not only the poor peasants, but, to some extent, also the middle peasants have come to the aid of the unemployed and assisted the workers in time of strikes. Even office employees and the lower government officials, who in the past adopted a disparaging attitude towards the workers and their organizations, have now changed their attitude towards them. In general, the Communist Parties and the Red trade unions have, with few exceptions, not carried on systematic work among the office employees and peasants. That the peasantry, the office employees, the lower government officials, the professional workers, and even the students are discontented is evidenced by their breaking away from the political parties which they formerly supported and by the fact that they are seeking for better parties—parties able and willing to defend their interests.

The recent elections in Germany are of interest in this connection. They offer a vivid picture of the unrest prevailing among the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. The following table shows the vote cast at these elections for these parties, which to a considerable extent enjoy the support of the peasants and office employees:—

	1928	1930	1932 (July 31)
German Nationalists...	4,380,029	2,457,686	2,172,941
People's Party ...	2,678,207	1,557,365	434,548
Democrats (<i>Staatspartei</i>)	1,504,143	1,322,034	371,378
<i>Wirtschaftspartei</i> ...	1,395,686	1,361,762	146,061
Peasant Party and Peasant League ...	1,589,792	1,108,043	325,224
Total	11,547,857	7,806,890	3,450,152

The peasant vote and the votes of office employees lost by these parties were only to a small degree won by the Communist Party of Germany. They have in the main been won, of late, by the demagogic National-Socialist Party (the fascists). In 1928, together with the *Völkische Partei*, the National-Socialists received 1,076,201 votes; in 1930, 6,379,672 votes; and in July, 1932, 13,732,779 votes. (The last elections, on November 6, 1932, have shown that an ebb has set in, in the National-Socialist movement. They received 11,712,983 votes.)

Had the Communist Party of Germany carried on better, more extensive and more systematic work among the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, it could have received a considerable number of these votes, which were lost by the "middle" parties. The Communist Parties must intensify their activities among these sections of the population. The results of their work will not fail to appear. The Communist Parties must fight for all they are worth to win over the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in town and country. In the countryside, peasant committees must be organized to lead the struggles of the poor and middle peasantry. It is necessary to intensify the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition in all agricultural labourers' trade unions of a non-revolutionary character. It is necessary to intensify the work of the revolutionary agricultural labourers' unions where such unions exist. It is necessary to intensify the work in the trade unions of office employees of every kind. It is necessary to draw in the more proletarian sections of the employees into all revolutionary organizations, Red trade unions, trade union opposition, I.R.A., W.I.R., revolutionary war veterans' organizations, tenant leagues, sport clubs, freethinkers' associations and similar organizations. The peasants, too, must be drawn into most of these organizations, and through the members of these organizations and through the peasant

committees the Communist Parties will be able to extend their influence over the peasant masses and the office employees.

At the present moment, in view of the aggravation of the class struggle, revolutionary Communist work in the armies of the capitalist countries is assuming exceptional importance. If work among the workers, peasants and office employees is intensified and improved, it will be the easier for the Communist Parties and Communist youth organizations to penetrate into the barracks and to develop the work among the soldiers of the imperialist armies. The situation is favourable for the development of this work. This is borne out by such recent events as the strike of the soldiers of the Fifth Infantry Regiment in Prague, Czechoslovakia, coming out with economic demands for a rise in pay. Even clearer evidence of the state of affairs in the armies of the capitalist countries and of the possibility of work among the soldiers is furnished by the recent events in Switzerland, where the soldiers in a number of cities (in Zürich 5,000 soldiers, in Basel over 1,000) have held protest meetings and revolutionary demonstrations against the Swiss bourgeoisie, in connection with the well-known case in November, 1932, when the workers were fired upon in Geneva. The events in the British navy, the recent strike of the Australian marines, the insurrection in the Dutch fleet, show that conditions are also favourable for work in the navies.

The revolutionary mass work of the Communist and revolutionary mass organizations is carried on in a feeble and inefficient fashion.

How else can we explain why the workers and employees still vote for the social-democratic parties and in some countries (Great Britain, U.S.A., France) even for bourgeois parties, if not by the fact that the Communist Parties and

the revolutionary organizations do not carry on enough mass work?

In Germany, for example, it is inconceivable that so many workers would vote for and support the Social-Democratic Party if they knew that this party betrayed the revolution in 1918-19, that it was itself instrumental in taking away all that the workers had gained in the field of social legislation (unemployed insurance, etc.), that it supported capitalist rationalization, as a result of which millions of workers lost their jobs, that it supported the reduction of unemployment relief and of the wages of employed workers, that it supported the introduction of new indirect taxes, and the raising of customs duties on food products, that it—the German Social-Democratic Party—dissolved revolutionary organizations, arrested and shot down workers during strikes and demonstrations, and, at the same time, encouraged the rowdyism of the fascist organizations who were murdering workers and destroying the headquarters of workers' organizations. And yet, after all of these betrayals, the German Social-Democrats still received 7,200,000 votes at the elections on November 6, 1932, including a good many workers' votes.

