

GEORGI DIMITROV
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DIMITROV

SELECTED
WORKS

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GEORGI
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WORKS
IN THREE
VOLUMES

DIMITROV

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VOLUME 1

SOFIA PRESS



CONTENTS

Invaluable National Capital	9
After May Day	13
The Need of Trade Unions in Bulgaria and their Organization	19
Bulgaria's Economic Development	36
The Budapest Resolution	44
Towards Unity!	49
Against Military Credits	53
The Significance of the Second Balkan Conference	62
The Small Nations	66
The Right Road	69
No Pardon, But Amnesty	71
Preface to the Pamphlet <i>Lenin to the Workers in Europe and America</i>	72
The Tasks of the Trade Unions	75
Third Anniversary of the Russian Revolution	93
Moscow or Amsterdam	97
A Big Stride Forward	101
The Unions and Proletarian Dictatorship	105
Address to the Fourth All-Russian Trade Union Congress on Behalf of the International Council of Red Trade Unions	109
The Trade Union Movement in the Balkans	112
On the Eve of the International Red Trade Union Week	118
In Defence of Soviet Russia Against the Protection of Wrangel's Troops in Bulgaria	123
The Capitalist Offensive	125
Statement at the Tenth Session of the Second Profintern Congress	128
The United Workers' Front	131
Which Way?	137
The United Front and the Offensive of Capital	141
The United Front and Bourgeois Reaction	145
The United Front and the Political Crisis	149
Fear of a United Labour Front	152
United Front or Class Collaboration	156
United Front or Political Speculation	161

Their Front	165
Which Is Better?	169
Now or Never	174
Open Letter to the Bulgarian Workers and Peasants ..	178
After the Uprising	185
Two Appeals to the Working People throughout the World	190
To the Working Masses the World Over, to the Workers and Peasants in the Balkan States	193
Who Rules Bulgaria?	196
What Are the Prospects?	200
The United Front	204
Lenin and the Revolutionary Workers' Movement in the Balkans	207
A Socialist Balkan Conference	210
The Bulgarian Question and the Comintern	215
The Bloody Drive against the Labour Movement	223
The Bulgarian Lesson	247
The Trial against the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Com- munist Party	274
The Situation in Bulgaria	278
The Struggle for Trade Union Unity in Bulgaria	283
The October Revolution and the Balkans	292
Dimitar Blagoev	299
Measures for Combating Fascism and the Yellow Trade Unions	302
The Main Tasks of the Balkan Communist Parties	312
A Base Lie about the Romanian Communists in the Vienna <i>Arbeiter Zeitung</i>	319
Fascism in the Balkans	322
Imperialism in the Balkans	327
Statement to the Police Inquiring Magistrates	332
To the Examining Magistrate	336
To Dr. Paul Teichert	337
To Mr. Bünger, President of the 4th Penal Department of the Supreme Court	339
To Dr. Paul Teichert	340
Dimitrov's Notes for His First Speech in Court	342
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on September 26, 1933	348
To Dr. Bünger, President of the 4th Penal Department of the Supreme Court	351
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on October 11, 1933	353
To Dr. Bünger, President of the 4th Penal Department of the	

Supreme Court	355
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on October 23, 1933	357
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on October 31, 1933	360
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on November 4, 1933	362
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on November 8, 1933	367
From the Verbatim Report of the Court Session on November 13, 1933	375
To Dr. Bünger, President of the 4th Penal Department of the Supreme Court	378
Minutes of the Speech Before the Court	380
Remarks on the Sentence	405
An Interview with Dimitrov	407
To the Minister of Home Affairs Dr. Frick	409
Interview with Representatives of the Soviet and Foreign Press	411
We Shall Again Be in Soviet Germany	420
Letter to the Austrian Workers	423
Can Fascism Win in France?	439
What the Prime Minister Has Not Forgotten	442
On a Turn of the Party	445
Notes	449

INVALUABLE NATIONAL CAPITAL

TODOR ZHIVKOV

The name of Georgi Dimitrov is surrounded by an aureole not only in the minds of the Bulgarian working class in which he was born, reared and educated, not only in the minds of the Bulgarian people, with the heroic history of whom he is forever indissolubly linked. Georgi Dimitrov's name is one of those great names in the annals of the revolutionary struggles of the world proletariat, which the communists, the working people and all progressive people throughout the world pronounce with profound respect and devotion.

Having joined the ranks of the Bulgarian workers' movement as a young printing worker, nurtured with the ideas of Botev and Levski and the Russian revolutionary democrats, having mastered and thoroughly assimilated the ideas of scientific socialism, Georgi Dimitrov from his earliest youth merged his personal destiny with the destinies of the proletarian emancipation. The times were propitious for a versatile development of his titanic personality. A son and militant of the Bulgarian working class movement and of the Party of the Bulgarian Left-wing Socialists, a disciple and close comrade-in-arms of such prominent Marxists as Dimiter Blagoev and Georgi Kirkov, Georgi Dimitrov naturally and in a law-governed manner became the universally acknowledged and beloved leader of the Bulgarian communists and the Bulgarian working class, of the Bulgarian working people. Brought up amid the left-wing socialists, educated in the spirit of their great revolutionary virtues, Dimitrov became profoundly aware of the weaknesses and shortcomings of left-wing socialism and stood at the helm of the struggle for the Party's rearmament with the ideas of Leninism, for its bolshevization. Under his leadership the Party drew lessons from the defeats of the Vlodaya, the June and September 1923 Uprisings, overcame defeatist, ultra-leftist and sectarian trends, and embarked upon a Leninist

course. Under his leadership the Party forged a worker-peasant alliance, established a popular front during the years of the anti-fascist struggle, rallied the democratic forces in the Fatherland Front and led the long struggles of the Bulgarian working people to the great victory of the September 9, 1944 socialist revolution.

Bulgaria was fortunate in having in those stormy years such a tested and wise leader as Georgi Dimitrov at the helm of the Party and the state. Surrounded by the devotion of the communists and the working people, he directed with a firm and resolute hand the nation along the road to socialism. Under his leadership the people's rule was consolidated, the resistance of the internal and international counter-revolution was broken and the road to the future was cleared. At the Fifth Congress of the Party Georgi Dimitrov gave a theoretical elucidation and practical solution to the major problems set by Bulgaria's social development during the transition period from capitalism to socialism.

Today, when we say that even without Dimitrov we are marching forward along the Dimitrov road, we have in mind that Georgi Dimitrov's road is that of the all-conquering Leninist teaching; we have in mind our fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the constructive application of the laws of socialist construction with due account taken of local conditions and of the international situation, as well as of the epochal experience of the CPSU and the Soviet Union. A brilliant reaffirmation of this truth is the fact that under the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party the Bulgarian working people fulfilled Georgi Dimitrov's behest and in 15 to 20 years accomplished what it took other peoples and countries under different conditions a whole century to accomplish.

At present the Party and country are faced with new important tasks. The Party programme adopted at the Tenth Congress set the task and mapped out the road of the construction of a developed socialist society in Bulgaria, the historical bridgehead to communism. The Party programme embodies the constructive experience, collective mind and wisdom of the Party, its energy and will to lead Bulgaria to the front ranks not only in the socio-political field, but also in the sphere of material production, in the promotion of science and technology, in education and culture. True to the great cause of Georgi Dimitrov, heirs of his revolutionary thought and indomitable spirit, the Bulgarian com-

munists will transform the bright prospects of the programme into a splendid reality.

An embodiment of the best qualities of the Bulgarian communists, Georgi Dimitrov stood out as one of the great leaders of the international communist and workers movement. His unshakeable conviction in the just struggle of the world proletariat, his devotion to the communist ideas and profound attachment to the Soviet Union — the country of workers and peasants, his proud courage in the face of the class enemy, demonstrated by the great son of the Bulgarian working people during the Reichstag Fire Trial, revealed his colossal figure in vivid relief, turning his name into a symbol and banner of the anti-fascist struggle in all continents. Having grown up as a proletarian worker in the atmosphere of the Bulgarian workers' movement where the problems of proletarian unity and the alliance of the working class with the peasants and the other non-proletarian labour strata were of vital importance, having accumulated tremendous theoretical and practical experience in the anti-fascist struggle both on a national and on an international scale, having become acquainted with the problems of the anti-fascist struggle in France and Germany, in Yugoslavia and Austria, in the Baltic countries and Poland, and immediately experienced the tragic defeat of the disunited working class in Germany, Georgi Dimitrov became a prominent theoretician and builder of the united proletarian and popular anti-fascist front, a consistent fighter for a new Leninist course of the world communist movement.

The Bulgarian Georgi Dimitrov revealed himself as such a figure at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, as an 'anti-fascist tribune, a brilliant and bold bolshevik, a strategist of the struggle against fascism, the glorious leader of the Communist International', as he was characterized in the Pravda of August 14, 1935.

The ideological weapons forged at the Seventh Comintern Congress with the closest participation of Georgi Dimitrov stood the test of history during the anti-fascist resistance in the years of the Second World War. In our days, enriched and further developed by the three conferences of the representatives of the international communist and workers' movement and by the experience of the individual parties, these weapons find ever wider application in the struggle of the forces of peace, socialism and

progress in all countries. It is no accident that the representatives of the fraternal parties repeatedly and on different occasions expressed their profound gratitude to the 'far-sighted teaching of the great teacher and hero of the anti-fascist struggle, Georgi Dimitrov', to the advice received from the great son of the Bulgarian people, to his wise words which, as they say, 'serve us as a guide in our struggle'.

Educated in the ranks of the Bulgarian left-wing socialists, Georgi Dimitrov emerged as one of the outstanding and most consistent internationalists of the epoch. An ardent patriot, boundlessly devoted to the interests of the people, he became convinced of the indivisibility of the class struggle on an international scale, of the unity of the national detachments of the working class as a vitally important condition for the triumph of socialism on a national and international scale. Boldly and categorically, with a daring typical of a great revolutionary, Dimitrov defined the attitude towards the October Revolution and towards the Soviet Union as a basic criterion, a touchstone for checking the sincerity and honesty of every militant of the workers' movement, of every workers' party and organization of working people, of every democrat.

The Bulgarian Communist Party unswervingly follows and develops the internationalist traditions of Georgi Dimitrov. Incessantly it consolidates and strengthens fraternal friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, combats the deviations and retreats from Marxism-Leninism, fights for the unity and cohesion of the international communist and workers' movement, for unity of action of all forces of the world anti-imperialist front. The high international prestige which Georgi Dimitrov won for our Party was preserved and enhanced during the two decades after his death by the successful socialist construction in Bulgaria, by the consistent Marxist-Leninist policy pursued by the Party, by its clearcut and unshakeable internationalism. The greetings of the representatives of the great number of fraternal parties who attended the Tenth Congress once again clearly and with full force demonstrated that the world communist and workers' movement sees in the person of the Bulgarian communists of today loyal successors of Georgi Dimitrov's ideas and cause.

The life, thoughts and work of Georgi Dimitrov are our invaluable national capital.

AFTER MAY DAY

This year Labour Day was celebrated with rare impressiveness in all our bigger towns. The mass evacuation of workshops and factories, the non-appearance of the daily press and of various productions, the participation in the May Day demonstrations of a considerable number of workers who until yesterday were indifferent to the struggles of their organized comrades – all this lends to this year's May Day an unprecedented demonstrative and agitational character.

On this historically and politically great day we were fortunate not only to manifest our class solidarity and proletarian demands together with the whole world proletariat, not only to demonstrate against the existing capitalist regime, but also to count our ranks, to measure our forces and to review the road travelled, fortifying our conviction that the workers' socialist movement in Bulgaria, despite all ups and downs, is properly developing and forging ahead.

Thanks to the persistent and energetic propaganda carried on among workers during the past year, our Party and trade union organizations in Sofia, Plovdiv, Roussé, Sliven, Pleven and other major proletarian centres can boast of considerable achievements in their educational and organizational work, as well as in their drive to improve working conditions and to clear the road of the workers' movement from alien influences and from those barriers which the bourgeoisie is systematically trying to set up. Under the influence of the workers' socialist organizations the frequent strikes, which at first were only a spontaneous manifestation of the seething dissatisfaction among the workers against unrestricted exploitation, have

recently been assuming the character of an organized struggle for better working conditions and of a fine school for their class education. Although their practical results are very limited, they have been most useful in organizing and educating the workers. The number of workers taking an active part in the political struggles under the banner of our Party is steadily growing. The December demonstration against the crafts law and the mass workers' protest meetings on February 19 for the application, extension and addenda of the Law on Woman and Child Labour testify to the growing political consciousness of the workers. On the very morrow of May Day this could also be noticed in the struggle of the Sofia printers against the yellow press, in the person of its typical representative, the *Vecherna Poshta* (The Evening Post) of Shangov.

