

Theses on Tactics and Strategy

Third Congress of the Communist International – Resolutions

Comintern

1921

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1.) Definition of the question

‘The new international workers’ association was founded to organise the *common activity* of proletarians of different countries who strive for one single goal: overthrowing capitalism and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and an international Soviet republic to completely abolish classes and realise socialism, the first stage of the communist society.¹

This definition, set down in the Statutes of the Communist International, *encompasses all the questions of tactics and strategy* that are posed for solution, questions relating to our struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. They relate to how we win the majority of the working class to the principles of communism and how we organise the socially decisive layers of the proletariat for the struggle to achieve them. They relate to our relationship to the proletarianised petty-bourgeois layers, to the ways and means of rapidly undermining and shattering the organs of bourgeois power, and to the final international struggle for the dictatorship.

The question of the dictatorship itself, as the only road to victory, is not part of this discussion. The developing world revolution has shown plainly that there is only one alternative in the present situation: capitalist or proletarian dictatorship. The Third Congress of the Communist International undertakes its review of tactical questions at a time when the objective conditions are ripe for revolution. A number of mass Communist parties have been formed, but there is not yet a single country in which they have actual leadership of the majority of the working class in genuinely revolutionary struggle.

¹The paragraph is taken from the Statutes of the Communist International. See Riddell (ed.), *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991), vol 2, pp. 696 – 7.

2.) On the eve of new battles

The *world revolution* – that is, the decay of capitalism, the accumulation of the proletariat's revolutionary energy, and its organisation into an aggressive and victorious power – will require a *lengthy period* of revolutionary struggles. As a result of variations in the level of antagonisms in different countries, variations in their social structure and in the scope of the obstacles to be overcome, and the high degree of organisation of the bourgeoisie in the developed capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America, the World War was not immediately followed by the victory of world revolution.

The Communists were correct in saying, even during the War, that the *epoch of imperialism* would lead into a time of *social revolution*, that is, a long succession of civil wars within individual capitalist states and of wars between capitalist states on one side and proletarian states and exploited colonial peoples on the other. The world revolution does not develop in a straight line. Instead, periods of chronic capitalist decay and everyday revolutionary preparatory work come to a head and find expression in acute crises.

The pace of world revolution became even slower because of the evolution of workers' organisations and workers' parties formed by the proletariat to lead its struggle against the bourgeoisie. During the War, these organisations – namely the Social Democratic parties and the trade unions – were transformed into counterrevolutionary tools to mislead and restrict the proletariat, and they retained that character after the end of the War. This made it easy for the world bourgeoisie to overcome the crisis of the demobilisation period. During the apparent prosperity of 1919 – 20, it was able to awaken new hopes of bettering conditions within a capitalist framework, which led to the defeat of uprisings during 1919 and the slower tempo of revolutionary movements during 1919 – 20.

The world economic crisis that began in mid-1920 and extended around the world, multiplying unemployment everywhere, shows the international proletariat that the bourgeoisie is not capable of rebuilding the world. The sharpening of all world-political antagonisms – France's plunder campaign against Germany, the British-American and American-Japanese enmity, with the resulting armaments race – all this shows that the dying capitalist world is again hurtling toward world war.

The League of Nations is simply an international trust of victor states for the exploitation of their defeated rivals and the colonial peoples. It has now been broken apart by the British-American rivalry. The international Social Democracy and the trade-union bureaucracy held the working masses back from revolutionary struggle through the illusion that, by rejecting the conquest of political power in revolutionary struggle, they could progressively and peacefully achieve economic power and self-government. That illusion is now disappearing.

In *Germany*, the farce of socialisation, which the Scheidemann-Noske government used in March 1919 to hold back the working class from an uprising, is at an

end.² The phase of socialisation has given way to a genuine Stinnesisation, that is, the subjugation of German industry to a capitalist dictator and a clique of his cronies. The attack of the Prussian government, led by the Social Democrat Severing, against the miners of Central Germany was the prelude to a general offensive by the German bourgeoisie to drive down wages of the German working class.

In *Britain*, plans for nationalisation have been cast aside. Instead of carrying out the Sankey Commission [coal] nationalisation plan,³ the government calls up the army to support the lockout of British miners.

As for the *French* government, only its campaign of robbery against Germany holds it off from bankruptcy. It gives no thought to any plan to strengthen its economy. Even the reconstruction of devastated northern France, to the extent it is done at all, serves only to enrich private capitalists.

In *Italy*, the bourgeoisie, supported by the Fascist White Guards, have launched an attack on the working class.

Bourgeois democracy has been further exposed everywhere, both in countries where it has long been established and in the new countries resulting from imperialist collapse. White Guards; dictatorial powers for the British government against the miners' strike; Fascists and the Royal Guard in Italy; Pinkertons, expulsion of socialist congressmen,⁴ and lynch justice in the United States; white terror in Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Latvia, and Estonia; legalisation of the white terror in Finland, Hungary, and the Balkan countries; anti-Communist laws in Switzerland and France; and so on. Everywhere the bourgeoisie seeks to burden the working class with the results of heightened economic anarchy by lengthening the working day and reducing wages.

Everywhere they are assisted by the leaders of the Social Democracy and the Amsterdam trade-union International. However, they can only postpone, not prevent, the awakening of the working masses to new struggles and the approach of a new revolutionary upsurge. Already we see that the German proletariat is preparing for a counterattack. The British miners, despite the betrayal of the trade-union leaders, held out for weeks in heroic struggle against the capitalist mine owners. After the Italian proletariat's experiences with the Serrati group's vacillation, we see a new will to struggle emerging in its front ranks, expressed in the formation of the Communist Party of Italy.

²On 1 March 1919 the SPD fraction in the National Assembly put forward a resolution calling for the socialisation of certain industries. Two days later the government published a scheme to that end.

³The Sankey Commission (named after its president, John Sankey) was set up in early 1919 by the Liberal Party government to avert the threat of a coal miners' strike and industrial unrest. The commission's findings endorsing the principle of nationalisation were rejected by the government

⁴Presumably a reference to the January 1920 expulsion of five SP members from the New York State Assembly on the grounds that the SP 'was not truly a political party' but rather 'a membership organisation admitting within its ranks aliens, enemy aliens, and minors'.

In France, after the split of the social patriots and centrists, we see the Socialist Party beginning to shift from Communist agitation and propaganda to mass demonstrations against imperialist robbery.⁵ In Czechoslovakia, we experienced a political strike in December, in which a million workers took part, despite the lack of a unified leadership. It was followed by the formation of the Czech Communist Party on a mass basis. In Poland in February, we had the railway workers' strike, led by the Communist Party, and following that the general strike, and we are witnessing an ongoing process of disintegration in the social-patriotic Polish Socialist Party.

Under present circumstances we must not expect an ebb of world revolution or a lessening of its waves. On the contrary, the most likely variant under present circumstances is a rapid aggravation of social antagonisms and social struggles.