Can it be said that the British Labour Party is less traitorous than the German Social-Democratic Party? Not at all. It changed the unemployment insurance legislation for the worse, it drafted the bill to reduce unemployment benefit by 10 per cent., to cut the sailors' pay, etc. It zealously carried out, so long as it was in power, the imperialist policy of the British bourgeoisie. And now that it is in "opposition" to the National Government, it does not hesitate to vote for its measures. In spite of all this, it received about five million workers' votes in the last parliamentary elections, while the Communist Party of Great Britain did not get even a couple of hundred thousand votes.

TASKS OF THE COMMUNISTS

In the presidential elections in the U.S.A., millions of workers' votes were cast for the two capitalist parties, the Republican and Democratic, in spite of the fact that these two parties dominate the federal and state governments, that the governors and judges who are responsible for the imprisonment and killing of strikers belong to these two parties, that Congress has appropriated billions of the people's money to aid the banks and trusts, while refusing at the same time to grant unemployment insurance and even relief.

In France, workers and employees vote not only for the Socialist Party (which in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies of May, 1932, received 200,000 votes more than in 1928), but still vote for the Radical Socialists, Republican Socialists and similar parties.

All of these Social-Democrats and Radical and Republican Socialists support French imperialism in every way. They are responsible for the fact that the French workers have no unemployment insurance nor even temporary relief. They are responsible for the persecution of the alien workers who work in France (the Socialists introduced a bill in the Chamber of Deputies, providing that alien workers should not compose more than 10 per cent. of the total number of workers employed in any given enterprise). They are also responsible for wage cuts and the breaking of strikes.

Were the workers and employees convinced of this, would they vote for the Social-Democrats, Republicans, Radical and Republican Socialists? Of course not. And who can explain all this to them, if not the Communist Parties and revolutionary workers' organizations? And yet, the methods of oral and written agitation employed by these organizations will, in most cases, not bear criticism.

Apart from the fact that they occasionally give a wrong estimation of the situation and at times choose incorrect

tactics, resulting in wrong slogans which hinder the approach to the broad masses, the press and oral agitation of the Communist Parties and revolutionary organizations is not popular in its methods, but abstract, dry and dull.

Besides the agitation which is carried on in the press (newspapers), the Communist Parties and revolutionary organizations resort to the calling of mass meetings, which are sometimes attended by many thousands of workers. But these are for the most part workers who are in sympathy with us and read our press, this being, in fact, how they hear about the meetings. There is no real agitation in the industrial plants, at the factory gates, on the street cars, underground railways and buses, at the labour exchanges, in the queues at the food stations and flophouses (where the unemployed line up for hours to get a slice of bread and soup or a place to sleep), in the streets, and finally in the homes of the working men and women. We must reach the working men and women and the office employees wherever they are to be found. We must explain to them, in popular style, their conditions, how they can be improved, who defends their interests and who betrays them. We must convince them of the correctness of the policy which is pursued, and of the struggle which is waged by the Communist Party.

If this is not being done, it is not because the members of the Party or the members of the revolutionary organizations are not willing to carry on such agitation. The members of the Communist Parties and revolutionary organizations make great sacrifices. They turn out to demonstrations, participate in strikes, resist the attacks of the fascists, distribute illegal literature, and so on. All of this not infrequently ends in the arrest of many of them, in their being dismissed from their jobs, in their being wounded and even in death. The trouble is that these comrades do not get proper instructions. The press does

not provide them with material for convincing agitation. The newspapers either write in an involved and learned language, not touching upon those subjects which are of interest to the broad masses at the particular moment, or deem it beneath their dignity to react to the absurd and vicious fabrications of the renegades and of the social-democratic and fascist press. Thereby they fail to provide the members of the Party and of the revolutionary organizations with arguments for their agitation, and for their conversations on political subjects with workers of other political shades or non-party workers. When they do start a discussion with our opponents, the newspapers not infrequently fail to discriminate between the leaders and the rank and file of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions. And finally, instead of correctly recounting the facts about our opponents and analysing and explaining them in a clear and popular manner, they too often confine themselves to mere denunciation—to be sure, quite justified—of these opponents. At the time of elections to representative bodies, such as parliaments and municipal councils, when the platform is made public, when a great deal of literature is published on all questions, when the papers analyse in the light of concrete facts by whom, when and where the interests of the working class have been betrayed, the members of the Party and of the revolutionary organizations and the thousands of non-Party workers who volunteer to help the Communist Party in the election campaign accomplish wonders. They get in touch with the electors everywhere, even in their place of residence. But this is the way agitation should always be carried on, and not only before elections. During election campaigns the voters receive such a mass of printed material from all parties—material containing such a variety of promises—the voters are visited by such a large number of representatives from the various parties, that we cannot always and everywhere

expect success. In ordinary times, however, such agitation might be more successful.

The leaflets of the Communist Parties are frequently too long and not sufficiently popular. Often enough they begin with Adam, instead of concentrating the attention of those to whom they are addressed on the most essential point. The papers of Party cells in the factories are still, for the most part, written in the section committees in standardized fashion for a whole number of factories, without taking into account the special conditions obtaining in each of them and describing the life of each particular factory. The workers do not buy or read such factory papers. On the other hand, factory papers which are founded on facts relating to the particular plant have a great sale among the workers. There have been cases in various countries where the same issue of a factory paper has had to be reprinted twice, such was the demand for it among the workers. Such special numbers bring in a flood of correspondence from non-party workers and sometimes even from members of reformist and other trade unions and members of the social-democratic parties, because these workers, too, read good factory papers. But though these facts are well known to the central committees and other Party committees, there has been no increase in the publication of such papers, nor has the stereotyped method of producing factory papers been abandoned.