When pointing out these successes, however, one should not forget that although quite a bit has been done and achieved by our organizations, it is still far from sufficient. Much more is required to have them reach the degree of intensity, consciousness and discipline necessary for a victorious organization of the forthcoming workers' struggles.

The percentage of trade union members in Bulgaria is very small. Hundreds of workers, men and women, are still outside the reach of socialist propaganda, and have not yet been inspired by the idea of organization and organizational struggle. The number of trade union members at the *factories* is insignificant. There are only a *few women workers* in all our trade unions. Furthermore, there are trade unions, mainly in Sofia and Varna, which constitute a special union headed not by the Workers' Social Democratic Party but by some petty bourgeois faction. Many of our trade unions are weak organizationally and financially, owing to which they perform their trade union functions irregularly and inadequately. Others are in the process of consolidation and have not yet stepped soundly on their feet. The proletarian element is insufficiently represented in some Party organizations. There is a great shortage of advanced workers agitators and propagandists. Socialist education among the workers in

certain towns is carried out unsystematically, even negligently. Our press has too limited a circulation, so that its influence over the workers' masses is limited. There are even organized workers (in some trade unions their number is not small), who do not receive the organ of their union *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* (Workers' Gazette) while many trade union workers do not subscribe to *Novo Vremé*.

Moreover, the Bulgarian workers live and work under appalling conditions. The long working day, the low wages and insanitary conditions at workshops and factories, work at night and on holidays, the wide use of woman and child labour, the frequent unemployment, the lack of any serious legislative brakes on exploitation – all this makes it impossible for the broad masses of workers to live decently, drives them to degeneration, checks their progress, organization and class consciousness. It is a well-known fact that the worker who is exhausted and emaciated from overwork and undernutrition cannot be a good element for the workers' organization. He does not get a chance to rest after his tiring work, cannot attend meetings and lectures regularly, read, meet freely with comrades, devote more attention to his organization and take an active part in its work for the organization and education of the workers. Many trade unions and educational societies are compelled to call their meetings and lectures very rarely, because the majority of their members work 12 to 15 and even 17 hours daily and have no regular rest on holidays. The financial weakness of our trade unions and their slow consolidation is due, above all, to the low wages which do not allow a substantial increase in the membership dues, which are quite insufficient to cover trade union work, propaganda and mutual aid. It is therefore a *vital necessity* for the proper development of the workers' organizations to win better working conditions and to obtain a genuine workers' legislation.

On the other hand, the restlessness of our working class, its organization and establishment as an independent and intransigent social and political force has drawn the attention of the bourgeoisie and prompted it to mobilize its forces and assume the offensive against the socialist move-

ment. The application of the crafts law, the drawing up of the draft Law on Persons, the 'social policy'¹ of the present government are aimed, in general, at diverting the workers' movement from its final and natural goal – the abolition of the present-day capitalist exploitation, and at confining it to tasks that do not transcend the limits of the bourgeois system. And just as individual capitalists import from the West the most perfect means of production – the latest word of technology, so the bourgeoisie resorts to the most modern ways of combating social democracy. All bourgeois bodies and departments are seriously concerned with removing this 'dangerous enemy'. The bourgeois press, particularly the yellow press, spreads deception among the workers, so as to keep them in ignorance and to reconcile them with the present state of affairs. The Holy Synod translates and publishes 'scientific' pamphlets against socialism, freely disseminated in thousands of copies. 'Popular lectures' are being organized at which, along with general educational subjects, lectures are also held on the 'unsoundness' and the 'utopian character' of Marxism. And the government organ *Nov Vek* (New Age) makes use of every opportunity to recommend its party as a defender and benefactor of the workers and to appeal to them to leave the socialist organizations and to rally under its banner. The government agents hastened to introduce *Zubatov's*² *methods* in Bulgaria. They formed a railwaymen's union for the purpose of diverting the railway workers from their independent organization. And the Party of the Radical Democrats is getting ready to penetrate the workers' masses with its demagogy in order to organize them along bourgeois lines and against social democracy. Moreover, the Industrial Union³ does not confine itself to interventions in favour of individual industrialists, but goes further: it wants to preserve the capitalist class from the offensive of the socialist movement. It firmly opposes the application of the Law on Woman and Child Labour and insistently calls for a legislative ban on strikes. Nor does the Crafts Union⁴ stand with folded hands. It, too, aims its arrows against the workers, trying by all possible means to bring them 'under the influence of the crafts' organizations

and to prevent their becoming organized in the socialist trade unions.

It is clear, however, that we are on the eve of far-reaching and intense trade union and political struggles both for improving working conditions and for clearing the road of the workers' movement and parrying the reactionary blows of the bourgeoisie; struggles which require much stronger organizations than those which our working class has at present.

Today, after the celebration of the international socialist holiday, encouraged by the successes achieved so far, the Party and trade union organizations should, therefore, with redoubled energy continue their work for the organization and socialist education of the workers, doing their utmost to attract factory workers, men and women, no matter how difficult this may be. The organizations must do their utmost to make effective and expedient use of all the forces at their disposal for all-round socialist activity.

May Day is of great importance from the viewpoint of propaganda. The preparations for its celebration, the pre-May Day meetings, conferences, appeals and in particular the May Day demonstration have galvanized the workers' masses and aroused a certain interest in the movement, struggles and demands of the organized workers among them. The workers' organizations have been offered a rare opportunity to attract new workers. They must not only step up, but also more effectively organize their propaganda, paying attention to its purely socialist content. The Party organizations, trade unions and educational societies should hold regular meetings and lectures, while the workers' agitators should go zealously among the workers and made use of the post-May Day unrest in their midst to strengthen the workers' organizations. The consistent and daily work for the ideological and organizational consolidation of the trade unions, for enlisting new militants in their ranks, for a fruitful settlement of all conflicts between labour and capital, should be carried on most energetically. The present moment requires that all func-

tionaries, all Party and trade union members devote all their efforts and capacities to the proletarian cause.

And thus, in the struggles against ignorance and bourgeois influence, for rallying the workers under the banner of social democracy, against individual capitalists and the state, for better working conditions and workers' legislation, against all organs of the bourgeoisie, for clearing the road of the workers' movement – the workers' socialist organizations will attract an ever greater part of the working class, will become an ever stronger factor, will go from victory to victory, and will come ever closer to the great proletarian goal – the emancipation of mankind from the present economic, political and spiritual oppression.

Novo Vremé, No. 5, 1906

Signed G. D.

G. Dimitrov, Works. Vol. 1, pp. 10–18

Published by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), 1951

THE NEED OF TRADE UNIONS IN BULGARIA AND THEIR ORGANIZATION

I

It is not for the first time that the question of the formation of trade unions is being raised in our country. As early as 1894, as a result of the efforts of the Social Democratic Party to organize the printing workers who had grown restless at that time, the Central Workers' Trade Union was set up in Sofia, with branches in the provinces. However, after the Sofia general printers' strike and the strikes in Roussé and Varna this newly-founded trade union *went to pieces*. It was destroyed at its very inception by the anarchic movement of the printers. Around 1900, when the printers' trade union was re-established and a few other trade union organizations were set up in Sofia, the question of their unification with those existing in the provinces into trade unions was again put forward. It was considered at that time that several trade unions should be set up first, with the General Trade Union then emerging from among their midst, as happened in the more advanced Western nations. Attempts were made first to form a printers' union which was to serve as a model to the unions of blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, etc. These attempts, however, encountered insurmountable obstacles in the weak development of capitalist production. The small trade union groups, scattered all over the country, which were actually educational circles, did not feel directly and strongly the need of a trade union organization. The Sofia trade union associations, which should have formed the basis of the trade unions, were in their early phase of stabilization, in a weak and insecure condition. The trade union organization affected practically only the artisan workers. The trade-

union-organized struggle was in its initial stage. The Workers' Social Democratic Party, which until then, owing to the petty bourgeois character of our country, had been almost entirely engrossed in political propaganda among the petty bourgeoisie, was just beginning to pay more serious attention to the needs of the workers' movement. On the other hand, the fateful struggle against the bourgeois influence of the Right-Wing Socialists in the ranks of the Party and the ensuing Party and trade union split⁵ in 1903 relegated the question of the unification of the local trade union associations either into trade unions or into a General Trade Union somewhat to the background.

Experience shows clearly that under the then prevailing conditions within the trade union movement it was impossible to form individual trade unions. The only form of organization for the unification of the trade union associations into a whole was the *General Trade Union*. And when after our split with the Right-Wing Socialists the workers' movement, which had grown stronger at that time, called for a unification of the trade unions, the foundations of the General Workers' Trade Union were laid in 1904. Moreover, as it was impossible to form individual trade unions in most of the towns, mixed trade unions were formed which are a transitional form in organizing the workers in trade unions.

Having anticipated the establishment of trade unions, the General Trade Union had to assume many of their functions. But as the mixed trade unions, owing to their heterogeneous composition, are not able adequately to fulfil the task of a trade union organization, so also the General Trade Union, although playing a very important role in the organization and unification of the trade union movement in our country and in intensifying the general class struggle, cannot successfully and adequately perform the work of the individual trade unions. The sooner the latter are set up and take over their functions from the Union, the more successful these functions will be performed and the better it will be able to devote itself to its special task – *as general organizer and leader of the trade union movement*, as an

idea underlying the organization of the broad masses of factory workers, the bulk of whom are still unorganized, and draw them under its banner.

The question of the trade unions was again put forward at the trade union congress last year. Without going into greater detail, the congress adopted in principle the *necessity* and *feasibility* of such unions under the new conditions and recommended to the local trade union associations *able* to do so to proceed to the formation of trade unions. To this end, the Trade Union Committee drew up a special trade union draft constitution during the current year. After studying the question in detail, the Sofia printers' trade union, in agreement with the existing printers' groups and sections of the mixed trade unions in the provinces, laid the foundations of the *printers' trade union*. After all this, this year the fourth trade union congress will deal specially with the question of the formation of trade unions and will have to give a definite instruction to the trade union associations along this line.

It is clear to everybody that today this question is being put forward under conditions quite different from those of a few years ago. With the development of capitalist production and the passing over of some crafts to a more or less capitalist form of production, the number of factories has considerably increased, and big workshops were opened with many more workers. The constant shifting of workers from one town to another, from one branch of production to another, shows all too clearly the close link between the interests of the Sofia and provincial workers. The workers' movement on the whole and the trade union movement in particular are assuming a mass character. The struggle is now waged not only against individual masters, but against their organizations as well – the crafts and the industrial associations. The latter also rely on the support of the state with all its organs – police, army, chambers of commerce and industry, etc. As an illustration we can point out, apart from many other strikes, *the strike of the Pernik miners*⁶ and *the general railwaymen's*⁷ *strike*. The individual strikes are growing into struggles for wage scales. There is already a strong movement among tobacco, textile

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and other factory workers. In order to oppose the strikers' movement, besides everything else, the bosses, irrespective of their party differences, formed a common *bloc against the workers' strikes*,⁶ against which we shall have to battle.

On the other hand, the enlistment of the workers in our union has made considerable progress. The number of *trade union* associations is growing more rapidly than that of the *mixed* ones. Most of the former have already stepped firmly on their feet. They are being speedily transformed from primarily *educational* organizations, as they were before, into *real trade union associations*, which seriously look upon improving working conditions and promoting the constant class struggle against hired labour. Here, however, they are confronted with the *impossibility* of further spreading their influence among the workers of their own trade and of combating more successfully the ruthless exploitation, because they do not dispose of the power and means of the organized workers of their trade on a national basis, i. e. because they have not been transformed into *trade unions*.