3.) The most important present task

The most important task of the Communist International at present is to gain decisive influence over the majority of the working class and to lead its decisive sectors into struggle. The economic and political situation is objectively revolutionary, and can give rise to an acute revolutionary crisis at any moment – be it a mass strike, a colonial uprising, a new war, or even a major parliamentary crisis. However, the majority of the working class is not yet subject to Communist influence. This is especially true in countries where the strength of finance capital makes possible the existence of significant layers of workers corrupted by imperialism (Britain and the United States, for example), and where genuinely revolutionary mass propaganda has hardly begun.

The Communist International does not aim to form small Communist sects seeking to exert influence on the working masses through propaganda and agitation. *Rather, from the earliest days after its formation, it has clearly and unambiguously pursued the goal of taking part in the struggles of the working masses, leading these struggles in a Communist direction, and, through the struggle, forming large, tested, mass revolutionary Communist parties.*

From the very first years of its existence, the Communist International rejected sectarian tendencies by calling on its affiliated parties – no matter how small – to participate in the trade unions, in order to defeat the reactionary bureaucracy from within and to transform the unions into revolutionary mass organisations of the proletariat and agencies for its struggle. Already in its first year of existence, the Communist International called on Communist parties not to close themselves off as propaganda circles but to utilise every opportunity that the bourgeois state is compelled to provide, as a weapon, a platform, a point of assembly for communism. This includes freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the bourgeois parliamentary institutions, regardless of how stunted they may be.

⁵By 'Socialist Party', the resolution is referring to the Communist Party of France, the name taken by the former Socialist Party majority in December 1920.

At its Second Congress, the Communist International openly rejected sectarian tendencies in its resolutions on the trade unions and on utilising parliament.

The experiences of two years of struggle have fully confirmed the correctness of the Communist International's point of view. The policies of the Communist International have brought about, in a number of countries, the *separation of the revolutionary workers not only from the open reformists but also from the centrists*. The Centrists have formed the Two-and-a-Half International, which joins publicly with the Scheidemanns, the Jouhauxs, and the Hendersons within the Amsterdam trade-union International. This clarifies the field of battle for the proletarian masses, which can only facilitate the coming struggles.

German communism was able to develop from a political current at the time of the January and March struggles of 1919 to a large revolutionary mass party thanks to the Communist International's tactics and strategy: revolutionary work in the trade unions, Open Letter, and so on. The party has won such influence in the trade unions that the union bureaucracy has taken fright at the revolutionary impact of Communist work there. It has expelled many Communists from the unions, taking on itself the odium of splitting the movement.

In *Czechoslovakia*, the Communists succeeded in winning over the majority of the politically organised workers. In *Poland*, the Communist Party has faced severe persecution, which has forced it completely underground. Nonetheless, it has been able, thanks above all to its underground work within the trade unions, not only to maintain its ties with the masses but to lead them in mass struggles. In *France* the Communists have won a majority in the Socialist Party. In *Britain*, the Communist groups are consolidating a fusion carried out on the basis of the Communist International's tactical guidelines. The Communists' growing influence has forced the social traitors to attempt to bar them from entry into the Labour Party.

By contrast, the sectarian Communist groups (KAPD, etc.) have not gained the slightest success from their policies. The concept of strengthening communism through pure propaganda and agitation and the formation of separate Communist trade unions has been shipwrecked. Nowhere has an influential Communist Party been built in this fashion.

4.) The situation in the Communist International

The Communist International is on the road to forming mass Communist parties, but it is far from having gone far enough. Indeed, in two of the most important countries of capitalist triumph, the work has hardly been begun.

In the *United States of North America*, a broad revolutionary movement was lacking before the War, for historical reasons. Here the Communists still face the initial and most elementary tasks of building a Communist nucleus and linking it up with the working masses. Favourable conditions for this work have now been created by the economic crisis, which has thrown five million workers into

unemployment. American capitalism is aware of the threatening danger that the workers' movement may radicalise and fall under Communist influence. It has therefore attempted to crush the young Communist movement through barbaric persecution, to destroy it and drive it underground, where, it believes, the party will lose any connection with the masses, degenerate into a propaganda sect, and wither away.

The Communist International draws the attention of the United Communist Party of America to the fact that the underground organisation can provide the basis only for uniting and educating the most active Communist forces. The party is obligated to seek in every way possible to reach out from its underground organisation and link up with the working-class masses now in ferment. It is obligated to find ways and means to unite these masses in open political activity for the struggle against American capitalism.

The *British* Communist movement too has not yet succeeded in becoming a mass party, even though it has brought its forces together in a unified party.

The British economy remains in disorder; the strike movement is intense as never before; the broad popular masses are increasingly discontented with the Lloyd George government; and the Labour Party and Liberal Party may well win in the coming parliamentary elections. All these factors open up new revolutionary perspectives for Britain and pose extremely important questions to British Communists.

The initial, overriding task of the Communist Party of Britain is to become a party of the masses. The British Communists must strengthen their roots in the already existing and developing mass movement. They must get involved in all the specific forms through which this movement finds expression and take up the workers' individual and partial demands as the starting point for their own tireless and energetic agitation and propaganda.

Through the mighty strike movement, hundreds of thousands and millions of workers are subjecting to close examination the capacity, reliability, steadfastness, and conscientiousness of the trade-union apparatus and leadership. Under these conditions, Communists' work in the unions has taken on decisive importance. No criticisms by the party from the outside can have even a small fraction of the influence on the masses exerted by steadfast daily work by Communist trade-union cells. This work aims to expose and discredit the petty-bourgeois traitors in the trade unions, who have become in Britain, more than anywhere else, the political pawns of the capitalists.

In other countries, where there are mass Communist parties, their task consists largely of seizing the initiative in mass actions. In Britain, by contrast, the task of the Communist Party is above all to show the masses, in the framework of their experience in mass actions that are currently under way, that the Communists courageously and accurately express these masses' interests, needs, and feelings.

The mass Communist parties of Central and Western Europe are in the process of

developing the appropriate methods of revolutionary agitation and propaganda and the organisational methods suitable to their character as organisations of struggle. They are making the transition from Communist propaganda and agitation to action. This process is hindered by the fact that, in several countries, the workers embraced revolution and came to communism under the direction of leaders who had not overcome centrist tendencies. They are not capable of carrying out genuinely Communist popular agitation and propaganda and may even fear it, knowing that it will lead the parties into revolutionary struggles.

In *Italy*, these centrist tendencies brought about a split in the party. The party and trade-union leaders associated with Serrati failed to transform the spontaneous movements of the working class and its increasing activity into a conscious struggle for power, for which conditions in Italy were fully ripe. Instead, they let these movements run aground. They did not see communism as a means to arouse and unite the working masses for struggle. And because they feared the struggle, they could only steer Communist propaganda and agitation into a centrist channel. They thereby reinforced the influence of reformists like Turati and Treves in the party and D'Aragona in the trade unions. Because the Serrati forces did not differ from the reformists either in word or deed, they did not want to break with them, preferring to break with the Communists. The policies of the Serrati current, while strengthening reformist influence on one side, created on the other a danger of anarchist and syndicalist influence and the generation of anti-parliamentary and verbally radical tendencies within the party itself.