The press and oral agitation of the Communist Parties and revolutionary organizations do not, as a rule, penetrate deep into the masses. They only skim the surface.

The great masses of the people are against war. The danger of new imperialist wars and of an attack on the U.S.S.R. is very great. The war in the Far East is in full swing. But the Communist Parties and revolutionary organizations have not succeeded in explaining in a broad and popular fashion the danger which is menacing the

masses of the people. For this reason, they have not so far succeeding in hindering the shipping of arms and munitions to Japan. Large sections of the workers in the big capitalist countries are literate and read the newspapers, while a considerable number of them lived until the economic crisis in more or less cultured conditions. A large percentage of them are organized; many of them are members of trade unions, sport and other organizations. Not a few of them are affiliated to political parties. All this has led the Communist Parties, the revolutionary organizations and their press to believe that for such workers it is not necessary to write and agitate in a simple and popular style, to explain all the facts of their deception by the trade unions and by social-democratic and similar parties. They are themselves quite able to understand the laws which are directed against them, and it is therefore assumed that there is no need to comment on these laws. These workers, it is assumed, should only be approached with political questions. This view is profoundly erroneous. The facts show that these workers should be approached by the same methods as were employed by the Bolsheviks in Tsarist days to approach the Russian workers, who were not always literate. They explained to them who were their exploiters, how their conditions could be improved, what demands they must put forward, what was the mutual connection between the employer for whom they worked and the government which defended him. The Bolsheviks formulated the demands of the workers, from demands for boiled water, clean toilets, abolition of fines, reduction of the working hours and an increase in the wages, up to the slogan "Down with the Autocracy," the right to strike and to organize trade unions, etc. For as soon as the workers came out on strike, the police and the gendarmes took action against them, just as is now being done in the civilized "democratic" countries of Europe and America.

An analysis of the instances of good work done by factory cells, groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition and sections of the Red trade unions, provides additional evidence of the correctness of this contention. Here are a few such instances:—

(a) In the plant of the German General Electric Company at Henningsdorf, where 1,500 workers are employed, there was a section of the Red Metal Workers' Union of Berlin which reacted to the smallest needs of the workers. It organized passive resistance against wage cuts among the workers in the welding department, who were members of the reformist metal workers' union. The management not only withdrew the proposal to cut wages, but also agreed to pay for time lost in waiting for piecework.

The same thing happened in the tool shop, where a 15 per cent. wage cut had been announced, in the press shop and in other shops also. This good work has produced the following results:—

(i) The section of the Red Metal Workers' Union increased its membership from 250 to 315.

(ii) It led to a split among the reformist members in the factory committee.

(iii) On the initiative of the section of the Red trade unions a twenty-four hour political strike was carried through against the decree which provided for a 10 per cent. wage cut. All workers took part in this strike, with the exception of 200 Social-Democrats and reformists. The workers of this plant now support the revolutionary trade union opposition and the Communists.

(b) In the Cowlairs Works in Glasgow, Scotland, where 2,500 workers are employed, the Communist cell of nine members put forward the following demands: that the management explain to the workers how the pay is computed on the basis of the piece rates; that the workers

control the fixing of piece rates; and that wages be paid in accordance with the wage agreement. The management refused to accept these demands. This resulted in the suspension of work in several shops, after which the directors granted the demands. This considerably enhanced the prestige of the Party cells among the workers. The next issue of the factory paper published by the cell had to be printed twice.

(c) In the Troedyrhiw colliery in South Wales a successful strike took place after the *Daily Worker*, central organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain, had published a letter from this colliery, which put forward demands relating to wages, timber and better ropes. After these demands had been granted, the Communist cell issued a leaflet calling upon the workers to demand that additional timber be furnished and that the siren be blown punctually at the end of the working day. The management immediately granted the demands mentioned in this leaflet, without even waiting for the workers to express their support of these demands.

(d) At the Lucas factory in Birmingham, England, where 15,000 workers are employed, the Communists and members of the Minority Movement organized a strike against the introduction of new rationalization measures by the management. The strike was won. The prestige of the Communist Party and the Minority Movement was so enhanced in the plant and in the city that workers from the mills and factories in the vicinity began to come to the Party and Minority Movement with requests to help them formulate demands and organize struggles.

(e) The Hösch Works in the Ruhr closed down for two weeks without paying the workers during this period of enforced idleness. The Red trade union opposition proposed in the factory committee the calling of a general meeting of the workers to consider this question. Two

reformist members of the committee voted together with the supporters of the revolutionary trade union opposition. The votes were split, and the meeting was not called. But the *Ruhr Echo*, organ of the Ruhr district committee of the Communist Party, published several articles on the closing down of the plant and put forward the demand that the workers be paid for lost time. This was sufficient to compel the management to announce that the 1,500 workers would be paid from ten to fifteen marks each. The prestige of the Communist Party of Germany among the workers in the Hösch works was greatly enhanced as a result of this.