Under these new conditions the trade union movement needs a new organization. To preserve the status quo means to check the progress of the workers' movement in general. And this is quite obvious. A strike must be properly organized, must be able to rely on the general solidarity of the workers of a given trade throughout the country and on their moral and material support, in order to be successful, both practically and ideologically. This, however, can be achieved in good time and with success, when the workers of the same trade scattered all over the country constitute an organized whole, pooling their efforts and means and directing them towards the same goal. The preliminary study and appraisal of the conditions for every prospective strike will then be more exact and certain, because the Union with its statistical data on the conditions of production, the number of workers, organized and unorganized, etc., not only locally, but nationally, will best be able to judge whether or not a strike should be started. When there are trade unions, many of the hitherto quite unprepared and often senseless strikes will not be declared, and the necessary organization will more easily be in-

roduced in the strikes. In strikes headed by the trade unions the bosses will not be able to count on hiring workers in the provinces as scabs or on moving their enterprises to other towns, because they will know that they are up against a national workers' union.*

Moreover, a major reason for the failure of almost all unsuccessful strikes has been the low percentage of organized workers and the presence of a large number of unorganized workers, from among whom the bosses have hitherto been able to recruit plenty of scabs. We shall be able to attract these masses of workers to our ranks through a strong and steadily exercised influence. The trade unions will then be much better able to carry out a broad socialist propaganda, both oral and through the press, among the workers of their trade, than at present the different trade union associations and particularly the mixed ones. Their attractive force will be greater: 1) because they will embrace workers from all towns; 2) because the numerous workers who are now members of the educational groups in towns where even mixed trade union associations cannot be formed, as well as those at factories situated far away from the towns, will be able to join the unions and thus increase considerably their financial and moral force. Such workers are to be found in Bourgas, Aitos, Karnobat, Nova Zagora, Harmanli, Chirpan, Kazanluk, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Gabrovo, Radomir, Samokov, Trun, Breznik, Peshtera, Kocherinovo, Panagyurishtë, Toutrakan, Belyovo, Banya Kostenets, Sestrimo, Dolna Banya, and other localities. Among them there are over 500 to 600 organized workers – tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, printers, etc., who are not members of any trade union association, and 3) because the unions will be able to undertake more successfully practical campaign in favour of the workers and to reach broader masses of unorganized workers with their propaganda and agitation.

All this will be of great help in enlisting in our ranks the sound elements of the Right-Wing Socialists and in

*In 1898 during the general printing workers' strike in Paris, part of the owners of printing houses moved to the provinces where there were unorganized workers and in this way avoided accepting the demands of the workers.

preserving them now that the Right-Wing Socialist Party is disintegrating under the influence of the Radical Democrats who, after having adopted the theory and practice of that party, are out to inherit its influence among the workers.

On the other hand, by performing all trade union functions (organizing and financing strikes, assisting the unemployed, the ill and travelling workers, propaganda, and agitation, etc.) better than the *individual* trade union associations, the trade unions will be able with much greater success to fight against unemployment – this terrible scourge for the working class. A product of capitalist production, unemployment will not be completely eliminated so long as the present order prevails. But the workers' organization is in a position to mitigate to a large extent the dire consequences of unemployment. This can be achieved by assisting the unemployed and travelling workers, by organizing employment agencies and collecting statistical data on the conditions of employment. The centralized forces and funds of the trade union, however, are needed for the purpose.

Consequently, from the viewpoint of trade union organization and the workers' trade union struggle, the *necessity* of establishing trade union is *imperative*.

But this is not all. As is well known, the improvements which we are trying to introduce in the working conditions by means of the trade union struggle, are not *an end in themselves*, but only a *means* of intensifying and more successfully waging the general class struggle, for the complete abolition of *hired slavery*. From this only correct viewpoint, the trade union movement is of value insofar as it helps to promote the emancipatory class struggle. The interests of the latter, however, dictate with no less exigency a concentration of the trade union associations into trade unions.

At present the working class is living through an important and crucial moment. Its political activity is strongly circumscribed. It is up against a reactionary legislation. The reactionary artisan law pales before the much more reactionary laws against the strikes, against the association of

the state workers and against the press. The ruling and the oppositionary bourgeoisie close their ranks and make common cause against the workers' organization and their struggle. It has learned from us and from our struggles against it to organize itself, but now, supported by the state, it is trying to outdo us in this respect. The bourgeoisie is showing a higher class consciousness than we, workers. While part of the working class is dragging a long behind notorious demagogues and petty bourgeois politicians in blocs and other bourgeois campaigns, the bourgeoisie is un-animously forging laws and chains against our emancipatory movement and forms a *bloc against strikes*.

To restore and safeguard the rights of the working class, to parry the blows of the bourgeoisie, to paralyze its influence among the workers and to obtain ever more favourable conditions for the existence and the class struggle of the Bulgarian proletariat, trade union organizations are needed with centralized funds and forces. A united bloc of the working class under the banner of social democracy must be firmly opposed to the bloc of the ruling and oppositionary bourgeoisie against the organized workers' movement. A necessary prerequisite for this is the unification of the trade union groups and workers scattered all over the country in *trade unions*. The trade unions will penetrate broader masses of workers, will broaden and deepen their influence over them, will help to make their struggle more conscientious and successful and will promote their unification under the banner of social democracy. In this way the general class struggle of the Bulgarian proletariat will be more united and powerful.

Thus, without going into greater detail, the interests of the trade union struggle, as well as those of the entire emancipatory workers' movement call most insistently for the formation of trade unions as part of the General Workers' Trade Union.

Of course, this new organization will include only those trade union associations which can now or in the near future be transformed into unions, as, for instance, the *printers', metal workers', tailors', shoemakers', carpenters', tobacco workers', textile workers', etc.*, trade union associations.

Even after the formation of trade unions, many trade union associations will remain in their present state, owing to the impossibility of being transformed into trade unions. These trade union associations will gradually, with the creation of favourable conditions, be united into trade unions.

What the organization of trade unions in Bulgaria should be like, we shall see next time.

II

The question about the organization of the trade unions depends closely on their purpose, character and tasks.

As is well known, the socialist trade union organizations, unlike the bourgeois ones, having as their special purpose to fight for better working conditions within the framework of capitalist exploitation, at the same time direct all their efforts, under the banner of the general political organization of the working class – social democracy, on the *radical* abolition of exploitation itself. They cannot confine themselves to their professional struggle of the basis of present conditions and transcend the limits of capitalist society, fully aware of the fact that so long as the latter exist: 1) there can be no genuine, lasting and general improvement in all walks of life of the working class, and 2) whatever improvements and reforms are achieved, the workers will remain a subordinate and exploited class with a very insecure existence. The reforms which are possible under the existing capitalist system cannot do away with the basic evils springing from this very system, such as anarchy in production, competition, unemployment etc., which cause so much suffering to the working class and to society as a whole. That is why, in fighting to restrict capitalist exploitation, the socialist trade unions take an active part, with all their forces and funds, in the general struggle of the working class for *the destruction of hired slavery, for the freedom of labour, and the triumph of socialism.*

The fighting working class, however, is up against the whole bourgeoisie with its economic and political organizations, with its state and the latter's numerous

organs. All this is *strictly centralized* and pursues one general goal: *to consolidate the economic and political might of the bourgeoisie and to deal continuous blows to the emancipatory workers' movement so as to prevent it from fulfilling its historic tasks.* For the purpose the bourgeoisie, through the centralized political power of the state, encroaches upon the rights of the working class, passes a whole series of laws restricting the workers' movement and subjects the workers' organizations and individual workers to persecution and violence, especially at the crucial moments in the class struggle. At the same time the bourgeoisie strives by means of demagogy and of its bankrupt science, as well as of certain concessions and reforms of minor significance, to corrupt and disorganize the working class, placing certain strata and parts of the latter under its influence, making use of them for its own factious and class aims and pitting them against the class conscious workers' movement.

Under these circumstances, if the workers' movement is to be preserved, become stabilized and successfully fulfil its tasks and achieve its final goal, *centralization* is a necessary condition, i. e. the workers must be organized under a common banner, their efforts must be directed to a common goal, they must lead a unanimous struggle, in other words, must be faced by the *still more centralized forces of the working class, the centralized forces of the bourgeoisie.* That is why the class-conscious proletariat in its general struggle sticks to the principle of centralization.

In all the countries which the trade union movement has developed under the influence of social democracy as a workers' class movement, the trade unions are organized on the *principle of centralization.* The centralized union consists of workers from the whole country. It has a common constitution, a common treasury, a common central administration, etc. In Germany, Austria, Italy, etc., most of the strongest unions are centralized. Even in neighbouring Serbia, where the prevailing conditions are much like those in Bulgaria, a centralized form of organization in the trade unions has been adopted. The predominant trend in the development of trade union movement everywhere is that the more it becomes a class-conscious movement and

the more deeply it is pervaded by a socialist spirit, the more the organization of the trade unions proceeds along centralist lines. The historical experience of the trade union movement in the other countries shows that under a centralized trade union organization the workers' struggle is very *powerful* because it is *unified*. And this is quite obvious. In a centralized union the workers of a given trade who have a common organization, a common principle, a common leadership, are capable of quick and common action, directing their efforts all the time towards a common goal. In the centralized unions every disunity and diversity of action of their separate parts are precluded, things of which the enemies of the working class usually take advantage. Hence, the more the forces of the individual bosses and the bosses' organizations of the entire bourgeoisie and its state are centralized to fight against the workers' movement, the more it becomes necessary for the workers to be organized in centralized unions all their forces to be united into a single *whole*, and together, with the necessary speed, to direct their weapons against their strong and well-organized enemies in the person of the present bourgeois state and the various capitalist organizations, trusts, etc.

Besides centralized unions, there are also in some countries *federative unions*. This form of organization is developed chiefly in France, owing to certain historical and political conditions. The federative union is formed by independent trade union associations, which have their own constitution, leadership and treasures. They unite on certain special terms, outside of which every trade union association preserves complete autonomy in its activity. At any moment the individual trade union association can leave the federation and even declare itself against it. That is why the federative union cannot be a sound and permanent organization like the centralized union. The forces of the federative union are limited and scattered. A common consciousness does not exist in its ranks, nor a strong discipline and one cannot rely on a sure unity of action at the crucial moments in the struggle. The federative form of organization is much to the liking of the bourgeoisie. And not in vain. If we examine the history of this form of

organization in the trade union movement, we shall see that it was always the result of the efforts of the bourgeoisie to keep the workers' organizations in its own hands, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the lack of consciousness and the selfishness of the workers, who are not conscious of their common class interests and refuse to subordinate their personal and group interests to the general interests of the workers' movement. The idea of the *federative organization* of workers has the same origin as the idea of the *neutrality of trade union associations*. The bourgeoisie can most easily attain its anti-workers' goals in the workers' movement when the latter is *neutral* towards social democracy and has a *federative organization*, because then it cannot be effectively mobilized and make use in its struggle of all the forces which are at the disposal of the working class, and because the disunity, the *autonomy* of the individual trade union groups enables the bourgeoisie to mislead the weaker among them and to pit them against the federation itself and the entire emancipatory workers' movement. With the federative form of organization, as well as with the neutrality of the trade union associations, the bourgeoisie aims at transforming the trade union movement from a *factor for the liberation of the working class into a factor for the consolidation of the system of capitalist exploitation and, along with this, the hired slavery of the working class*.

In Bulgaria the trade union associations were not only formed under the influence of social democracy, but were in large measure its own creations. The bourgeoisie is only now beginning to think of organizing the workers into trade unions under its own banner. On the other hand, at their very inception the Bulgarian trade union associations had a socialist character, the character of class organizations following the example of the socialist trade union movement in the other countries. The trade union *neutrality*, preached by the different factions of the bourgeoisie suffered, complete fiasco. Especially now, under the new political conditions in our country, i. e. with the bourgeoisie pursuing a conscious, consistent class and reactionary policy with regard to the workers' movement, the utter inconsistency of neutrality becomes obvious. Our

trade union movement, which has hitherto successfully adopted the most modern and tested forms of organization and methods of struggle, would commit a big and unpardonable error if, under our existing historical and political conditions, it were to adopt a form of organization in its trade unions like the federative one, which would directly hamper the proper development and rapid consolidation of the movement and would expose it to the anti-worker endeavours of the bourgeoisie.

Centralization is the more necessary in our country also because of the weakness of the movement itself, which is in great need of strong central bodies, so as to be able to advance successfully in its individual weak parts. If placed on centralist principles, our trade unions will be able, by having greater financial means, moral forces and efficient bodies at their disposal, to carry on a fruitful propaganda and agitation in order to raise the class consciousness of their members and rid them of many prejudices and political fallacies.