The split in Livorno and the formation of a Communist Party in Italy united all the genuinely Communist forces on the basis of the decisions of the Communist International's Second Congress. This initiative will make communism a mass force in Italy, provided that the Italian Communist Party, while continually and unrelentingly combating the opportunist policies of Serrati, is also capable of linking up with the proletarian masses in the trade unions, in strikes, and in struggles against the Fascist counterrevolutionary organisations. It must unify their movements and transform their spontaneous actions into carefully prepared struggles.

In *France*, the chauvinist poison of 'national defence' and the subsequent intoxication of victory were stronger than in any other country. Opposition to the War developed more slowly than in other countries. Thanks to the moral influence of the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary struggles in the capitalist countries, and the experiences of the French proletariat betrayed by its leaders, the majority of the French Socialist Party evolved in a Communist direction, even before the course of events placed it before the decisive challenges of revolutionary action. The French Communist Party can utilise this situation all the better and more fully to the degree that it does away with the excessively strong remnants in its own ranks – especially in its leadership – of national-pacifist and parliamentary-reformist ideology.

To a greater extent than now and in the past, the party must move closer to the

most oppressed layers in the cities and the countryside, giving full expression to their sufferings and needs. In its struggles in parliament, the party must break decisively with the hypocritical formalities and deceitful courtesies of French parliamentarism, which are deliberately encouraged by the bourgeoisie in order to hypnotise and intimidate leaders of the working class. Communist Party parliamentary deputies must strive through strictly supervised activity to expose the fraud of nationalist democratism and traditional revolutionism and approach every question in terms of class interests and relentless class struggle.

Party agitation must be carried out with much more concentration and energy. It must not dissolve into the changing and varied situations and patterns of day-to-day politics. It must draw basic revolutionary conclusions from every event, large and small, and convey those lessons to the most backward layers of workers. Only such truly revolutionary conduct will show the Communist Party to be something more than the left wing of the radical bloc around Longuet, which offers its services to bourgeois society with increasing energy and increasing success, in order to protect it from the convulsions that are inevitably approaching in France. Regardless of whether these decisive revolutionary events take place sooner or later, a disciplined Communist Party, imbued with revolutionary determination, will find it possible even now, in a preparatory period, to mobilise the masses both economically and politically, broadening and clarifying their struggles.

Impatient and politically inexperienced revolutionary forces attempt to apply extreme methods – more appropriate to a decisive revolutionary proletarian uprising – to individual issues and tasks, such as the proposal to appeal to conscripts in the army's class of 1919 to resist the military call-up. If put into practice, such methods set back for a long time genuine revolutionary preparation of the proletariat for winning power.

The Communist Party of France, like the parties in other countries, has the task of rejecting these extremely dangerous methods. However, this absolutely must not lead the party into inactivity; quite the contrary.

Strengthening the party's links with the masses requires above all closer ties to the trade unions. The party's task is not to subordinate the trade unions mechanically and superficially or to deny them the autonomy necessitated by the character of their work. Rather the task is to give direction to the work of truly revolutionary forces unified and led by the Communist Party within the unions, along lines that express the broad interests of a proletariat struggling to win power.

In this regard, the Communist Party of France is obligated to offer friendly but clear and resolute criticism of anarcho-syndicalist currents that reject the dictatorship of the proletariat and the need to unify the proletarian vanguard in a centralised and leading organisation, that is, the Communist Party. As for syndicalist currents in transition – who barricade themselves behind the Amiens Charter, drafted eight years before the War, and do not want to give a new and forthright answer to the basic questions posed in the new epoch following the

War – they must be subjected to criticism in the same fashion.

The prevailing hatred of politicians among French syndicalists is directed chiefly against the traditional ‘socialist’ parliamentarians, and here it is quite justified. The purely revolutionary character of the Communist Party creates an opportunity to demonstrate convincingly to all revolutionary forces the need for a political movement for the winning of power by the working class.

The revolutionary-syndicalist and Communist organisations need to be fused together, as a necessary condition for any serious struggle by the French proletariat.

French syndicalism displays tendencies to premature action, to vagueness on principles, and to organisational separatism, all of which need to be overcome and removed. But this will be achieved only to the degree that the party itself, as stated, transforms itself into a powerful attractive force for the working masses of France, by dealing in truly revolutionary fashion with every question of daily life and struggle.

In *Czechoslovakia* the working masses have shaken off in two and a half years most reformist and nationalist illusions. In September 1920, the majority of Social Democratic workers separated from their reformist leaders. In December, about a million of *Czechoslovakia*’s three and a half million industrial workers took part in a revolutionary mass action against the *Czechoslovak* capitalist government. The *Czechoslovak* Communist Party was formed this past May with 350,000 members, alongside the Communist Party of German Bohemia [Sudetenland], which had been formed earlier and has 60,000 members. The Communists thus make up a large segment not only of the *Czechoslovak* proletariat but also of its population as a whole.

The *Czechoslovak* party now faces the task of attracting broader masses of workers through truly Communist agitation. It must also train its members, both longstanding and newly won, through effective and unremitting Communist propaganda. It must unite the workers of all nations within *Czechoslovakia* in a solid proletarian front against nationalism, the main weapon of the bourgeoisie in *Czechoslovakia*. It must strengthen the proletariat’s power, created through this process, during all coming struggles against government and capitalist oppression, and convert this strength into an invincible power. The Communist Party of *Czechoslovakia* will accomplish these tasks all the more quickly if it overcomes centrist traditions and hesitations in clear and determined fashion, pursuing a policy that educates the broad masses of the proletariat in a revolutionary spirit, unites them, and is thus capable of preparing their actions and carrying them through to victory. The congress instructs the *Czechoslovak* and the German-Bohemian Communist parties to fuse their organisations into a unified party within a period of time to be set by the Executive.

The United Communist Party of Germany was formed from the fusion of the Spartacus League with the working masses of the Independent [USPD] left wing. Although already a mass party, it faces the major task of increasing and

strengthening its influence on the broad masses; winning the proletarian mass organisations, the trade unions; breaking the hold of the Social Democratic party and trade-union bureaucracy; and taking the leadership of the proletariat in the mass struggles to come. This central task requires orienting all agitational and organisational work toward winning the support of the working-class majority, without which, given the power of German capitalism, no victory of communism in Germany is possible.