It would be possible to quote a number of such instances from every country.

In Germany, until September, 1932, neither the Communist Party nor the revolutionary trade union opposition succeeded in organizing a struggle against the emergency decrees. But when the Communist Party of Germany and the revolutionary trade union opposition undertook this task energetically and started doing work in the mills and factories, they succeeded in developing a united front in the struggle against the September emergency decree. Many mills and factories struck in all parts of Germany. And, what is more important, there was a very high percentage of victorious strikes. Some of the strikes in individual enterprises, such as the strike of the workers of the Berlin Transport Company, developed from economic strikes into important political events.

The Communist Parties much change their methods of agitation. The press must adopt a more popular style, providing the members of the Party and the revolutionary workers with such material as may help them to carry on agitation and conduct debates with their opponents. Members of the Party and of the revolutionary organizations, particularly members of the revolutionary trade union opposition and Red trade unions, must carry on not only popular

agitation, but also painstaking everyday work within the plants and trade unions and at the labour exchanges. Then they will soon have success in winning over a majority of the working class.

If the Party and trade union organizations were working properly, such shortcomings as there have been in the trade union work, in the work among the unemployed, in the plants, and among the peasants and employees would be impossible. Agitation and the press would be popular and would have taken hold of a much larger circle of working elements. If the Party and trade union organizations functioned better, there would be no such fluctuation as we have now in the membership of all Party, trade union and other revolutionary organizations in all countries. These organizations do not know how to consolidate by organizational methods the ideological influence which the Communist Parties enjoy in the capitalist countries. It is the task of the Communist Parties in capitalist countries to improve the work of the Party organizations, to help eliminate defects and shortcomings in all fields of Party and trade union work. The Communist Parties of the capitalist countries must carry out the tasks assigned them by the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

The Communist Parties in the capitalist countries have unquestionably achieved considerable successes between the Twelfth and Thirteenth Plenums. Their influence is increasing. There are already clear indications that the workers are deserting the social-democratic parties and the reformist trade union bureaucrats. Despite the unprecedented terror which prevails even in the countries of "democracy," the economic crisis has made it much easier for the Communist Parties to approach the broad masses of workers and peasants as well as the petty bourgeoisie of the towns. The vast masses of the toilers have at length begun to move. Many of them—workers and peasants—

are fighting against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government of the various countries. Under such conditions it must be recognized that, as compared with the march of events and with the actual revolutionary upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movement, the Communist Parties are still lagging behind in their work and in their achievements.

The end of relative stabilization is aggravating all the antagonisms between the imperialists as well as between the classes within each country. In a number of countries (in Poland, Germany and Japan) a revolutionary crisis is maturing.

In order that the class battles may end with the victory of the proletariat, the Communist Parties must draw the broad masses into struggle, must organize the struggle.

The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. not only gave a correct appraisal of the situation and pointed out the tasks of the individual parties, but also pointed out how and by what methods the Communist Parties should work, what they must do in order to be able not only to overcome their backwardness, not only to win over a majority of the working class, but also to wage a successful struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is the task of the Communist Parties successfully to put into effect the decisions of the Plenum in accordance with the conditions obtaining in their respective countries, to extend and consolidate their influence, to organize and to head the struggles of the masses and to lead them to a victorious proletarian revolution.

POSTSCRIPT

The Situation in Germany in Connection with the Changed Conditions, the New Tasks of the Communist Party of Germany in the Field of Party Construction and the Utilization of Legal Opportunities Among the Masses.

THE coming into power of the Hitler-Hugenberg-von Papen government caused a storm of protest throughout Germany. As soon as the appointment of the Hitler government became known, the working masses spontaneously held demonstrations in many cities. General demonstration strikes took place in a number of cities (Lübeck, Strassfurt), under the leadership of the C.P.G. In all cities of Germany, sanguinary clashes occurred with the fascist gangs who made attacks on meetings of revolutionary workers, on labour halls and Communist headquarters, on workers' homes and on individual workers.

In some places in the resistance which was offered to the fascists under the leadership of the Communist Party organizations, a united front of struggle was established among workers of all political shades. Funerals of the victims of fascist terror developed into tremendous demonstrations of the united front of the working class. The fascist government of Hitler dissolved the Reichstag, the Prussian Landtag and all the municipal councils of Prussia, in the expectation that it would succeed, by means of provocations and savage terrorism in the election campaign, in securing a majority in the representative institutions.

But even with the employment of Rumanian and Polish methods, to which Germany was unaccustomed, it proved no easy task for the fascists to win a majority in the elections to the Reichstag, the Landtag and the municipal councils.

On the very eve of the elections they found it necessary to set fire to the Reichstag, to subject the Communists to the most unheard-of bloody terror, to suspend not only the Communist newspapers but the Social-Democratic and Left liberal papers as well, in order to preclude all possibility of their acts of bandit provocation being exposed. All police power in Germany was transferred to the fascists. They *manufactured* the elections. Wherever they could not secure the desired election results by means of terror, the Storm Troops simply added extra ballots, of which they possessed a plentiful supply. The Hitler-Hugenberg-von Papen government has secured a majority, and is now ruling Germany "on a legal basis."