The centralized form is also quite in tune with the state of our production. Viable trade union associations cannot be formed in most of the trades in the provinces, because the number of workers who can be organized is insufficient for the purpose. And the federative organization, even assuming it were not harmful, requires as a prerequisite the existence of such trade union associations.

It is clear, however, that the only and most suitable form of organization of trade unions in our country, bearing in mind our historical and political conditions and the experience of the West European trade union movement, is the *centralized* form. Only as centralized organizations will our trade unions develop properly and thus become powerful and militant trade union associations.

How the organization of the unions will work out in practice can be clearly seen from the *draft constitution* drawn up by the Trade Union Committee and sent to all trade union associations for a thorough study. According to it, the trade union is simply an association which unites the workers of a given trade not only in one town, but on a nation-wide basis. *Local groups* will be formed in all towns

which have at least seven members. In towns where there are at least four members, *proxies* will be appointed, through whom the members will get into contact with the central management. Where there are less than four members, they will enrol directly at the central management. The draft constitution solves more or less successfully all difficulties which are encountered with regard to the management and control of union affairs, the treasury, grants, strikes, etc.

But we shall dwell on this problem, as well as on the more substantial obstacles to the formation of trade unions in our country, in the next issue.

III

Some consider the *small number* of organized workers of the different trades as the foremost obstacle to the formation of viable trade unions in Bulgaria. It is enough, however, to know the real state of affairs in order to understand that this consideration is groundless. Although the number of organized workers in the General Trade Union is still not very large, in some trades it is enough to set the foundations of trade unions. Thus, for instance, today there are about 290 *metal workers*, 300 *textile workers*, 150 *tobacco workers*, 400 *tailors*, 120 *carpenters*, 390 *shoemakers* and 140 *printers* organized in different trade union and mixed associations, as well as in educational workers' groups. This number can be further increased, for it constitutes only four per cent of all workers engaged in the above trades. Regardless of this, new categories of workers become more active and organized. Such are the stone-cutters, miners, the road-builders and railwaymen, etc. Capitalist production is rapidly expanding in Bulgaria, large masses of workers concentrate in factories and other industrial enterprises and the conditions for a mass trade union movement are already at hand. On the other hand, the General Trade Union, after being exempted from the tasks entrusted to the different trade unions, will be able to devote more time and attention to the organization of the

bulk of factory workers, men, women and children, and thus conditions will be created for the establishment of such trade unions, which are impossible at present not because there are not enough workers in a given industry, but because hitherto no planned agitation and propaganda has been carried out among them.

A real obstacle to the formation of the unions constituted the question of their management. We all know that in the trade union there is more work and the tasks of the *central management* as leader, organizer, agitator and propagandist are more numerous and difficult than those of an ordinary management. For the successful implementation of these tasks wider knowledge and greater experience are needed than those which most of our trade union comrades have at present. Moreover, suitable comrades are needed for the *local managements* throughout the country and more particularly *proxies* wherever *groups* will not be formed. All this is indeed a serious obstacle, but this will in large measure be removed at the start and later will be completely eliminated. In the first place, there are already sufficient numbers of trade union members who are rapidly being educated and who within a short time will be able to get satisfactorily prepared to take part in the management of the unions as secretaries, treasurers, etc. The trade union committee, on its part, will also lend its full support and give the necessary instructions to the central managements. In the provinces the groups and proxies will rely on the cooperation of the local workers' councils and the managements of the educational workers' groups. The present sections of the mixed trade unions, when they become groups under the trade unions, will have the experience acquired before, which will stand them in good stead in their new work.

Another obstacle is the question of the financial support of the unions. Their broader activity will call for paid officials, secretaries, etc., who, only if they devote themselves exclusively to union work, will be able to make use of all their forces and capacities for the development and consolidation of the union. Moreover, agencies for the jobless should be organized, trade union organs published

and sums should be set aside for annual meetings, for a stepped up agitation and propaganda, etc. All this would require substantial financial funds which, very naturally, the newly-formed trade unions will not have at first. It is wrong, however, to suppose that the unions will by all means have to start working from the very onset on such a wide scale. On the contrary, temporarily there will be no paid secretaries or other officials. The work will be done without any remuneration, as it is now the case in the trade union associations. The secretaries and treasurers will be given a sufficient number of assistants, their work will be organized more simply and in this way until the unions do not get stabilized financially they will fulfil their duties comparatively successfully only during their free hours. As a transitional measure a sort of *secretariat* could later be organized in Sofia, maintained by the Party organization and the formed unions and trade union associations. As a matter of fact, there should be one paid secretary and treasurer at the Sofia Party organization who could help in the office, administrative and organizational work of the unions and trade union associations. Once the unions develop and become stabilized, they will find the necessary means to maintain their own offices, secretaries, etc. Likewise not all unions will from the very onset start publishing their own organs. At first they might use the general trade union organ *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, leaflets and special circular letters, and later, once they become stabilized, they might have papers of their own.

The question of membership fees also constitutes a serious obstacle. The formation of the unions will lead to a certain increase in the membership fees of provincial workers who now pay very low membership fees in the mixed trade union associations, as well as in most other trade union associations. This increase will be difficult in most trades due to the low workers' wages. But here again the difficulties are surmountable. An *average* weekly membership fee will be determined which, without being too small, will not be too great burden on the provincial workers whose wages are low. Since at present in certain places there is a big difference in the wages of workers

belonging to the same trade in the various towns. Two kinds of membership fees can be introduced – *whole and half*. Workers receiving a salary of less than 40 leva a month shall pay, say, a *half fee*, and those receiving a higher monthly salary – *whole fee*. Moreover, the increased number of union members will also swell the revenues of the unions, which will enable them to meet their financial obligations even when they have not very high but *medium* membership fees. On the other hand, the development of capitalist production, its influence on the crafts, as well as the struggle of the unions, will lead to ironing out the differences in working and living conditions throughout the country and will gradually enable all members to pay an equal membership fee with equal ease.

We could point out also certain other minor obstacles with which we shall positively have to grapple when setting up trade unions, but these will be eliminated still more easily and that is why we shall not dwell on them here. The difficulties outlined above are indeed serious but, as we saw, they are *all surmountable*. They do not give anyone sufficient ground to conclude that the setting up of trade unions in Bulgaria is impossible at present or that it would be *rash* to proceed with their formation. Neither the one nor the other is true. These obstacles only go to show that the foundation of unions will be a tough job, the successful implementation of which calls for great efforts, attention and perseverance.

This year's trade union congress is faced, therefore, with the task, after examining thoroughly the question of the formation of trade unions and the character of their organization, of instructing the trade union associations along the following line: 1) to proceed to the formation of trade unions beginning with those trades in which conditions for this are the ripest, and 2) the unions thus formed to be *centralized* according to the basic stipulations contained in the *draft constitution* drawn up by the trade union committee. The question of trade unions is a question of paramount importance for the organization of the trade union movement in our country and its proper development. That is why, in concluding our notes on it, we are far from

assuming that it has been exhausted. This important organizational question will indeed be further elucidated at the congress and will more particularly be examined at the *trade union conferences* which, however, will still be insufficient. To explain it to all trade union members, its discussion will have to be continued after the congress, at meetings and in the press. According to us, it is particularly necessary that some of our more experienced comrades, who are acquainted with the history, organization and struggles of the trade unions in the other countries more closely and more in detail, give a fuller explanation.

Once the question of trade unions in our country is thus elucidated and properly resolved, we shall be able boldly to proceed, side by side with the already formed *printers' union*, to the foundation of *successive unions of metal workers, textile workers, tobacco workers, tailors, shoemakers, etc.*, profoundly convinced that this modest beginning will contribute greatly to the building up of the magnificent edifice of the socialist trade union movement in Bulgaria.

G. Dimitrov, *Works, Vol. 1, pp. 109-130*

Published by the BCP, 1951.

BULGARIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

After the liberation from Turkish political oppression,⁹ the doors of our country were flung wide open to the influence of the advanced European capitalist states. The strong impact of this influence produced a profound change in the life of the entire country.

The old primitive methods of production, the crafts which had formerly flourished in Turkish times and were now outdated, proved impotent and helpless in the face of the competition of modern, mechanized, large-scale capitalist production in the European countries. Our home market was flooded with their goods, which displaced the local products with amazing rapidity and weakened or ruined a series of craft productions. This process was accelerated by the fact that after Bulgaria's liberation, many of the crafts had to forego the free market of Asia Minor and the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, which had been at their disposal prior to liberation.

The intensified spread and development of capitalism in Bulgaria began in these economic conditions. A number of modernly equipped factories and other capitalist enterprises were built, at first with foreign and later also with local capital. European and Bulgarian banks and other credit institutions were founded, so were big commercial firms with branches in the country's major towns. Railway lines and ports were built. Parallel with the perfected machines and steam engines, electric power was introduced into industry. In general, the way was cleared for the development of local, national capital, and this acquired particular momentum after the economic crisis came to an end towards 1901, and during the upswing that set in in 1903 and 1904 which, but for some minor fluctuations, has been continuing to this day.

The state itself, organized on the model of the state organization, in capitalist countries with a numerous and highly-paid bureaucracy, an extremely expensive monarchy and military establishment, fell entirely under the strong influence of emergent capitalism. At first there were vacillations between the old forms of production and modern capitalist production, but later the state sided ever more consistently and resolutely with capitalism, making every effort to promote the latter's rapid and untrammelled development.

Together with the illegal and piratic accumulation of huge capital in the hands of a minority of local capitalists, many of whom had started on a shoestring, an accumulation obtained from the state treasury and state loans through the government and by means of wholesale spoliation of the population, the state also created numerous facilities and privileges for the capitalists. Besides everything else, the special Act on Fostering Local Industry, passed in 1895, was extended and the privileges and benefits it granted affected many new branches of industry. The system of direct taxation was replaced by that of indirect taxation, and the state thus acquired revenues which, together with the floating of loans, enabled it to start the construction of a number of new railway lines, ports, bridges and roads and, in general, extensively to protect capitalism.

According to the census carried out by the State Board of Statistics on December 31, 1904, and the data provided by the Ministry of Trade and Agriculture on July 2, 1907 the state-protected factories numbered:

1895-1900	99
1901-1904	166
1905-1907	207

Thus, in less than 12 years, the number of factories enjoying protection* increased by 108.

* The Act on Fostering Local Industry protects only those industrial enterprises which have a minimum capital of 25,000 leva, or exploit at least 20 workers and work with machines and other modern means

Most of the protected industries are big factory enterprises. Of these 56 have a capital of from 100,000 to 500,000 leva, and 94 a capital of 500,000 to one million or more leva.

Of course, today the number of enterprises protected by the Act is far larger. After 1907 many new factories were built: in Varna a textile mill, in Roussé a factory for iron articles, in Elliseina a copper ore-dressing factory, in Gabrovo leather footwear, textile, wood-processing and other factories, which do not enter into the figure of 207.

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that, besides the protected productions, there are many other industrial enterprises, which do not enjoy the benefits of the Act on Fostering Local Industry, because they are subject to special laws. Among these are: the tobacco factories, the factories for cartridge cases, the printing and bookbinding enterprises, the trams, arsenals (military and railway), the two state mines, as well as the private collieries, which are now developing very rapidly. At the moment there are no precise industrial statistics, but it may be boldly asserted that there are today more than 800 industrial enterprises in our country and that this number is quickly growing with the present industrial upswing in Bulgaria.

At the same time, the railway network has been developing greatly as can be seen from the following data:

1888	536,905
1895	761,089
1900	1,465,520

When the newly-built railway lines of Turnovo-Tsareva Livada-Plachkovitsa, Kyustendil-Gyuéshevo, and Chirpan-Plovdiv are added, the total railway network exceeds 2,000 kilometres. Moreover, many more kilometres of railway lines are under construction, such as: Mezdra-Vidin, Tsareva Livada-Gabrovo, Boroushtitsa-Stara Zagora, and Devnya-Dobrich.* The railway network is being rapidly extended and will soon, after the projected lines are built,

*Today Tolbukhin

connect all the parts of the country of importance for industry, trade and agriculture, with railway lines.