The party has not yet succeeded in this task, with regard either to the scope or the content of its agitation. It has also failed to consistently follow the path it had blazed through the Open Letter, which counterposed the practical interests of the proletariat to the traitorous policy of the Social Democratic parties and the trade-union bureaucracy. The party's press and organisation is still too marked by the stamp of an association, not an organisation of struggle, expressing centrist tendencies that have not yet been fully overcome. These tendencies led the party, when faced with the requirements of struggle, to jump in too precipitously and without sufficient preparation, and to neglect the need for vital contact with the non-Communist masses. The disintegration of Germany's economy and the capitalist offensive against workers' living standards will soon confront the VKPD with tasks of struggle that cannot be resolved if the party counterposes tasks of agitation and organisation to those of action. The party must keep the spirit of struggle in its ranks always at the ready, while shaping its agitation in a truly popular fashion and building its organisation in such a manner that, through its ties with the masses, it develops the capacity to carefully evaluate challenges to struggle and to carefully prepare for action.

The parties of the Communist International will become mass revolutionary parties only when they overcome the remnants and traditions of opportunism in its ranks. This can be done by seeking close ties with the struggling masses of workers, deducing their tasks from the proletariat's ongoing struggles, rejecting the opportunist policy of covering up and concealing the unbridgeable antagonisms, and also avoiding revolutionary verbiage that obstructs insight into the real relationship of forces and overlooks the difficulties of the struggle.

The Communist parties came into being through a split in the old Social Democratic parties. The split resulted from the fact that the parties had betrayed the proletariat's interests in the War, and then, after the War, had continued their betrayal through an alliance with the bourgeoisie or through a timid and evasive course that evaded every struggle. The slogans and principles of the Communist parties form the only basis on which the working masses can regain unity. They express the requirements of proletarian struggle.

For that reason, it is now the Social Democratic and centrist parties and currents that represent the atomisation and division of the proletariat, while the Communist parties are the force promoting unification. In Germany it was the centrists who broke away from the majority of the party, when this majority declared for communism. Fearing the influence of communism as a force for unity, the Social Democrats and the Independent Social Democrats of Germany

and the Social Democratic trade-union bureaucracy have refused to join with Communists in action to defend the elementary interests of the proletariat. In Czechoslovakia, it was the Social Democrats who split the old party, when they saw the approaching victory of communism. In France, the Longuet supporters broke from the majority of French Socialist workers, while the Communist Party sought the unification of socialist and syndicalist workers. In Britain, it is the reformists and centrists who, fearing the Communists' influence, drive them out of the Labour Party, while again and again sabotaging the unification of workers in struggle against the capitalists. The Communist parties thus become the main force in a process of proletarian unification on the basis of the struggle for its interests. Conscious of this role, they will attract new forces.

5.) Partial struggles and partial demands

The Communist parties can develop only through struggle. Even the smallest Communist parties cannot limit themselves to mere propaganda and agitation. In all the proletariat's mass organisations they must be a vanguard that, by pressing for struggle for all the proletariat's vital necessities, demonstrates how the struggle should be carried out, thus exposing the traitorous character of the non-Communist parties. Only if the Communists are able to take the lead in and promote all the proletariat's practical struggles will they be able to actually win broad masses of the proletariat for a struggle for its dictatorship.

All the Communist parties' agitation and propaganda, indeed all their work must be imbued with the consciousness that no enduring improvement in the conditions of the masses is possible in a capitalist framework. Steps to improve working-class conditions and to reconstruct an economy devastated by capitalism can be taken only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie and smashing the capitalist state. *But this insight must not lead to any postponement of the struggle for the proletariat's immediate and urgent necessities of life until the time when it is capable of erecting its dictatorship.*

The present period is one of capitalist decay and collapse, a time when capitalism is no longer capable of assuring workers of even the life of a well-fed slave. The Social Democracy advances the old Social Democratic programme of peaceful reforms, carried out on the basis and in the framework of bankrupt capitalism, through peaceful means. This is conscious deception of the working masses. Not only is decaying capitalism incapable of providing the workers with relatively humane living conditions, but the Social Democrats and reformists show every day, in every country, that they do not intend to conduct any type of struggle for even the most modest reforms contained in their programme. The demand for socialisation or nationalisation of the most important industries, advanced by the centrist parties, is equally deceptive. The centrists mislead the masses by seeking to convince them that all the most important branches of industry can be torn out of the grip of capitalism without the defeat of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, they seek to divert the workers from the real, living struggle for their immediate needs through hope that branches of industry can be taken over, one

after another, ultimately creating the basis for ‘planned’ economic construction.

In this fashion, they go back to the Social Democratic minimum programme for reforming capitalism, which has been transformed into an obvious counterrevolutionary fraud. Some of the centrists advance a programme to nationalise the coal industry, for example, in part as an expression of Lassalle’s concept that all the proletariat’s energies should be focused on a single demand, in order to convert it into a lever for revolutionary action, whose progress would lead to a struggle for power. What we have here is empty schematism. The working class in all the capitalist states suffers today from so many and such terrible scourges that it is impossible to concentrate the struggle against all these oppressive burdens that weigh it down by focusing on some formula dreamed up in doctrinaire fashion.

The task, by contrast, is to take all the masses’ interests as the starting point for revolutionary struggles that only in their unity form the mighty river of revolution. The Communist parties do not propose a minimum programme for these struggles, one designed to reinforce and improve the rickety structure of capitalism. Instead, destruction of this structure remains their guiding goal and their immediate task. But to achieve this task, the Communist parties have to advance demands whose achievement meets an immediate, urgent need of the working class, and fight for these demands regardless of whether they are compatible with the capitalist profit system.

Communist parties direct their concern not to the viability and competitiveness of capitalist industry or the resilience of capitalist finance but to the dimensions of a deprivation that the proletariat cannot bear and should not have to bear. Demands should express the needs experienced by broad proletarian masses, such that they are convinced they cannot survive unless these demands are achieved. If that is the case, the struggles for these demands will become starting points for the struggle for power.

In place of the minimum programme of the centrists and reformists, the Communist International offers a struggle for the specific demands of the proletariat, as part of a system of demands that, in their totality, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat, and mark out the different stages of the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. Each of these demands gives expression to the needs of the broad masses, even when they do not yet consciously take a stand for proletarian dictatorship.

The struggle for these demands to meet the masses’ essentials of life needs to embrace and mobilise broader and broader numbers. It must be counterposed to defence of the essentials of life for capitalist society. To the extent that this is done, the working class will become aware that for it to live, capitalism must die. This awareness provides the basis for a determination to struggle for [proletarian] dictatorship. Communist parties have the task of broadening, deepening, and unifying the struggles that develop around such specific demands.

Every partial action undertaken by the working masses in order to achieve a partial demand, every significant economic strike, also mobilises the entire

bourgeoisie, which comes down as a class on the side of the threatened group of employers, aiming to render impossible even a limited victory by the proletariat ('Emergency Technical Assistance',⁶ bourgeois strikebreakers in the British railway workers' strike, Fascists). The bourgeoisie mobilises the entire state apparatus for the struggle against the workers (militarisation of the workers in France and Poland, state of emergency during the miners' strike in Britain). The workers who are struggling for partial demands will be automatically forced into a struggle against the bourgeoisie as a whole and its state apparatus.