Ever since the revolution of November, 1918, the German government had been headed, albeit in different combinations, by the so-called Weimar coalition, the Social-Democratic Party, the Catholic Centre and the State Party (these three parties secured the adoption of the German constitution at Weimar). Even when the German government was composed only of representatives of the openly bourgeois parties, with Brüning at their head, the Social-Democratic Party supported this government, and in return the Social-Democratic government in Prussia was supported there by the Catholic Centre. The governments of the Weimar coalition signed the Versailles treaty, agreed to the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan and ruined the petty bourgeoisie through the inflation of 1921-24. These same governments gradually reduced to nothing, all that the German working class had gained in the field of social legislation (unemployment insurance, etc.), violated the political rights of the workers (police terrorism during strikes, the dissolution of a number of revolutionary labour organizations, etc.) and fired upon demonstrations. These governments also dissolved the League of Red Front Fighters, while tolerating the fascist Storm Troops. In

many cases Social-Democratic police presidents protected the fascists when the latter attacked the workers.

The world economic crisis has dealt particularly severe blows to Germany, which has been ruined by the war, the defeat and the billions of reparations payments after the war. The standard of living of the working class is even lower in Germany than in the other principal capitalist countries. The agrarian crisis has ruined the poor and middle peasantry and plunged the agricultural labourers into the most terrible impoverishment. The Social-Democratic Party, the reformist trade unions and the Catholic Centre, since they depend on the support of the masses of workers and employees, were not able to carry out the demands of the bourgeoisie—demands which increased as the crisis deepened and which aimed at shifting the *entire* burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the toilers. They were afraid of losing once and for all their influence over the masses (the reformist trade unions have lost over two million members in the last few years, while the C.P.G. has won 1,150,000 workers' votes from the Social-Democrats). It has become more advantageous to the German bourgeoisie to dismiss these faithful lackeys of theirs. And in this decisive moment it turned out that the parties of the Weimar coalition, as a result of their many years of treacherous work, have lost the confidence of a considerable section of the workers, employees and toiling peasants, inasmuch as they have not afforded them any real defence against the fascist attack. The National-Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (the fascists), as the party of big capital, directed the discontent of the petty-bourgeois masses, not against the urban and rural bourgeoisie, but against the parties of the Weimar coalition, the Versailles treaty, the Jews, and, above all, against the Marxists, *i.e.*, the Communists, whose influence was also gaining ground rapidly among the employees and poor sections of the rural population. The fascists have

resorted to demagoguery on the widest scale, promising work to the unemployed, food to the starving, aid to the peasants, a rise in wages to the employed workers, and to the petty bourgeoisie a return of the great and mighty Germany of the past. The National-Socialist Party was subsidized not only by the German bourgeoisie, but by the foreign bourgeoisie as well. It had a large apparatus, newspapers, publishing houses, etc.

The government apparatus of the bourgeoisie either protected the National-Socialists or actively supported them. After the von Papen-Schleicher government, following on the Brüning government, had failed, owing to the resistance organized by the C.P.G., to enforce the outrageous emergency decree which would have rendered the position of the working class markedly worse, and after the government of the "Social" General Schleicher had failed to secure even temporary mass support for carrying out his program against the toilers, the bourgeoisie decided to include Hitler in the government. In the Hitler-Hugenberg-von Papen government the Hitlerites at first had only three portfolios and the Nationalists eight. The big bourgeoisie and landlords expected that Hugenberg would utilize the Hitlerite organization to crush the workers and that at the same time the Nationalists would succeed in retaining the government apparatus in their hands. However, when the fascists, with the aid of bloody terrorism, provocations and frauds, "received" seventeen million votes, they seized the state apparatus not only on an all-German scale and in Prussia, but in all other provinces as well. Now the National-Socialists have got rid of their "allies"—the Nationalists.

What can the Hitlerite "national revolution" give to the working class, poor and middle peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie? The bourgeoisie has entrusted the national *bloc* with the task of effecting a sharp reduction

in the living standards of the toilers, making further wage cuts, completely doing away with social legislation, and, in particular, of unemployment insurance, annulling collective agreements, dissolving factory committees, transforming trade unions into organs of open class collaboration and introducing forced labour for the unemployed. With the aid of the National Government, the banks and usurers expect to extract their loans from the poor and middle peasantry. To meet the deficit in the state budget and to increase the subsidies to the capitalists and large landed proprietors, the government will increase both indirect and direct taxation on the toilers. Moreover, its tariff policy, while benefiting the landowners, will cause a rise in the prices of food products for the population. This is the program for the enforcement of which the bourgeoisie has appointed the "National Government."

Before the elections the Hitler-von Papen-Hugenberg government put out a bait for the peasantry: it extended the moratorium for agriculture until October, 1933. But even on March 17, Göring declared at a meeting of the Pomeranian *Landbund* that, "although in the very first cabinet meetings Hitler took up the question of aid to the peasantry, decisive salvation must come from the people themselves. The Germans must buy only German goods. Stronger than all official decrees would be the declaration of a boycott against any house in which foreign butter would be found."

Little is thus left of the former promises of the fascists to the peasantry.