The railway lines in operation have yielded the following revenues ;

1893-3,612,538 leva	1902- 7,498,178 leva
1894-3,818,070 leva	1903- 8,226,841 leva
1895-4,120,454 leva	1904-10,960,288 leva
1896-4,587,830 leva	1905-11,170,969 leva
1897-4,592,615 leva	1906-11,772,387 leva
1898-5,110,555 leva	1907-14,082,009 leva
1899-5,118,021 leva	1908-15,423,993 leva
1900-6,163,454 leva	1909-17,552,451 leva
1901-7,285,097 leva	

Since 1903 the state has had a clear profit of from two to six million leva a year from the railways.

In 1903 there were 7,570 kilometres of state and municipal roads, periodically maintained and repaired 5,935 km state and 1,635 km municipal roads). That same year there were 11,729 bridges (8,809 built by the state and 2,920 by the municipalities). There were 208 lodges for the maintenance men in charge of roads and bridges. That same year 3,148 km of roads were under construction or had been projected, which were completed in 1909. Roads, bridges and maintenance men's lodges are in far greater numbers today.

Post and telegraph offices, of which there were only 100 in 1886, numbered 295 in 1908. There were only eight postal agencies and mobile bureaus in 1886 while in 1908 their number had risen to 1,757. In 1886 there were all in all 3,834 km of postal rounds, while by 1908 they had risen to 23,509 km.

The entire telegraph network in 1886 was 3,548 km, while in 1908 it was 5,900.

In 1903, when telephone exchanges were first installed, there were just four of them with 565 telephones. In 1908 these had increased to 21 with 2,039 telephones. In 1903 there were 135 km of telephones lines, and in 1908-263 km.

In the last four years state revenues from the posts, telegraphs and telephones have been as follows:

1906	4,300,494 leva
1907	4,745,075 leva
1908	5,140,336 leva
1909	5,510,000 leva

There were seven Bulgarian ports in operation on the Black Sea in 1895. In 1908 there were eight, two of which (those of Varna and Bourgas) were organized as modern ports. These were visited in 1895 by 2,733 ships (1,583 sailing boats and 1,150 steamships), while in 1908 the number was 5,933 (3,489 sailing boats and 2,444 steamships).

There were eight ports in operation on the Danube in 1895, and nine in 1908. The number of incoming ships was 4,608 (589 sailing boats and 8,203 steamships) in 1908.

The two main Black Sea ports (Bourgas and Varna) supplied the following revenue from 1903 to 1907 (in leva):

Years	Bourgas	Varna	Total
1903	149,571.06	11,974.75	161,545.81
1904	379,679.30	34,431.15	414,110.45
1905	363,703.20	83,075.35	446,778.55
1906	282,515.36	271,842.30	554,357.66
1907	283,903.30	435,815.15	719,718.45

Of course, revenues after 1907 have been far greater.

The capitalist development of Bulgaria is also reflected in its foreign trade which, in the various years following the liberation until the present, progressed as follows (in leva):

Years	Imports	Exports
1879	32,137,800	20,092,854
1885	44,040,214	44,874,751
1890	84,530,497	71,051,123
1895	69,020,295	77,685,546
1900	46,342,100	53,982,629
1905	122,249,938	147,960,688
1909	160,429,624	111,433,683

Imports consist primarily of ironware, machinery and various other similar materials necessary for industry, construction and agriculture.

Capitalism, albeit more slowly, is now penetrating agriculture. The concentration of land in the hands of ever fewer persons and the proletarianization of the peasant masses is a continuous process. According to official 1897 statistics, 799,588 farmers owned 3,977,577.73 hectares. If we consider a farm of between 0.1 to 10 ha as a small farmstead, one of 10 to 100 ha as medium-sized and one of 100 to 500 and over as a large farmstead, we obtain the following picture:

698,030 peasants own	1,946,722.04 ha
100,610 peasants own	1,771,025.28 ha
948 peasants own	259,760.41 ha
<hr/>	
799,588 peasants own	3,977,507.73 ha

This little table shows that a mere 948 persons own more than 250,000 ha. If we divide the total number of hectares by the number of owners, we shall get the following *average* per peasant owner: only 2.8 ha for the first category, 17.6 ha for the second, and 274 ha for the third.

This trend towards land concentration is still more clearly apparent in the following table:

Hectares	Owners	Total ha	Lots
from 100 to 200	606	82,600.26	19,001
from 200 to 300	155	37,779.31	5,900
from 300 to 500	100	42,736.12	3,575
from 500 upwards	87	96,641.42	2,413

Consequently, 87 owners own more land than the 255 owners of the second and third category, and more than the 606 owners of the first category. Moreover, the fewer the owners and the larger the property, the less the number of *lots*, which goes to show that the small lots are concentrated in the big farms.

This becomes even clearer from the following table, according to which the ownership of the farms existing in 1897 was distributed as follows:

166,765 farmsteads possess up to 0.5 ha

90,508	from 0.5 ha to 1 ha
106,373	from 1.0 ha to 2 ha
75,100	from 2.0 ha to 3 ha
60,061	from 3.0 ha to 4 ha
50,222	from 4.0 ha to 5 ha
92,515	from 5.0 ha to 7.5 ha
56,486	from 7.5 ha to 10.0 ha
55,503	from 10.0 ha to 15.0 ha
22,095	from 15.0 ha to 20.0 ha
14,911	from 20.0 ha to 30.0 ha
4,338	from 30.0 ha to 40.0 ha
1,770	from 40.0 ha to 50.0 ha
1,993	from 50.0 ha to 100.0 ha
606	from 100.0 ha to 200.0 ha
155	from 200.0 ha to 300.0 ha
100	from 300.0 ha to 500.0 ha
87	over 500.0 ha

Total 799,588 farmsteads

Today the situation has changed still further in this direction, particularly in the Varna, Bourgas, Lom and other districts. A large mass of farms are doomed to ruin. According to more recent statistics, the number of farms which possess less than 5 ha has risen to 792,618! As is known, a minimum of 5 ha are necessary for the existence of an average farm.

Of course, it should also be borne in mind, that most of the *independent* farms listed in the official statistics are only *fictitiously* independent as *actually* they are in the hands of usurers or of the Agricultural Bank.

Land concentration and the proletarianization of the peasant population goes hand in hand with a comparatively rapid industrialization of agriculture.

From 1890 to 1908 the following farm machinery has been imported:

Year	Amount(kg)	Value
1890	310,404	201,999
1895	309,132	323,551
1900	429,058	428,313
1905	936,548	834,019
1906	1,771,777	1,448,054
1907	2,541,802	2,199,336
1908	1,678,722	1,366,800

In recent years farm machines have been introduced into the cultivation of land still more rapidly.

Thus, the capitalist mode of production and trade have been consistently invading the entire country, penetrating into all the pores of its economic, social and political life, and creating new conditions, new class groups and relations, and new social movements and struggles.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 1, pp. 285-293

Published by the BCP

THE BUDAPEST RESOLUTION

The International Trade Union Conference in Budapest will remain memorable for the workers in Bulgaria, because, as is known, it finally cleared the deck for a *genuine* representation of the Bulgarian proletariat in the Trade Unions International, and for its *complete merger* with the life and struggles of the workers in other countries.

For seven whole years it was not the fighting Bulgarian proletariat that was represented in the International, but the centre management of semi-existent *rival* trade unions which, owing to their anti-worker activity, were always outside the pale of the international workers' movement. During this long period the right-wing socialist politicians and careerists most unscrupulously misused the prestige and funds of the Trade Unions International in interests and for aims that were *utterly alien* to the proletariat and which *exposed* the International. For a few strikes, which happened to be headed by them, they wrested from the international proletariat some 33,000 leva, half of which sum vanished without a trace in the pockets of various political loafers.

Moreover, these right-wing socialist politicians and careerists exploited these strikes for which international aid was sent, to further their petty politics and gross careerism, which was particularly true, of the general railwaymen's strike in 1906¹⁰ and of the strike of the Eastern railwaymen in 1908.¹¹

The former strike, as is known, was turned into a lever in the hands of the then 'patriotic' bloc,¹² to overthrow the Stambolovist Government. The Democratic Party, which took over the government, made use of this, of course; many right-wing socialist careerists also won, as they

managed to get well-paid jobs, and 'special missions' under the beneficial wing of 'democracy'; the bureaucratic elements in the railways got big raises, while the mass of the railwaymen, who shouldered the vast burdens and adversities of the prolonged strike, was basely *tricked*.

The heroic strike of the Eastern railwaymen was *sold out* by these right-wing socialist politicians to the democratic government, thanks to which the latter had no trouble in seizing the Eastern railway lines and in preparing the *formal* grounds necessary for proclaiming 'independence'.¹³ At the very moment when the entire bourgeoisie, headed by its monarch, now adorned with a royal title, exulted at what had been accomplished, when the corrupt were writing boring articles and making grandiloquent speeches, to prove that the seizure of the Eastern Railways by the government was the realization of a 'socialist principle' – 400 Eastern railwaymen, together with their families, were fired and thrown into the throes of starvation and misery!

In the face of these and a whole series of other irrefutable established shameful facts, made public by our delegation at the Budapest Conference of the International, there was nothing more natural and imperative for the latter than to *throw* the right-wing socialist trade union centre out of the Trade Unions International. Nor could the Conference have acted otherwise. It was bound to do this. The honour of the International had to be saved, an end had to be put to the vulgar misuse of its prestige and funds by a political clique under the guise of some kind of a 'trade union centre'; the doors of the International had to be flung open to the *genuine* trade union centre of the Bulgarian proletariat, to thrust its liberating movement forward and to deal a mortal blow to the *separatist* endeavours to form and support *rival* trade unions, which could *solely* serve the interests of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

And the Budapest International Conference, to the honour of the International and the good fortune of the Bulgarian Workers, did this – it should be stressed – *unanimously* and without *any* *hesitation*.

This is the true and profound meaning of the resolution

on the 'Bulgarian question' voted in Budapest. Although this resolution is imbued with great tact and international courtesy, and although it has a most seemly form, *its core* nevertheless remains the indisputable fact that the right-wing socialist trade union centre was *kicked out* of the International as *unworthy* of being in its midst, and that the deck was cleared for the final entry of our trade union, which *undoubtedly* all delegates to the Conference, familiar with matters in Bulgaria, considered as the *sole representative of the Bulgarian proletariat*.

The exertions of the politicians around the *Workers' Struggle* and the supermen of *Napred* to give another interpretation to the said Budapest resolution, clinging only to its flexible form, and to fragmentary foreign press comments on it, will remain fruitless. Their reasoning today that the right-wing socialist centre was not *thrown out* of the International but merely *temporarily suspended*, so as to facilitate the *merger* of the *two* trade union centres in Bulgaria, can serve as a consolation to the few incorrigible naive persons of the rival trade unions. However, they will not mislead a single serious worker, because actually the matter is perfectly clear.

It does not require much intelligence to grasp that if the Conference looked at the situation in Bulgaria the way our politicians and supermen do, if it desired a 'merger' such as they keep whining about, there would be *no need* whatever to have the right-wing socialist trade union centre 'suspended' from the International. On the contrary, such a 'merger' would have stood much better chances if the right-wing socialist centre had remained in the International and the Conference had told us: you want to enter the General Trade Unions International – very well! We do not object. Merge with the trade union centre from Bulgaria, which joined us seven years ago, and by virtue of this fact you, too, will be in the International. If you do not wish to do this, then you will remain outside the international family of the proletariat.

We know that this is precisely what the Conference did in the case of America. The new American trade union centre was frankly and categorically told that, *if it wanted to*

*be in the International, it should join the old American centre*¹⁴ (known as Gompers' American Federation of Labour), which has belonged to the International Trade Union Secretariat since the Paris Conference (1909).¹⁵ Why did not the Budapest Conference 'temporarily suspend' the old American centre, too, so as thereby to facilitate and accelerate the 'merger' of the two federations in America?

Can one believe that the tried and experienced trade union and social-democratic militants, who were in session in Budapest, did not know what they were doing? Though they are thousands of times more modest than the braggarts around the *Workers' Struggle* and *Napred*, they had enough sense and brains to realize that there was *absolutely no contradiction and no inconsistency* in their two different decisions concerning the dispute on Bulgaria and that on America.

That is why when Jouhaux¹⁶ the Secretary of the French Confederation of Labour,¹⁷ who had certain sympathies for the *new* America centre, stated his regret, after the resolution on the 'Bulgarian question' had been voted that the Conference had not taken the same decision on the American case, he was quietly told that the two cases differed greatly, and hence two quite different decisions had been taken.