To the extent that struggles for partial demands and partial struggles by specific groups of workers broaden into an overall working-class struggle against capitalism, the Communist Party must escalate its slogans and generalise them to the point of calling for the enemy's immediate overthrow. In advancing such partial demands, the Communist parties must take care that these slogans, anchored in the needs of the broad masses, do not merely lead them into struggle but are also inherently demands that organise the masses. All specific slogans that arise from the economic needs of the working masses must be steered toward a struggle for control of production – not as a scheme for bureaucratic organisation of the economy under capitalism, but as a struggle against capitalism through factory councils and revolutionary trade unions. Building such organisations and linking them according to branches and centres of industry is the only way to organisationally unify the struggle of the working masses and resist the splitting of the masses by Social Democracy and the trade-union leaders. The factory councils can carry out these tasks only if they arise from struggle for economic goals shared by the broadest masses of workers, only if they create links among all revolutionary sectors of the proletariat – between the Communist parties, the revolutionary workers, and the trade unions that are evolving in a revolutionary direction.

Objections raised against raising such partial demands and accusations of reformism based on partial struggles express the same incapacity to grasp the living conditions for revolutionary action. This weakness was also expressed when certain Communist groups opposed participation in the trade unions and parliamentary activity. The task is not to summon the proletariat for the final struggle but to intensify the actual struggle, the only factor that can lead the proletariat to the struggle for the final goal. The objections to partial demands are groundless and alien to the requirements of revolutionary activity. This is demonstrated conclusively by the fact that even small organisations formed by the so-called Left Communists as places of refuge for their pure teachings have been required to advance partial slogans in an attempt to attract larger numbers of workers into the struggle than those immediately around them or to take part in the struggle of broader masses in the hopes of influencing them.

The revolutionary essence of the present period consists precisely in the fact that

⁶Emergency Technical Assistance (Technische Nothilfe) was an organisation of strikebreakers formed by a German government decree of 30 September 1919 with the stated purpose of maintaining essential services.

even the most modest subsistence needs of the working masses are incompatible with the existence of capitalist society. It follows that even the struggle for quite modest demands expands into a struggle for communism.

The capitalists utilise the constantly expanding army of the unemployed to pressure organised workers by reducing wages. The cowardly Social Democrats, Independents, and official trade-union leaders hold themselves aloof from the unemployed, regarding them only as recipients of government and trade-union charity, and categorising them politically as the lumpenproletariat. Communists must understand that under present conditions the army of unemployed is a revolutionary factor of immense importance. Communists must take the leadership of this army. Through the pressure of the unemployed on the trade unions, Communists must hasten the unions' renewal and, above all, free them from their traitorous leaders. By uniting the unemployed with the proletarian vanguard in the struggle for socialist revolution, the Communist Party will restrain the most revolutionary and impatient forces of the proletariat from isolated acts of desperation. They will render these forces capable, in favourable conditions, of giving effective support to a sector of the working class that goes on the attack. They will extend these conflicts beyond their initial framework and make them the starting point for a decisive offensive. In short, they will transform the mass of unemployed from a reserve army of industry into an active army of revolution.

By energetically taking up the cause of this layer of workers and stepping down into the depths of the working class, the Communist parties are not acting on behalf of one layer of workers against another but defending the interests of the working class as a whole. The counterrevolutionary leaders betray this cause in order to serve the momentary interests of the labour aristocracy. As the number of jobless and part-time workers grows, their interests become those of the working class as a whole, to which the passing interests of the labour aristocracy must be subordinated. Those who defend the interests of the labour aristocracy, counterposing them to those of the unemployed or simply abandoning them, are tearing the working class apart, to counterrevolutionary effect. The Communist Party, as tribune of the interests of the working class as a whole, cannot limit itself to recognising these interests and asserting them propagandistically. To defend these interests effectively, the party must, under certain conditions, lead the bulk of the most oppressed and destitute workers against the resistance of the labour aristocracy.

6.) Preparing the struggle

The character of the transitional period makes it the duty of all Communist parties to increase to the utmost their readiness for struggle. Every individual struggle can lead to a contest for power. To heighten this readiness, the party's entire agitation must take the form of an impassioned attack on capitalist society. Through this agitation, it must succeed in linking up with the broadest popular masses, speaking in a language that can convince them they are being led by a

vanguard engaged in a genuine struggle for power. We do not need house organs proving theoretically that communism is correct. Rather our newspapers and appeals must sound the alarm for proletarian revolution.

Communists' activity in parliament does not aim to discuss with the enemy or convince him but to ruthlessly and pitilessly expose him and the agents of the bourgeoisie. It must arouse the will to struggle of the working masses and draw the semi-proletarian petty-bourgeois layers to the proletariat. Our organisational work in both the trade unions and the party must not aim to consolidate the structure and increase the membership in mechanical fashion; it must rather be inspired with awareness of the coming struggles. In all its activity and its organisational forms, the party must personify the will to struggle. Only then will it be capable of carrying out its task at the moment when conditions for broader action campaigns are present.

Where the Communist Party represents a mass force, with influence extending beyond its own structures to the broader layers of workers, it has the duty, through its deeds, to awaken the working masses to struggle. Large mass parties cannot rest content with criticising the failings of other parties and with comparing their demands to those of the Communists. As a mass party, they carry the responsibility to develop the revolution. As the conditions of the working masses become more and more unbearable, the Communist parties must do everything necessary to bring the working masses into a struggle for their interests.

In Western Europe and the United States, where the working masses are organised in trade unions and political parties, spontaneous movements are therefore for the time being quite infrequent. Given that fact, Communist parties are obliged to attempt, by mustering their strength in the trade unions and increasing their pressure on other parties based on the working masses, to enable the proletariat's struggle for its immediate interests to unfold on a unified basis. If the non-Communist parties are forced to join the struggle, the Communists have the task of preparing the working masses from the start for the possibility of betrayal by these parties in a subsequent stage of struggle. Communists should seek to intensify the conflict and drive it forward. The VKPD's Open Letter can serve as a model of a starting point for campaigns. If pressure by the Communist Party in the trade unions and the press is not enough to achieve a unified front in the struggle, the Communist Party is duty-bound to seek to lead large sectors of the working masses on its own.

Through this autonomous policy, the most active and class-conscious sector of the proletariat seeks to defend the class's vital interests. For this policy to achieve success in arousing the backward masses, the struggle's goals must grow out of the specific situation and be comprehensible to the masses. They must recognise these goals as their own, even if they are not yet capable of struggling for them.