Outside pressure, the closing of the frontiers to German exports, will force the Hitlerites to retreat from their program of autarchy—the policy of self-dependent economy.

Similar lying tactics were used by the fascists to win the votes of the unemployed. Before the elections the National Government raised the unemployment benefit by

two marks a month and decided to distribute 700,000 centners of rye and 2,000 centners of butter in the famine districts. This manœuvre, too, will soon be exposed by the entire further policy of the fascists.

What can this government achieve in the domain of foreign politics? Could it really free the German people from the fetters of Versailles and from their country's dependence on the more powerful imperialist countries victorious in the war? The Nationalists and National-Socialists have stirred up chauvinism; they have widely exploited the wounded national feelings of the broad masses, but they have not been and will not be able to really fight against the Versailles system. When the Communist fraction in the Reichstag demanded the annulment of the Young Plan and the repudiation of the Versailles treaty, the fascists either absented themselves from the session or abstained from voting. Now they have raised a lot of pre-election noise about equality for Germany and the annulment of the Versailles treaty. But of a real struggle against the Versailles system there has been no indication so far, unless we are to reckon as a "struggle" the hoisting of National-Socialist flags at railway stations in Swiss and Belgian towns near the German frontier or the reviews of Storm Troops in the prohibited area near the French border. The result of all this noise, which in turn arouses chauvinism in the other bourgeois countries, can only be increased expenditures on armaments and the creation of a big camouflaged army in the form of the organization of compulsory labour for young conscripts, etc., which will increase the already heavy burden of taxation on the toilers and increase the danger of war. The "National Government" can distribute well-paid government and municipal jobs to members of its parties, but it will aggravate, instead of improving, the situation of the workers, the unemployed, the employees and the poor middle peasantry.

In order to carry out its program of a bloody offensive against the toilers, the "National Government" is striving to annihilate the Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class, and to convert the Social-Democrats into obedient executors of this program. For this purpose they must transform the trade unions into a weapon for their policy. The fascists will not succeed in this, without evoking a determined struggle on the part of the revolutionary workers who are members of reformist trade unions. Although the trade union bureaucratic leaders (Leipart, Tarnov and others) are of course doing their utmost to convert the Social-Democratic, "free" trade unions into weapons of the fascist policy.

The Social-Democratic Party of Germany and its partners in the Weimar coalition shot down revolutionary workers during the revolution of 1919. The White terror of Noske and Severing struck mercilessly against the workers. But the revolutionary resistance of the masses was so strong, and the bourgeoisie was so intimidated by the October Revolution in Russia, that the Weimar coalition was compelled to reconcile itself to what the workers had gained—the eight-hour day, factory committees, social legislation, collective agreements, etc. In this way the Weimar coalition retained its hold over broad masses of the toilers during the first few years after the revolution.

With the aid of American loans in 1923-24 the German bourgeoisie succeeded in overcoming the economic collapse, in stabilizing German currency and reviving the industries. On the basis of this temporary "stabilization" the Weimar coalition consolidated the state power of the bourgeoisie.

Hitlerite fascism has come to power under different conditions. The aggravation of the world economic crisis, the derangement of the financial and credit system in the chief capitalist countries, particularly in the United States, excludes the possibility of the National Government obtain-

ing foreign loans. Moreover, the United States will insist on Germany paying private loans in full (75 per cent. of Germany's private loans came from the United States). The temporary and illusory improvement in Germany's foreign trade at the end of 1932, hailed by bourgeois economists as the way out of the crisis, has already suffered a crash. Economic collapse in Germany is spreading. On the other hand, the small temporary concessions, which the National-Socialists and Nationalists so ostentatiously made to the toilers before the elections as a bait for their votes, are rapidly being taken away, and the National Government will increase to an extreme degree the pressure which is being brought to bear on the toilers by means of terrorism and bloody repressions. To remain in power only on the basis of terrorism and bloody repressions is impossible even in a backward agricultural country, the more so in such a highly developed industrial country, with a proletariat of fifteen millions which has behind it the experience of a proletarian revolution—heroic even though defeated.

The policy of a savage offensive on the German working class and on all the toilers—severe as are the sacrifices with which it will be attended—will inevitably lead to the bankruptcy of the bourgeois fascist system and will only hasten the coming of the proletarian revolution.

As we have seen above, the German Social-Democratic Party and the leaders of the reformist trade unions not only saved the bourgeois system in Germany in 1918-19, but by their collaboration with the bourgeoisie and by disorganizing the struggle of the working class, by splitting its ranks and by open strike-breaking, paved the way for the fascist dictatorship of Hitler. In the elections of March 5 and March 12, the Communist Party of Germany defeated the provocative plans of the Hitlerites, which aimed at isolating the Communists from the masses. But the Communist Party proved itself not yet sufficiently strong to organize

by itself such revolutionary mass action as might, despite the desperate resistance of the Social-Democratic Party and trade union leaders, prevent the coming into power of the Hitlerites.