And indeed, whereas in the *old* American Federation of Labour the Conference saw a *real* centre of the American proletariat, which *had to be* in the International, on the contrary, it had good grounds to look upon the right-wing socialist trade union centre as a fictitious trade union centre, which only *shamed* the International, *misusing* its prestige, *despoiling* its funds and *obstructing* the real merger of the Bulgarian proletariat by its international relations.

To facilitate the *unity* of the trade union movement in America, the Budapest International Conference *rejected* the new American centre and *left* the old federation in the International. To achieve the same unity in Bulgaria, it *threw* the right-wing socialist trade union centre *out* of the International and *opened* its doors to our trade union.

So today we are gratified to note that the Budapest resolution on the 'Bulgarian question' has already given beneficent result for the unity of the proletariat in our country and for the complete disintegration of the rival trade unions rejected by the International.

But more about this in the following issue.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik,

No. 60, October 3rd, 1911

Signed: G. D.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 1, pp. 481-486

Published by the BCP, 1952

TOWARDS UNITY!

The visit to Sofia during the Easter holidays of Comrade K. Legien,¹⁸ President of the International Trade Union, was for the Sofia workers and for the whole Bulgarian proletariat fighting against capitalist exploitation a rare proletarian festival which left behind profound and indelible memories.

No one else has yet been given such a grand and cordial welcome in Bulgaria's capital as the president of the Trade Unions International. The organized workers of Sofia and the entire class-conscious Bulgarian proletariat gave a vivid expression of their boundless sympathies for the organized international proletariat when welcoming Comrade K. Legien and at the impressive workers' meeting in *New America*, as well as through hundreds of messages of greetings sent from the provinces; they manifested their sentiments of international proletarian solidarity in a most eloquent manner and showed that in spirit and struggle they were *part and parcel* of the eight-million strong workers' army, rallied under the banner of the International.

This was also a brilliant manifestation of the idea of proletarian *unity*, of the *complete unity* of its organization and struggle, as well as a condemnation of the attempts made so far by the corrupt mock-socialist intelligentsia to split the workers' forces. We value this manifestation all the more, because a proletariat devoid of class-consciousness and a feeling of *cohesion and unity* in its organization and struggle against capitalism is *doomed*.

K. Legien's visit to our country is of great importance for the unity and further development of the Bulgarian trade union movement. True, as we are bidding farewell

today to our dear guest and his most congenial companion Comrade Bukscheck, we cannot yet say unfortunately that the trade union split in a number of trades has been completely overcome. It should be stressed, however, that his mission in this respect *was not in vain*. What has been done at the recent conferences of trade union representatives is a decisive step towards doing away with the existing split in trade unions, something which may be considered as impending.

First of all, at the conferences presided over by Comrade K. Legien, a survey was made of the state of the trade union movement in our country and, in particular, of the trade unions affiliated to the two trade union centres. What became strikingly clear here was the vast numerical, financial and all-round superiority of the Social-democratic trade unions over the rival trade unions affiliated to the centre of Right-wing Socialists. Before a representative of the International it was positively ascertained, *with all the necessary factual data*, that our General Workers' trade Union, comprising 13 central trade unions, numbered 6,563 *regular* members on March 20, 1914, that from January 1 to March 20 of the same year 47,200 weekly membership dues totalling 15,534.45 leva were received in the central treasury of these unions, and that the total revenue for the same period was 20,283.45 leva, with ready cash on March 20 reaching 40,410.79 leva. Whereas the rival 'right-wing' unions, according to the *two* sole tables submitted by their centre containing *uncertain* data, and *unconfirmed resources*, have 3,163 members, with a revenue from membership dues 3,920.80 leva, a total revenue of 7,153.41 leva and ready cash 4,678.99 leva in March!

It was also ascertained that the Right-wing Socialist centre has a few organizations only in the trades of printers, tailors, shoemakers, sales clerks and carpenters, and that mainly in Sofia, as the listed *handful* of members from the other trades cannot be considered as forming organizations. Moreover, it became abundantly clear that while in the Social-democratic trade unions there is complete cohesion and centralization, as is the case in all

modern trade unions, the rival unions continue to be completely decentralized and disorganized.

All these important findings, ascertained officially by the President of the International Trade Union in person, go to show once again that the *de facto* representative and leader of the trade union movement in Bulgaria is our trade union centre, the only one that deserves serious attention on the part of the International.

Nevertheless, Comrade Karl Legien was fully aware of the necessity of creating a single unified trade union centre, so as to secure the regular development of the trade union movement and to guarantee the success of the workers' future struggles. Proceeding from the *assumption* that there are *two* Social-democratic parties in Bulgaria, with which *the two* trade union centres are connected, and that the latter's existence apart from one another is determined by the existing *Party* split, considering the Right-wing Party a Social-democratic one, insofar as it is affiliated to the International Socialist Bureau, without considering its true character, Comrade Legien found that the best way out of the present situation would be for the two centres to merge on the basis of neutrality, naturally not neutrality with regard to socialism, but to the existing *two socialist parties*. Formally, he was quite right. The trouble is that the Right-wing Socialist Party is *not in any sense of the word a Social-democratic Party*, that a wide and unbridgeable gap separates it from the Workers' Social-democratic Party and that, this being so, if a trade union merger were to be effected on a basis of neutrality, the thus unified trade union movement would become the arena of Party struggles and be exposed to the demoralization which is now undermining the ranks of Right-wing Socialists. This is a terrific risk which our trade union centre and the Social-democratic trade unions, conscious of their responsibility for the present and future of the Bulgarian workers' movement, could not take at the moment.

We therefore proposed at the conference that the settlement of all the problems concerning the character, tactics, etc., of the trade union movement be left to *the workers themselves*, who form part of the organizations attached to

the two trade union centres and have a *direct* stake in the attainment of trade union unity. We submitted to the conference the following declaration:

We agree that it be decided now, in the preservation of Comrade Karl Legien, that the two trade union centres should convene a general congress, at which the representation should be determined on the basis of the data, ascertained by this conference, on the numerical strength of trade unions belonging to the two centres, with one delegate from the midst of the trade unions themselves per 100 members. This congress should decide sovereignly, on the basis of an ordinary majority, all questions concerning the character, tactics form of organization and relationship to political parties of the future General Trade Union, its decisions being compulsory for the member unions. The congress should be convened at the end of April at the latest.'

This proposal, which leaves to *the workers themselves* from the two parties concerned to decide upon the outstanding issues and to achieve the complete unity of their organizations, *was flatly rejected* by the right-wing leaders. Those who loudly proclaimed at every street corner their readiness to achieve trade union unity *at all cost*, now that an acceptable practical basis leading to real trade union unity was proposed, considered it advisable to back out.

We remain convinced, however, that all the workers who hold dear the unity of the trade union movement will accept this modus and will help to overcome the now existing split in the trade unions. All the more so, as it is now no longer possible to keep up the myth, which the rival organizations have been spreading for years among the workers, that the International will impose unity on the basis of neutrality.

The demagogical flirting with the idea of unification has now come to an end. The complete unity of the trade union movement in Bulgaria is about to be re-established.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik, no. 279

April 9, 1914

Signed by: G. Dimitrov

Works, Vol. 3, pp. 10-15

Published by the BCP, 1952

AGAINST MILITARY CREDITS

Gentlemen! During previous votes on military credits, our parliamentary group has had occasion to state its reasons for voting against such credits. I do not intend now to go into these basic reasons again, as they are already known to the members of Parliament. But it is my duty, on behalf of our group, to draw your attention to a major and special reason which prompts us firmly to oppose the new military credit of 6,050,000 leva.

We look upon all the funds now being voted for military purposes as a means of pursuing a policy tending to carve up and seize the Balkans. This policy was most clearly defined here in the reply to the speech from the throne by the majority, as well as by all the parliamentary groups of the opposition except ours. At that time it boiled down to the following: Bulgaria should under no circumstances enter into an agreement with the other Balkan states, as this was considered impossible and utopian under the present conditions; and Bulgaria should start negotiations with both groups of great powers in order to secure its independence and integrity and eventually to attain its national ideals. Well, gentlemen national representatives, we consider this policy which, but for differences in shade, is shared by the majority of the house and the bourgeois opposition parties in parliament, as fatal to our nation; hence any means instrumental to this policy cannot be approved here, in parliament, by the representatives of the people's masses and of the working class. We are against this military credit and we think that the parliament, if it really represented the interests of the Bulgarian people, and not those of a handful of privileged gentlemen who rule and dominate the country, if in its views it

expressed the interests of that people, should not approve the spending of a single penny for military purposes until *the present government, or a future government that might take its place, adopts the only salutary policy of an understanding among the Balkan states, of forming a Balkan federation.* We still consider the realization of such a policy, as we have stressed here time and again as possible...

Dr. K. Provaldiev: Are you serious?

G. Dimitrov:... as we have always done, so today we quite seriously recommend to the Bulgarian Parliament and to the present government this only salutary policy. This is why it is my duty to affirm here that we cannot cast our vote in favour that parliament, if it does not want to betray the interests of the Bulgarian people, should not vote any credits for military purposes until the time when an independent and free Balkan policy, that would at the same be a Bulgarian policy, is adopted.

In the second place, gentlemen national representatives, you will allow us to differ as to the necessity at this juncture of an extraordinary military credit, much of which would go to maintain reserve troops. For, in spite of the present situation in Bulgaria and the Balkans, we are convinced – on the basis of sufficient data which are probably not unknown to many of the gentlemen national representatives and to the present government – that the calling up of the reserves, of those three series of six levies, is not dictated by any present necessity of preserving the national independence of our country, but that it is, if I may say so, a rehearsal, a partial mobilization. After the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, after the wounds which they inflicted, after the readiness of the masses to fight has been completely exhausted, it is now deemed necessary to sound out public opinion, to test in how far the readiness of the masses has been re-awakened. The military authorities themselves do not conceal the fact that the main reason for calling up these levies is precisely the sounding out and testing of public opinion and, on the other hand, the forming of a martial spirit among the masses which may tomorrow have to be called to arms in case of a general mobilization. Well, we feel that the reserves ought not to

have been called up, that this is not dictated by considerations of national defence but by quite different motifs and, consequently, that the expenditure it entails might have been avoided. We are not prepared to sacrifice a single penny, or a single drop of blood for a policy that leads not to safeguarding Bulgaria's freedom and independence, but to its ruin. This is our main idea and our guiding principle.

This credit, which you will probably vote, met with approval on this side, too (Pointing to the left). The objections raised there are purely formal in character, and concern only the system of credits outside the budget, they are not objections of principle, for you may rightly tell those on the left that they, too, have spent considerable sums for military purposes in the same way, that this was not invented by the Liberal Government, but is an old system which is likely to continue in existence for years to come, in spite of everything that might be said to the contrary, if not as long as the bourgeois system prevails. Because the Bulgarian bourgeoisie ruling the country will never have the courage to come out openly before the masses, and say: 'We need so many millions for our war policy, for military purposes,' and to provide for the exact sum in the budget, but it will always try to hide it and throw dust in the eyes of the destitute masses who, if they are interested in the budget, will discover an outlay of only 50 million leva, whereas a correct estimate would show the sum to be not 50, but 150 to 200 million a year. Well, gentlemen, since none of the wings reject the credit in principle, obviously it will be voted. But allow me to ask what the present government, which hastens with credits outside the budget, especially for military purposes, has done, what you, gentlemen of the majority, who sanction with your vote the various measures of the government, propose to do, so as to guarantee the existence of the thousands of families the heads of which have been called up for a three-week training. Surely you are not unaware of the fact that a great calamity has befallen the country, due to the calling up of the reserves of several levies. Ninety per cent of these people are workers, poor peasants and farmers; they have

most of them left their families without a single penny, and that while there is a social crisis; they have no stocks, no savings, they had no way of saving and, consequently, their families are now starving, suffering from the harsh winter.

Prime Minister Dr. V. Radoslavov: Who is starving?

G. Dimitrov: The state has not done anything for them.

Minister P. Peshev: The state is doing all that's necessary. Don't talk like a demagogue!

G. Dimitrov: Sir! We are not demagogues, we are just speaking the plain truth which you can check yourself anywhere.

Minister P. Peshev: Our state has not let its people go hungry.