The Communist Party should not limit itself, however, to defending the prole-

tariat against threatening dangers and the blows raining down on it. In a time of world revolution, the Communist Party is essentially a party of attack, of assault on capitalist society. It is obligated to broaden every defensive struggle of any depth and breadth into an attack on capitalist society. It is also obliged to do everything possible, when conditions are appropriate, to lead the working masses directly into this struggle. Anyone who objects to a policy of offensive against capitalist society is violating the principles of communism.

Taking the offensive depends, first, on an intensification of struggles, both nationally and internationally, within the bourgeois camp itself. When struggles within the bourgeois camp have grown to proportions that make it possible that the working class will be facing divided enemy forces, the party has to seize the initiative, in order, after careful political and – if possible – organisational preparation, to lead the masses into struggle. The second condition for offensive attacks on a broad scale is an intensive ferment in the decisive sectors of the working class that provides grounds for hope that the class will be ready to struggle against the capitalist government in unified fashion. When the movement is growing, the slogans of the struggle should become more comprehensive. Similarly, if the movement is receding, the Communist leadership of the struggle has the duty of leading the masses out of the struggle in as orderly and unified a fashion as possible.

Whether the Communist Party is on the defensive or the offensive depends on the specific circumstances. The most important condition is that the party be imbued with a spirit of readiness for struggle, overcoming through the struggle itself any centrist passivity that would necessarily sidetrack the party's propaganda into semi-reformism. Mass Communist parties must be characterised by a constant readiness for struggle. This is true not only because mass Communist parties, as such, have an obligation to struggle, but because of the entire present situation, one of capitalist decay and increasing destitution of the masses. The task is to shorten the period of decay, so that it does not destroy the material foundations for communism and wear down the energy of the working masses.

7.) The lessons of the March Action

The March Action was forced on the VKPD by the government's attack on the proletariat of Central Germany.

In this, the VKPD's first great struggle since its foundation, the party made a number of errors. The most serious of these was that it did not clearly stress the defensive character of the struggle. Instead, its call for an offensive was utilised by the unscrupulous enemies of the proletariat – the bourgeoisie, the SPD, and the USPD – to denounce the VKPD to the proletariat for instigating a putsch. This error was compounded by a number of party members who contended that, under present conditions, the offensive represented the VKPD's main method of struggle. The party opposed this error in its newspapers and through its chair, Comrade Brandler.

The Third Congress of the Communist International considers that the March Action was a step forward. The March Action was a heroic struggle by hundreds of thousands of proletarians against the bourgeoisie. And by courageously taking the lead in the defence of the workers of Central Germany, the VKPD showed that it is the party of Germany's revolutionary proletariat. The congress believes that the VKPD will be all the more successful in carrying out mass actions if, in the future, it better adapts its slogans for the struggle to actual conditions, studies these conditions closely, and carries out the actions in unified fashion.

In order to carefully weigh the possibilities for struggle, the VKPD needs to take into account the facts and considerations that point to the difficulties of a proposed action and work out carefully how they may be countered. But once the party leadership has decided on an action, all comrades must abide by the party's decisions and carry out this action. Criticism of an action should be voiced only after it has concluded, and then only within the party structures and in its newspapers, and after taking into consideration the party's situation in relationship to the class enemy. Since Levi disregarded these self-evident requirements of party discipline and conditions for criticism of the party, the congress approves his expulsion from the party and considers any political collaboration with him by members of the Communist International to be impermissible.⁷

8.) Forms and methods of direct struggle

The forms and methods of struggle, its extent, and questions of offensive or defensive action are all dependent on specific conditions that cannot be created arbitrarily. Previous revolutionary experience indicate that there are different forms of partial actions.

1. Partial actions by specific layers of the working class, such as the actions of miners and railway workers in Germany and Britain, of agricultural workers, and so on.
2. Partial actions by the working class as a whole for limited goals, such as the action during the Kapp Putsch and the action of British miners against military intervention by the British government in the Russian-Polish War.

Such partial struggles may expand to encompass a single district, an entire country, or several countries at once.

In the course of a revolution in a single country, all these forms of struggle will take place, one after another. Although the Communist Party cannot, of course, reject territorially limited partial actions, it should direct its efforts to transforming each major local struggle of the proletariat into a generalised struggle. Just as the party is obliged to defend the workers in struggle in a particular branch of industry by involving, if possible, the entire working class, so too it is obliged, when workers are in struggle in a single locality, to

⁷This sentence is omitted from the Russian text.

defend them, if possible, by bringing the workers of other industrial centres into struggle. Revolutionary experience shows that broadening the scope of the struggle improves the chances of victory. In countering the developing world revolution, the bourgeoisie relies not only on the White Guards but also on the fact that the working class is atomised and that it is only very gradually forming a unified front. When the proletarian masses engaged in struggle are more numerous, and the field of battle is greater in scope, the enemy is forced to divide and split up his forces. Even if a working-class sector rushing to aid another is, for the moment, not capable of committing all its forces, the mere fact that it moves into action compels the capitalists to divide their military strength, since they cannot know the extent to which the participation of a second proletarian sector will broaden and intensify the struggle.

During the past year, in which the capitalist offensive against labour became more and more shameless, we noted that the bourgeoisie, in every country, was not content with the normal pace of work by its government agencies. It formed legal and semi-legal White Guard organisations, enjoying governmental protection, which came to play a decisive role in every major economic confrontation.

In Germany, there is the government-supported Orgesch, which included a wide range of parties, from Stinnes to Scheidemann.

In Italy, there are the Fascists, whose feats of gangsterism have brought about a sharp shift in the mood of the bourgeoisie, giving the impression that the political relationship of forces has changed completely.

In Britain, the Lloyd George government, faced with a strike danger, turned for protection to volunteers charged with defending property and the 'right to work', first by replacing the strikers and ultimately by destroying their organisation.

In France the leading and semi-official newspaper, *Le Temps*, clearly inspired by the Millerand clique, engages in energetic propaganda to develop the already existing Civic Leagues and to transplant the methods of Fascism onto French soil.

In the United States, the groups of strikebreakers and assassins that have long supplemented the system of American freedom have now received a leadership body – the American Legion – recruited from the riffraff of the War.⁸

The bourgeoisie boasts of its power and stability, yet its leading governments are fully aware that it has received only a breathing spell. Under present circumstances, every massive strike tends to become a civil war and an immediate struggle for power.

In the proletarian struggle against the capitalist offensive, it is the duty of Communists to march in the forefront and promote understanding of the basic

⁸Formed in 1919, the American Legion's founding objectives called for maintenance of law and order and 100 percent Americanism. A resolution passed by its founding convention called for Congress to 'pass a bill for immediately deporting every one of those Bolsheviks or Industrial Workers of the World'.

revolutionary tasks among those in struggle. In addition, Communists are obliged to rally the best and most active forces in the factories and trade unions to create their own workers' contingents and defence organisations in order to resist the Fascists and deter the *jeunesse dorée* [gilded youth] of the bourgeoisie from harassing strikers.