The proposals of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany and of the revolutionary trade union opposition for a united struggle against fascism, which were made on January 30 and March 1, 1933, to the Social-Democratic Party and the central executive of the German trade union federation, were rejected by them, as was also the proposal of the C.C. of the C.P.G. of July 20, 1932, to call a general political strike. The united front which was formed by Communist and Social-Democratic workers in some places was not yet strong enough to prevent Hitler's coming to power. But it constitutes a guarantee that, in spite of the Social-Democratic Party and the leadership of the reformist trade unions, the Communist Party will succeed in establishing a broad united front in the struggle against the offensive of capital and the fascists, and in leading the majority of the working class and the toilers of town and country to a victorious proletarian revolution.

All that has been said in the chapter, "The Failure of the Communist Parties to Keep Pace with the Advance of the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Movement" fully applies to the German Communist Party in the present conditions. However, the new situation demands certain changes in the methods and the content of Party and trade union work. It seems absolutely necessary to dwell for a moment longer, if only in brief, on the specific tasks which arise from this situation, since this work was written before the recent events in Germany.

Before Hitler's advent to power, the German Communist Party during almost the whole of its existence (since January, 1919), with the exception of short periods in 1919 and 1923,

was a fully legal organization in the majority of the German provinces, and in some a semi-legal one. To-day, it has suddenly become necessary for it to work not only under persecution, but under circumstances of unprecedented terror.

Although the organizations of the German Communist Party were periodically subjected to persecution (the Party press was closed down for a period and Party meetings broken up), they were able to call meetings of their members openly, to arrange widespread meetings and mass meetings, to publish their newspapers, leaflets, magazines, pamphlets and books. All this has now been swept away at one stroke.

The Communist Party of Germany, as its press shows, was expecting this suppression. It has been half underground for a long time. But many of the responsible workers of the Party did not expect that the débâcle would take on such dimensions all at once. The fascists have gone so far as to *surround whole working-class districts* in their search after responsible Party workers. Many streets in Wedding, Neuköln and Moabit in Berlin, besides working-class districts in other big towns, were surrounded in this way. The fascists made house-to-house searches in all lodgings in their hunt after responsible workers of the Communist Party. They took off to the police station anyone not registered as living in the house they were searching. The fascists are breaking into the homes of Communists and revolutionary workers and murdering them. They are murdering arrested Communists, taking possession of Party and trade union offices, and turning them into fascist dens. They are taking books out of the bookshops and warehouses and burning them. They are having those who distribute illegal leaflets, etc., shadowed and beaten up. The majority of the members of the C.P.G. were not prepared for such unheard-of, mass repressions.

Before the elections the fascists did not make use of terror against the Social-Democratic organizations. They made

attacks on *workers* of all shades of opinion and the latter jointly defended themselves against the fascists. In the majority of cases the fascists did not touch the responsible workers of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats. Just before the elections the fascists closed down the Social-Democratic press as well. After the elections, however, the National-Socialists, "having obtained the sanction of a majority of the people," began to arrest, to beat up, and even to kill responsible workers of the Social-Democratic Party as well. The fascists are wrecking the Social-Democratic and trade union offices and making bonfires of Social-Democratic books. It would seem that after this the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats should have accepted the proposal made by the C.P.G. for a joint struggle against fascist provocation and terror and for the joint calling of a general strike. However, instead of the united front of struggle, the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats quickly found a new form of the "lesser evil" argument: Hitler, after all, came to power legally, since President Hindenburg entrusted him with the task and the majority of the people approved of the transfer. They promise to become a legal opposition.

The Social-Democratic Party immediately after the elections recommended that the fascists rule on the basis of the Weimar Constitution, which, as the Social-Democrats pointed out, would make it fully possible for them to bring pressure to bear upon the toilers. And these things are being written after the elections, when even the bourgeois liberal press of Germany is writing about the unheard-of acts of election terrorism. The Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats will doubtless do all in their power to prevent the proletariat from joining the Communists in a common struggle against the fascists. All the more determinedly, pertinaciously and vigorously must

the Communists resist the fascist bandits everywhere in a united front with the Social-Democratic workers who are members of the reformist trade unions, especially when attacks are made upon trade union and Party offices; they must organize mass protests on the part of the vast working masses by preparing to put through a general strike.

The fight against fascism in Germany has now assumed very acute forms. In order to fulfil the tasks with which the C.P.G. is confronted, it is essential that its organizations be reconstructed as quickly as possible on illegal lines. Besides drawing ever more of the broad masses into the struggle against fascism, the C.C. of the C.P.G. must immediately publish an illegal central organ and a theoretical journal of the Party; it must issue illegal proclamations on all the most vital questions, and strengthen its contacts with the district committees and Communist fractions in mass non-party organizations, seeing that they get better leadership and guidance. The local Party organizations must develop the broadest initiative in their work. To wait until instructions on all questions, ready prepared proclamations, notes for speakers, etc., come from headquarters is, at the present time, nothing short of criminal. The local Party organizations must vigorously develop their work within the bounds of the general Party decisions, in accordance with the state of affairs in the given locality. They should publish their own illegal newspapers and proclamations.