G. Dimitrov: All right, then, if you do not want those workers' families in our country to be destitute, this is what you should have done: before introducing this bill for credits outside the budget, you should have introduced a bill to guarantee the relief of families living in distress. This you didn't do, and yet you insist that the state has done everything necessary. The state has done nothing in this respect...

Minister P. Peshev: It won't forsake them.

G. Dimitrov:... And you are still trying to say that people aren't starving. Let's face it, gentlemen, they are!

From the right wing and right centre: Come, come! This is not true.

G. Dimitrov: You have enough to eat with plenty to spare, and that's why you won't believe those that are hungry (Protests from the right). Well then, gentlemen, if the Government does not introduce such a bill, why didn't the committee of the house come to an agreement with the Government to put on the agenda the bill introduced for the purpose by our parliamentary group as early as the last session and which we re-introduced at the beginning of the present session – a bill that concerns the relief of poor families during mobilization, which could be extended to include relief of workers' families living in poverty due to their men being called up for a three-week training, which incidentally is a partial mobilization in itself? This had not been done either. You know, moreover, that the crisis now

existing in this country affects most those who have no property – this at least none of you will try to deny – because there is no social crisis, no economic crisis for the gentlemen who dispose of much capital, for those who keep on pocketing interests no matter what happens. It's the have-nots who bear the brunt of the crisis. Now, gentlemen, so many industrial enterprises have closed down, there is a general economic stagnation and mass unemployment – the Minister of Industry and Labour here could tell you this, as he has a special report on unemployment from the workers' organizations; today over 30,000 men cannot find work anywhere in the country – and they have families – this means that more than 100,000 people have no means of subsistence, no bread, so sustenance. A bill has been drafted to provide for them, but this bill is not being put on the agenda. The government is doing nothing about it. People are starving while you are going to vote with both hands for new extraordinary credits for military purposes (Protests from the right wing and right centre). Gentlemen! I want to draw your attention to this glaring contradiction, this inconsistency and cruelty shown by the present state, represented by you, by the Government and the majority of the house.

S. Kalenderov: Cruelty, indeed.

G. Dimitrov: Yes, unprecedented cruelty! Gentlemen! A few minutes ago Mr. Koznichki, in order to persuade us that we too should vote for the credits outside the budget, cited the example of other nations: he said that that was what had been done in Germany, Austria and in all the other belligerent nations. The analogy he drew was, however, not exact, since they are fighting there, while we here are not.

V. Koznichki: I was speaking about the non-belligerent countries too, about the neutral ones.

G. Dimitrov: But for his analogy to have been correct, Mr. Koznichki ought to have told us what they are doing about the destitute workers' masses in countries where bills for credits outside the budget have really been passed due the war.

Minister D. Petkov: Where they are fighting!

G. Dimitrov: You, gentlemen, are not prepared to grant a single penny to the working class, to the destitute masses, whom tomorrow you will be calling to arms, to fight not for themselves, but for you again.

From the right wing and right centre: Hear, hear!

G. Dimitrov:... for your policy and your national ideals, under the guise of your own selfish, capitalist interests.

Minister P. Peshev: This is outrageous!

G. Dimitrov: I should like to tell Mr. Peshev that this is not outrageous, but the plain truth.

Minister P. Peshev: This is the limit! It's a scandal! The chairman ought not to let you speak like that! This is instigation, demagoguery! How dare you instigate?

V. Kolarov: Hunger and poverty are a fact.

Minister P. Peshev: Don't talk like demagogue, about a national problem. This is a wicked shame!

P. Genadiev (to the extreme left): You are rousing the people to rebellion.

D. Blagoev: You are rousing it.

Minister P. Peshev: (to Mr. Dimitrov): Hold your tongue!

G. Dimitrov: I should beg the Minister of Education to keep calm.

Minister P. Peshev: Hold your tongue!

G. Dimitrov: Sir! We know what we are talking about.

Minister P. Peshev: No, you don't.

G. Dimitrov: What we have said we can prove with documents.

Minister P. Peshev: You don't seem to realize what the consequences of your words can be.

G. Dimitrov: Don't let us rake up old accounts now.

From the right wing: A-ha!

S. Kalenderov: You don't know what you are talking about.

Chairman: Mr. Dimitrov! Stick to the point or I shall ask you to leave the floor.

D. Blagoev: Mr. Chairman, you have no right to tell him what he ought to say.

We protest against this outrage.

P. Genadiev: Mr. Blagoev! You forget that the calling up

of reserves is for the good of your country. You forget it at your age.

D. Blagoev: You there, keep quite!

The Chairman: I call on Mr. Dimitrov to keep to the subject. Our patience is exhausted. Else, according to the rules, I shall have to withdraw his permission to speak.

G. Dimitrov: Gentlemen! If you wished and if you had the patience to hear me out instead of losing your tempers...

S. Kalenderov: How can we stand this?

G. Dimitrov: ... I could point out to you here a dozen of patriots, who have robbed Bulgaria and for whose sake the Balkan Wars were waged. They are both here (Pointing to the right) and there (Pointing to the left). (Loud protests and thumping of feet from the right).

M. Nichov: Point them out, tell us who they are!

G. Dimitrov: As you know, a parliamentary inquiry was instituted which has found out many and is going to find out more...

M. Nichov: Go on, tell us who they are!

G. Dimitrov:... scores and hundreds of self-styled Bulgarian patriots, both there (Pointing to the right) and here (Pointing to the left).

Someone from the right: There are none here.

T. Loukanov: Look at Mr. Gendovich, he is a great patriot, the good man! Why do you say there are none?

The Chairman: Mr. Dimitrov! If you don't keep to the subject and continue to irritate the national representatives, I shall withdraw your permission to speak.

G. Dimitrov: You have no right to do it, Mr. Chairman. Let me finish.

The Chairman: We have no time for nonsense and ill-founded attacks here.

G. Dimitrov: I protest: The chairman has no right to say who is talking sense and who is talking nonsense.

The Chairman: I shall demand that you leave the floor.

D. Blagoev: How can you do this? It would be quite arbitrary!

The Chairman: He should keep to his subject. He should not make light with the National Assembly.

D. Blagoev: You don't like it, because you won't hear the bitter truth.

The Chairman: Mr. Dimitrov! Keep to your subject. Don't compel me to make you leave the floor!

G. Dimitrov: Mr. Chairman would not have been offended and he would not have reprimanded me if, say, like Mr. Grigor Vassilev, I had sung the praise of our Bulgarian army and asked for an increase of military credits. But because I come out as a representative of a party which cannot share this view and is openly against it, in order to speak against the credits, all of you start arguing and want me to leave the floor. This is not consistent with the principles of parliamentarism, it is most unprincipled of you who like to boast of your parliamentary principles.

Let me finish now. I wanted, gentlemen, to draw your attention to the fact that, while the voting of extraordinary credits for military purposes is being rushed, absolutely nothing is being done – and this is the truth – to guarantee the lives of Bulgarian families in distress. This was my whole point.

S. Kalenderov: Do you suggest that these sums be included in the credit now discussed?

G. Dimitrov: You find the means for introducing so many credits outside the budget, and when it comes to social reforms, you find only words.

T. Loukanov: That's how it will be, of course, when a budget of 60 million is submitted and, at the same time, military credits, are asked for 200 million leva.

G. Dimitrov: Millions upon millions are voted for military credits, while for social legislation and labour protection there remains only what was said in the speech from the throne and the promises of the cabinet. Well then, gentlemen, we are here to tell you that the working class, the broad masses, part of whom have elected some of you, cannot be solidary with such a policy. And when our government declares that the people approve of this policy, that they give their tacit consent to this policy, the Government should know, and you, gentlemen, should know that the people, who are suffering in poverty and distress, and with whose money you are building up a military organiza-

tion, in order to use it as an instrument, not in defence of the nation... .

S. Kalenderov: In defence of what then?

G. Dimitrov:... but, consciously or unconsciously, for the ruin of our national freedom and independence, that the people will not support you, that they are against it and, on their behalf, we resolutely oppose the policy pursued here, which is directed against the nation's freedom and independence (Applause on the extreme left).

Shorthand notes, 17th National Assembly

November 19, 1914, pp. 483-486

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 3, pp. 297-307

Published by the BCP, 1952

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SECOND BALKAN CONFERENCE

*Speech at a public meeting in Sofia
July 9, 1915*

The Second Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Bucharest marked a further step along the road towards the triumph of the Balkan Federative Republic which was started in 1909 at the First Balkan Social Democratic Conference in Belgrade. The latter had only drawn up and formulated the fundamental principles on the unity and common struggle of the Social Democratic Parties in the Balkan states and entrusted the practical organization of this common struggle to a second conference.

Unfortunately, however, the work successfully begun at Belgrade had to be suspended for a certain time owing to the political developments and the Balkan Wars.

Today we have to thank primarily the fraternal Romanian Party for the organization of the Second Balkan Social-Democratic Conference in Bucharest, because it not only assumed the initiative in convening this Conference, but also took great pains to guarantee its full success.

The Bucharest Conference elucidated, developed, reaffirmed and expended the fundamental principles laid down at the Belgrade Conference. Its main task, however, was to establish the necessary organizational forms, ways and means in the fight of the Balkan Social Democrats for the establishment of a Balkan Federative Republic.¹⁸

The Second Balkan Social-Democratic Conference decided with the *absolute unanimity* all the participating delegates that the workers' Social-democratic Parties and the trade union associations of the Balkan states should form a *Balkan Workers' Social Democratic Federation* with one Inter-Balkan Bureau composed of two delegates per country, one from the Party, and the other from the Trade Union association, with an executive committee elected by

the Workers' Social Democratic Party and the general Trade Union in Romania. Instead of individual Social-democratic Parties, hitherto acting separately and without coordination, a *united Balkan Social Democracy* was formed.

The first major practical step for the unification of the Balkan nations has been made by *unifying the socialist proletariat* in Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece into one *Balkan Social Democratic Federation*.

And this federation of the Balkan Social Democratic Parties and trade union associations is being formed not only because it is quite obvious that only artificial boundaries divide the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula and that they are bound by the same fate, but because without this organization it is impossible to carry out an effective struggle for the realization of a *Balkan Federative Republic*, in which all the Balkan peoples can find their only true salvation.

Guided by the principle that a *single Social-Democratic Party* and a *single trade union* association per country should join it, the Balkan Social-democratic Federation will endeavour to attract the social-democratic parties which subsequently are to be formed in Turkey, Albania and Montenegro into its ranks, provided they adopt the principles of international revolutionary socialism.

The Balkan Social-Democratic Federation will be represented at the International Socialist Bureau²⁰ and the international congresses by a *single Balkan delegation* in which the Federative Social-democratic Parties and trade unions will be equally represented.

The Conference entrusts the executive committee with the task of starting the publication of a *Balkan Socialist Bulletin* in French and German to keep the international proletariat informed on the situation in the Balkans and the struggle for a Balkan Federative Republic; the federated parties and trade unions assume the obligation to render each other assistance by exchanging delegates to their congresses, orators at their meetings, newspapers and various publications, etc. May Day is set as a day of a common demonstration in all countries in favour of the Balkan Federative Republic.

The Inter-Balkan Bureau will edit special pamphlets on the Balkan question and the struggle for a Balkan Federative Republic, *to be published in all the Balkan languages*.

Without listing other points of detail in the decisions of the Conference (those who are interested may read them in the *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*), you can see the great usefulness of the newly-established Balkan Social-Democratic Federation for the Balkan proletariat.

But the Bucharest Conference had to take a stand also on the present war and the tasks of the International. *Unanimously* it proclaimed the necessity of an immediate restoration of the International which is possible today only on the basis of *revolutionary socialist and proletarian internationalism*.

For this purpose the Conference expressed its great desire that the Social-democratic Parties of the belligerent countries might immediately break with the so-called *civil peace*²¹ and return again to implacable class struggle.

In sending most cordial greetings to Rosa Luxemburg,²² Libknecht²³ and to all who remained loyal to the principles of international revolutionary socialism, the Conference pointed out that it was absolutely necessary to start a ruthless struggle against *opportunism, social imperialism and trends of deviation* within the International.

The Bucharest Conference concluded its work by voting a resolution against military provocations of *peace and neutrality* at any cost.