Given the extraordinary importance of counterrevolutionary gangs, the Communist Party must devote attention – particularly through its trade-union cells – to setting up a special information and communication service to keep a close eye on the White Guard fighting detachments, their staff, their inventory of weapons, and their links with the police, the press, and the political parties. This service must work out a detailed plan for defence and counterattack.

The Communist Party must instil the broadest layers of the proletariat, through word and deed, with an understanding that every economic or political conflict – given the right combination of circumstances – will develop into a civil war, during which the task of the proletariat is to take state power.

Faced with the fury of white terror and white travesties of justice, the Communist Party must ensure that the proletariat understands the futility, during a time of uprising, of appeals to the enemy for clemency. Instead, acts of organised popular and proletarian justice are needed to settle accounts with those persecuting the proletariat. But at times when the proletariat is still only coming together and must be mobilised through agitation, political campaigns, and strikes, the use of weapons and acts of sabotage is justified only when this blocks the transport of troops sent against masses of proletarians in struggle or captures strategic positions from the enemy in direct combat. Acts of individual terror may represent symptoms of revolutionary indignation that must be defended against the lynch justice of the bourgeoisie and its Social Democratic lackeys. However, they are in no way conducive to raising the proletariat's level of organisation and readiness for struggle, because they awaken in the masses the illusion that the heroic deeds of individuals can replace the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

9.) Relations with the proletarian middle layers

In Western Europe there is no other class that could, alongside the proletariat, become the decisive factor in world revolution as happened in Russia with the peasantry, which was destined for that role from the outset by war and hunger for land. But in Western Europe, *sectors of the peasantry, large sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and a broad layer of the so-called new middle class* (office workers, etc.), are subjected to increasingly intolerable living conditions. The pressure of inflation, the lack of housing, and the insecurity of their lives generates a ferment among these masses that jolts them out of political inactivity and draws them into the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution. The bankruptcy of imperialism in the defeated countries and of pacifism and social reformism in the victor countries drives a sector of these middle layers into

the camp of open counterrevolution, while another sector rallies to the camp of revolution. The Communist Party is obliged to devote constant attention to these layers.

Winning the small peasantry to the ideas of communism, plus winning and organising the agricultural workers, are among the most important preconditions for the victory of proletarian dictatorship. These tasks enable the revolution to extend out from the industrial centres into the countryside and create bases from which to resolve the question of food – a life-and-death challenge for the revolution.

Winning over substantial layers of the commercial and technical employees, the lower and middle civil servants, and intellectuals would make it much easier for the proletarian dictatorship to master the technical and organisational challenge of economic and government administration during the transition from capitalism to communism. This can sow discord in the ranks of the enemy and break through the isolation of the proletariat in the eyes of public opinion. Communist parties must pay close attention to the ferment among petty-bourgeois layers and find appropriate ways to utilise such forces, even if they are not free of petty-bourgeois illusions. Intellectuals and office employees who are free of such illusions should be recruited to the proletarian front and utilised to draw in the discontented petty-bourgeois masses.

As a result of economic decay and the resulting breakdown of government finances, the bourgeoisie itself is forced to consign the foundation of its state apparatus, the lower and middle civil servants, to increasing destitution. The economic struggles of such layers directly affect the structure of the bourgeois state. These layers may repeatedly be appeased, for a time, but in the long run the bourgeoisie will find it impossible to maintain its organisational foundation, just as it is impossible for capitalism to maintain the physical existence of wage labour while safeguarding its system of exploitation. The Communist parties take up energetically the economic needs of the lower and middle civil service, without regard for the state of public finances. In so doing, they carry out effective preparatory work for the destruction of bourgeois state institutions and take preparatory steps for building the proletarian state.

10.) Coordinating action internationally

In order to rally all the forces of the Communist International to break the resistance of the international counterrevolution, and to hasten the revolutionary victory, we must strive with all our energy for unified international leadership of the revolutionary struggle.

The Communist International requires that all Communist parties lend each other energetic mutual support in struggle. The developing economic struggles demand, whenever possible, immediate intervention by the proletariat of other countries. Communists in the trade unions have to make every effort to block not only the shipment of strikebreakers but exports to countries in which an important

segment of the proletariat is in struggle. In cases where the capitalist government of one country uses force to plunder or subjugate another, Communist parties must not be satisfied with protests but must do everything possible to obstruct the invasion by its own government.

The Third Congress of the Communist International welcomes the demonstrations by the *French Communists* as a start toward escalating their campaign against the role of French capitalism as a counterrevolutionary exploiter. The congress reminds them of their duty to explain energetically to French soldiers in the occupied territories their role as thugs of French capitalism and encourage them to resist the shameful duties assigned to them. The French Communist Party has the task of making the French people aware that, by tolerating the formation of a French occupation army imbued with nationalist feelings, it is tying its own noose. Troops are being trained in the occupied territories who will then stand ready to drown in blood the revolutionary movement of the French working class. The presence of black troops on French soil and in the occupied territories poses special tasks before the French Communist Party.⁹ It gives the French party an opportunity to make contact with these colonial slaves and explain to them that they are serving their oppressors and exploiters. It must call on them to rise up in struggle against the government of the colonisers and seek, through these soldiers, to link up with the peoples of France's colonies.

The *German Communist Party* has to show the German proletariat, through action, that a struggle against exploitation by Entente capitalism is impossible unless the capitalist government is overthrown. This government makes a great outcry against the Entente, while acting as overseer and gang boss for Entente capitalism. The VKPD must demonstrate through impetuous and ruthless struggle against the German government that it is not seeking a way out for German imperialism, but aims rather to sweep away its ruins. This is the only way to heighten the will to struggle among the proletarian masses of France.

Before the world working class, the Communist International denounces the call of Entente capitalism for reparations as a campaign of plunder against the working masses of the defeated countries. As for the attempts of the Longuet current in France and the Independents in Germany to find the form of robbery that would be least painful for the working masses, the Communist International brands this as a cowardly capitulation to the sharks of Entente finance. It shows the proletariat of France and Germany that the only way to rebuild the devastated regions and compensate widows and orphans is by calling on the proletarians of both countries to struggle jointly against their exploiters.

The German working class can help the Russian workers in their difficult struggle only by hastening, through victorious struggle, the unification of agricultural Russia with industrial Germany. Communist parties of all countries whose troops are taking part in the subjugation and partitioning of *Turkey* must do everything

⁹During and after World War I, many troops from France's African colonies fought in the French army, numbering some 200,000 by the War's end. Some 125,000 were used in combat.

possible to win these troops to revolution. The Communist parties of the *Balkan countries* have the duty of committing the strength of their mass parties to build a Balkan Communist Federation, which will do everything possible to stand up to nationalism in order to hasten the day of victory. The victory of Communist parties in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia will bring with it the collapse of the shameful Horthy government and the elimination of Romania's boyar regime, broadening the base for rural revolution in the most developed neighbouring countries.