The C.P.G. must, not in word but in actual fact, transfer the centre of gravity of its work to the factories. At the present time this work acquires an especially great importance. The Party has no opportunity of calling workers' meetings, which means that verbal and written agitation inside the factories becomes still more important than ever before. Preparations for strikes must also be transferred to the factories, for the fascists forbid the trade

unions to carry on strikes, which is just what the trade union bureaucrats want. And, finally, it is easy to establish a *united front of workers of all shades of opinion* inside the factories. In the factories the Communists and revolutionary workers will encounter the attempts of the fascists to get into the factories, seize the factory committees, drive the revolutionary workers out of the factories and put in their own members in their place. In this way they will bring pressure to bear upon the non-class-conscious workers with a view to bringing them into the National-Socialist organizations in the factories. There have already been cases of this kind.

The Communists, the unorganized revolutionary workers, the anti-fascists, and members of the Social-Democratic Party and reformist trade unions must fight in a united front against things of this kind and must increase their work of enlightenment among the non-class-conscious workers in the factories and plants. It must be explained to these non-class-conscious workers that when the fascists attract them into their organizations, they are counting upon using them to help break the working class's resistance to wage cuts, to the abolition of collective agreements, to the fascization of the trade unions, etc. These non-class-conscious workers in factories and plants must not be left to themselves even after they have joined fascist organizations in the factories. Work must be carried on among them there also. There, too, it is necessary to organize actions on the part of the revolutionary workers and to unmask the promises and deeds of the fascists.

Illegal Party organizations must make use of all legal possibilities in their work. It is of enormous importance that legal possibilities should be properly utilized in Germany. The Communists and revolutionary workers, under the leadership of the Party organizations, should penetrate into all mass non-party workers' organizations, and especi-

ally into the trade unions. Communist and opposition work must be widely developed in these mass organizations. The fascists want to convert the German "free" and catholic reformist trade unions into corporations of fascist trade unions on Italian lines.

It was hard to imagine, in spite of all their earlier betrayals, that the trade union bureaucrats and the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party would so quickly and openly go over to the side of fascism, in order to strengthen the reactionary united front of the *whole* of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary united front of the Communists, members of reformist trade unions and Social-Democratic workers.

In 1914, on the outbreak of war, when the Social-Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucrats sided with their own bourgeoisie, they nevertheless maintained their own organizations, and the trade union bureaucrats continued to lead the trade unions independently. Now, however, the Social-Democratic trade union bureaucrats are dissolving their organizations for the sake of the fascists, and are prepared to appoint fascist commissars.

The more vigorously must the Communists and revolutionary workers begin a most determined struggle, especially inside the reformist and catholic trade unions, against collaboration between the trade union bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie, against the fascization of the trade unions, and for turning the trade unions into class organizations of the proletariat. Similar work must be done in all other mass reformist and catholic organizations of workers and employees. In order to strengthen the work in these organizations, wide use must be made of the elections of trade union officials and elections to factory committees, if these are not universally abolished by the fascists. In the elections in the trade union and factory committees, which took place before

Hitler's advent to power, the results for the C.P.G. were excellent.

Every attention should be paid to work among the unemployed. On the one hand, the fascists will cut wages and destroy the remnants of unemployment insurance for workers, and, on the other hand, in order to get the more active, but non-class-conscious sections of the unemployed on to their side, they are able, at first, to open free dining rooms for the unemployed and to introduce "social" (compulsory) labour and drilling. It is highly probable that at the last elections a certain section of the unemployed were attracted by the promises of the fascists and voted for them. Unemployment, however, has not only not declined, but is increasing more and more. However, this should only force the C.P.G. to intensify their work among the unemployed on the basis of the decisions of the Eleventh Plenum and the Prague Conference. It is of paramount importance that the organization of the unemployed should be improved and work among them intensified. Fascist demagogy may have a pernicious influence upon the starving unemployed, if it is not counteracted by our Communist work. Therefore the unemployed organizations must not only lead the struggle of the unemployed, but fight against the influence of the fascists over certain sections of the unemployed.

The most important thing at the present moment, when there are no Communist newspapers, is to arrange for oral and printed agitation.

The workers of Germany have been accustomed for many decades to read their newspapers daily, and now, in the absence of the Communist press, they will be forced to read the fascist press. It is the duty of the Party organizations to carry on widespread oral agitation wherever working men, women and young people, whether employed or unemployed, are to be found,

and to publish small pamphlets and proclamations on the most topical questions of the day. This is also a most important task for the local Party organizations. Not a single accusation against the C.P.G. must be left unanswered; not a single crime on the part of the fascists should be left unrevealed. The central leadership and the local Party organizations must tirelessly, systematically and determinedly expose the fascist government and the parties which support it, must relentlessly unmask the treachery of those parties which are alleged to be in opposition to the government (the Social-Democratic Party and the Catholic Centre). In order to do this, representative institutions must be made use of, no matter how fascist they may become and however difficult it may be to do this. The C.P.G., before Hitler's advent to power, had over 300,000 members. The revolutionary elements among the working class are still supporting their Party at the present time and will enter its ranks.

But this does not preclude the possibility of the more fainthearted ones and the cowards going over to the camp of the class enemy, as was the case in similar circumstances in Italy. The Party must relentlessly unmask these renegades who, in order to save their own skins, betray the interests of the working class.

The Party organizations of the C.P.G. must be immediately reconstructed in the course of the day's work, and fulfil the tasks which confront them in the struggle against the capitalist offensive and against the fascists; they must fight with all means in their power even to the extent of calling mass political strikes.

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