The outstanding responsibility of Communists internationally remains, now as before, *consistent support to Soviet Russia*. They must not only react energetically to every attack on Soviet Russia, but also struggle vigorously to eliminate all the barriers erected by capitalist states in the path of Soviet trade with the world market and with all the world's peoples. Only when Soviet Russia succeeds in restoring its economy and lessening the poverty created by three years of imperialist war and three years of civil war, only when it succeeds in raising the working capacity of its people, will it be in a position to assist the victorious proletarian states of the West with foodstuffs and raw materials and protect them from strangulation by US capitalism.

The Communist International's world-political task entails not just holding demonstrations when important events occur but also *steadily increasing international ties among Communists* and conducting extended common struggles as a unified whole. There is no way to predict where the proletariat will achieve a breakthrough. Perhaps it will be in capitalist Germany, where the proletariat is under extreme pressure from the German and Entente bourgeoisies, facing the choice between winning or perishing. Or perhaps it is in the agrarian South-East or in Italy, where the disintegration of the bourgeoisie is very far advanced. That is why the Communist International has the duty of intensifying to the utmost its efforts in all sectors of world proletarian struggle to support the decisive struggles of every section of the International with all available means. When major conflicts break out in a country, this support takes the form above all of heightening and bringing to a head the internal conflicts in all other countries.

11.) The decline of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals

During its third year, the Communist International was witness to the further political decline of the Social Democratic parties and reformist trade-union leadership, in which they were unmasked and exposed. At the same time, however, it was a year of efforts to unite them organisationally and move them into attack against the Communist International.

In *Britain* the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions showed during the coal strike that their task is simply to consciously destroy the growing unity of proletarians and to consciously defend the capitalists against the workers. The breakdown of the Triple Alliance provides proof that the reformist trade-union leaders have no intention even of improving the status of the working class in a

capitalist framework.

In *Germany*, the Social Democratic Party showed, after it left the government,¹⁰ that it is incapable of even the type of agitational opposition carried out by the old Social Democracy before the War. Each of its oppositional gestures was accompanied by efforts to avoid unleashing any working-class struggles. Although in supposed opposition on a national level, the Social Democracy, ruling in Prussia, organised the military campaign of the White Guards there against the Central German miners, with the conscious aim of provoking them before the Communists had arrayed themselves for battle. Given the German bourgeoisie's capitulation to the Entente, given the evident fact that it can carry out the measures demanded by the Entente only by creating absolutely intolerable living conditions for the German proletariat, the German Social Democracy re-entered the government, in order to help the bourgeoisie enslave the German proletarians.

In *Czechoslovakia*, the Social Democracy is mobilising the army and police in order to rob Communist workers of their buildings and institutions. The *Polish* Socialist Party's deceptive policies aid Pilsudski in organising his campaign of pillage against Soviet Russia. It helps his government throw thousands of Communists into prison by seeking to drive them out of the trade unions, where – despite all persecution – they can gather the support of growing masses. The *Belgian Social Democrats* remain in the government that is taking part in the complete enslavement of the German people.

The *centrist parties and groups of the Two-and-a-Half International* are no less blatant in showing themselves to be parties of counterrevolution. The German Independents curtly reject the call of the German Communist Party, despite differences of principle, to conduct a joint struggle against the worsening of working-class living conditions. During the March struggles, the Independents firmly supported the White Guard government against the Central German workers, helping to assure the victory of white terror and denouncing the proletarian vanguard before bourgeois public opinion as robbers, plunderers, and lumpenproletarians. And after that, they hypocritically complain about the white terror. Although they pledged at the Halle convention to support Soviet Russia, their newspapers are conducting a slanderous campaign against the Russian Soviet republic. They align themselves with the entire Russian counterrevolution, with Wrangel, Milyukov, and Burtsev, by supporting the Kronstadt uprising against the Soviet republic, a rebellion that represented a new policy of the international counterrevolution against Soviet Russia. By overthrowing the Communist Party of Russia, they seek to destroy the soul, the heart, the skeleton, and the nervous system of the Soviet republic, in order then to be able to easily dispose of its body. The *Longuet group in France* lines up with the German Independents in this campaign and thereby, as we have seen,

¹⁰The SPD resigned from the government in June 1920 after an electoral defeat. It re-entered the government in May 1921, joining a coalition cabinet headed by Catholic Centre Party leader Joseph Wirth.

links up with the French counterrevolution, which has been shown to be the initiator of this new policy against Russia. In *Italy* the policy of the centre group of Serrati and D'Aragona is to evade every struggle. This course has inspired the bourgeoisie to new courage, enabling it to use the Fascist white gangs to dominate the life of the entire country.

Although the centrist and Social Democratic parties differ only in phraseology, no union of the two groups in a single International has yet taken place. True, the centrist parties came together in February in their own international association with their own political platform and statutes. This Two-and-a-Half International seeks to shuttle verbally between the slogans of democracy and proletarian dictatorship. They provide the capitalist class in each country with much practical assistance by cultivating moods of indecision among the working class. Moreover, despite the devastation carried out by the world bourgeoisie and the subjugation of a large part of the globe by the victorious capitalist countries of the Entente, they pass on to the bourgeoisie blueprints of how to carry out exploitation without unleashing the power of the popular masses.

The Two-and-a-Half International shares with the Second International a common fear of the power of communism. The centrists' difference, however, lies simply in the fact that they also fear that a clear formulation of their point of view would cost them the rest of their influence on masses who may still be confused but have revolutionary sentiments. The political equivalence of the reformists and centrists is expressed through their common defence of the Amsterdam trade-union International, the last bulwark of the world bourgeoisie. Wherever they have influence in the trade unions, the centrists unite with the reformists and the trade-union bureaucracy in struggle against the Communists. They respond to Communist attempts to win the unions to revolution by splitting the unions. This demonstrates that, just like the Social Democrats, they are determined opponents of proletarian struggle and pacesetters for counterrevolution.

The Communist International must carry out, as before, a resolute struggle against not only the Second International and the Amsterdam trade-union International but also the Two-and-a-Half International. This unrelenting struggle shows the masses, every day, that the Social Democrats and centrists are not only unwilling to fight to overthrow capitalism, but that they are also unwilling to fight for the most elementary and urgent needs of the working class. Only in this way can the Communist International overcome the influence of these agents of the bourgeoisie over the working class. The Communist International can bring this struggle to a successful conclusion only by rooting out any centrist tendencies or impulses in its own ranks and demonstrating in its daily practice that it is the International of Communist deeds and not of Communist phrases and theory.

The Communist International is the only organisation of the international proletariat whose principles equip it to lead the struggle against capitalism. The task is to reinforce its inner unity, its international leadership and its activity in such a fashion that it can genuinely carry out the aim stated in its Statutes: 'To

organise the common activity of the proletarians of different countries who strive for one single goal: overthrowing capitalism and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and an international Soviet republic.¹¹

¹¹In Riddell (ed.), *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1991) vol. 2, pp. 696 – 7.