(Here the speaker describes the impressive meeting which preceded the Bucharest Conference and the indignation of the Bucharest proletarians at the Government's decision preventing delegates from addressing the meeting).

There is no need to point out in detail the tremendous *historic, political* and – as Comrade Sideris rightly put it – *moral* significance of the work which the Second Balkan Social-Democratic Conference did. It opens up a *new and bright epoch* for the Balkan proletariat and the peoples on the Balkan Peninsula.

Our task today after this epoch-making conference will

be to popularize the idea of a Balkan Federative Republic among the widest circles of the Bulgarian proletariat and working people and to rally the workers in the ranks and under the banner of the *Balkan Social Democratic Federation!*

It is only thus that we shall represent a worthy section of the Balkan International. Marching shoulder to shoulder with our brothers from Romania, Serbia and Greece, we shall bring closer the day of triumph of the Balkan Federative Republic which will mark a sure stage towards the great proletarian social revolution!

Rabotnicheski Vestnik, No. 77, July 12, 1915

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 4, pp. 107-111

Published by the BCP, 1952

THE SMALL NATIONS

The imperialists of the Entente²⁴ have been dinning it into the ears of the whole world that they were fighting for the rights and liberties of the small nations. In one of his speeches Lloyd George, comparing the big and small nations, said: 'Great are indeed the centuries-old pines and oaks, but it is from the small nations that we pick the most valuable fruit', and that the small nations, too, if left to develop freely and independently, were as necessary and valuable for the progress of mankind as the big ones, while Asquith,²⁵ in speaking about the conditions which peace would bring to the peoples, said: 'Both big and small, powerful and weak, will have equal rights of freedom and independence.'

In quoting the above and other statements, a Sofia daily concludes: 'If this principle of equality of nations does indeed prevail, and is applied after the conclusion of peace, its consequences for the Bulgarian people will be most favourable.'

Is it possible that the bourgeoisie of the Entente should have abandoned its age-old traditions of keeping hundreds of millions of nations, big and small, under subjection? In actual fact we see nothing of the kind. On the contrary. The Entente mobilized the whole fit male generation of the coloured peoples under its domination, using it as cannon fodder, to defend and expand the domination of the same bourgeoisie over the smaller and backward nations, while the outrages against the Irish people²⁶ who are fighting for freedom and independence are still fresh in our memory.

This loquaciousness of the ruling Entente bourgeoisie is probably due to the successes which it scored during the present war in enlisting a substantial part of the small European nations as well in its imperialist orbit.

Since the beginning of the war now raging we have been observing a new trend in the imperialist policy of the warring bourgeoisie. The one as well as the other strive by all means to conceal the imperialist goals which they pursue in the present war from their own peoples and still more from those they aspire to, and to facilitate their task they have cast yet another bait: alliance with the latter.

Let us recall here the well-known fact of how the Entente, in order to drag nations which stood outside, but which were and continue to be an object of its imperialist policy, into its colonial whirlpool, too, threw wide open its safes for all traitors who were and are ready to sell out their nations for gold. Serbia, Romania, Portugal, Greece, and if you wish Bulgaria, too, irrefutably prove this, always in the form of an alliance.

But what does an alliance of the small and underdeveloped nations with the great and developed capitalist powers mean in the present world capitalist duel? The answer is well known. Belgium, Serbia, Romania, Russia, etc., were nations which gave their last man in the fight, and on whose territories the most devastating military operations have been and are taking place, where everything has been reduced to ashes and ruins, while, at the same time, America, Britain, etc. stand at a respectful distance from the consequences of the world crime.

But this is only the one side of the medal. We know that in the present war armaments assumed colossal, unprecedented proportions. Most of the industries in the capitalist countries are engaged in the production of equipment for the battling armies. Hundreds of millions of leva are wasted every day for this purpose by the belligerent nations, which vie in contracting loan after loan for billions of leva.

The small and still underdeveloped capitalist nations are compelled to contract their state loans and armaments with their powerful allies. These nations have thus been burdened with unbearable debts towards the latter, while the bourgeoisie heading the belligerent blocs secured for itself a sure income for many a year from the interest on

these loans as well as lush profits from the deliveries of arms, clothing, food etc., which it makes to these countries.

What is more, the capitals of these powerful allies penetrate into these countries in yet another way: new banks, bank branches, increasing the capital of already existing banks etc. are the first steps along this line.

All this leads us to conclude with certainty that this is the beginning of the end of the independence of the small nations, to whom such compliments are paid from London. And Lloyd George is not wrong when he says that the people whom he represents pick valuable fruit from these nations. He is also right when he declares that these nations will in future be left to develop freely, as freely indeed as the small trees develop in the shade of the age-old oaks.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik,

No. 139, October 25, 1917

Signed G. D.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 4 pp. 435-438

Published by the BCP, 1952

It has long been known and beyond dispute that the proletariat has a *very great striking power* owing to its *crucial and irreplaceable* role in modern production as the creator of all social wealth, as well as to its *numerical strength* which is increasing with every passing day.

Destroying the old forms and methods of production and dispossessing the mass of independent petty owners and producers, the continuous concentration of production, the progress of modern technology and the merciless capitalist competition, on the one hand, place the whole production process in the hands of the proletariat and, on the other, increasingly multiply and tighten its ranks. By dint of this objective development, the proletariat gradually emerges as the only productive, most numerous and powerful social class.

In spite of this historical fact, however, for many decades and up to this day, the proletariat has been harnessed to the yoke of the capitalist industrial and social system, exploited and divested of its rights by the ruling classes, which possess the capital.

The very existence of the tremendous spontaneous force of the proletariat derived from its great numbers and its economic role, therefore, *by itself is quite insufficient* to set it free, to make it complete master of its destinies and worthy of its great historic mission.

On this *objective basis*, it is necessary to build up the real social and political force of the proletariat, to transform it into a *class of itself*, as Marx said in 1848, through a *decisive struggle for the reconstruction of capitalist society*.

In their remarkable *Communist Manifesto*²⁷ Marx and Engels, the great founders of scientific socialism, as early as seventy years ago showed and scientifically elucidated this only correct road towards proletarian liberation – the road

of the class struggle of the proletariat. Mercilessly castigating the misleaders of the workers at that time – various bourgeois, socialists and parlour pinks, Marx and Engels, unlike them, called themselves *communists* and gave to their historic appeal to the international proletariat the name of *Communist Manifesto*.

Today, when May Day, the labour holiday, coincides with the 70th anniversary of the writing of the Communist Manifesto (1848–1918) and the 100th anniversary of Marx's birth (1818–1918), we feel how the closing words of the Communist Manifesto *Proletarians of all countries, unite!* are raised and spread throughout the world.

We are most gratified to note that the *socialist* proletariat in Bulgaria has not deviated from the right road. It has not betrayed the emancipatory cause and the ideas of the international proletariat.

It refused to sacrifice its general and lasting vital interests, its principles, its programme and its future for petty momentary gains and for a mess of pottage.

The Social-democratic Party and the workers' trade unions have gained strength. Their means of carrying on the fight have increased. Their printed organ today, in spite of everything, has a three times wider circulation.

Social democracy in Parliament and in the municipalities has honourably acquitted itself of its duty, endeavouring to relieve the condition of the workers' masses as much as possible and, through labour laws and various other measures, to protect them from physical and moral degradation.

Precisely this road remains to be followed in future, still more firmly and more resolutely.

The early prospects of a new and still more powerful rallying of the proletariat all over the world for the class struggle against capitalism are clearly outlined on the May Day horizon.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik,

No. 273, May 1, 1918

Signed G. D.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 5 pp. 120–122

Published by the BCP, 1952

NO PARDON, BUT AMNESTY

Comrade Georgi Dimitrov, Social Democratic deputy, wired the following protest from the Central Prison to the Minister of Justice, with a copy to us:

In accordance with a meeting held by the special commission at the Central Prison for drawing up a list of prisoners deserving of pardon, among 200 persons I, too, was presented for pardon. I am deeply indignant at this attempt, through partial pardons to dodge or at least delay a general political and military amnesty, which the working masses throughout the country at rallies and meetings have so resolutely demanded, which they are ready at any price to impose, and which at the present moment is a pressing economic and political necessity. What is needed is not arbitrary royal pardon, constituting a sphere of exceedingly profitable vulgar trade in which the greatest injustices are committed with regard to the persons selected for pardon, and whereby the human and political dignity of the prisoners released in this manner is abased; but for Parliament to assume its proper role and annul the acts issued by the military courts, by examining and passing as soon as possible the bill submitted by the Social Democratic Party for an amnesty of military and political crimes, for a revision of the sentences issued by the military courts for other crimes, and for reducing by one half the punishments of prisoners unaffected by the amnesty, the bulk of whom have quite accidentally landed in prison as unfortunate victims of modern conditions, and who in every respect are incomparably more decent people than thousands of others who are at liberty.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik,

No. 143, December 3, 1918

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 155-156

Published by the BCP, 1952

PREFACE TO THE PAMPHLET

(Two open letters by Lenin to the American
and European workers)

The name of the most authoritative leader of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, Lenin, has become world famous. Today it is pronounced with fear and trepidation by the supporters of the old and shaken bourgeois system in all countries, and with admiration and even religious awe by the proletariat and all enslaved mankind. Side by side with Marx and Engels, the great founders of scientific socialism and authors of the Communist Manifesto, Lenin immortalized himself in the history of the workers' emancipatory movement by the titanic accomplishments of the Russian Socialist Revolution, the practical application of the principles of the Communist Manifesto and the establishment of the proletarian Soviet State. His name has become the symbol of the international workers' revolution which, after having triumphed in Russia, swept over Hungary, shook Germany and is steadily spreading in order to engulf the whole capitalist world.

It is for this very reason that everything written and said by Lenin today assumes tremendous significance for the fighting proletariat in all countries.

Engrossed day and night in the task of building up the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, of crushing the counter-revolution from within and without, and clearing the road of the workers' revolution in other countries, Lenin has still found time to address two letters – one to the *American workers*, of August 20, 1918, and the other to the *European and American workers*, of January 21, 1919.

We borrow Lenin's first letter from the Social Democratic paper *Workers' Education* in America, where it was printed after undergoing certain excisions by the American censorship. As can be seen, the deleted passages

deal with the situation in America and the present-day revolutionary tasks of the American proletariat.

The second letter is a verbatim translation from the Russian original.

In his first letter, Lenin brilliantly champions the cause of the Russian Socialist Revolution, of the Soviet Republic and its peaceful policy, as well as of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In his second letter, noting the substantial successes of the revolutionary proletariat in various countries in its struggle for political power, he proclaims the actual foundation of the Communist International, outlining with his customary clarity and sharpness the ways and means of the universal workers' revolution.

We Bulgarian Communists (Left-wing Socialists) are gratified to note that we are in complete agreement with Lenin, that the principles and tactics of the Communist International are also our principles and tactics.

Lenin's views on bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism are those most firmly upheld by our Party, which has never been the victim of any parliamentary illusions and has always kept aloof from the fallacies and prejudices of bourgeois democracy. Rejecting bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, the Bulgarian Communist Party is preparing the proletariat and the working people's masses for a revolution aimed at the conquest of political power. It makes use of electoral campaigns and the parliamentary tribune along with its other means solely for this preparation, until the moment about which Lenin is speaking in his second letter sets in in our country, when it will forsake its parliamentary position and go over to an all-round offensive in order to overthrow the capitalist state and to replace it by a Soviet proletarian state, by the workers' dictatorship.

The three main trends among the proletariat in all countries, which Lenin has so well described in his second letter, exist also in Bulgaria. The two trends, the social-patriotic and the moderate one ('Kautsky's followers') are represented by the Right-wing Socialists' party, which with its extreme social-patriots (Sakuzov, Djidrov, Pastouhov,

Sakarov, Assen Tsankov, etc.) and its moderates, the Kautskians (Romanov, Rashenov, etc.), is entirely in the camp of the bourgeois counter-revolution.

The representative of the revolutionary trend is the Bulgarian Communist Party (Left-wing Socialists), which by its nature, its programme and communist slogans, its activity and mass revolutionary struggle is the *only Communist Party* in our country and rightly represents the Bulgarian section of the Communist International.

This being the actual situation, everyone realizes not only how senseless, but also how harmful and treacherous it is to set up various 'communist groups', 'organizations' and 'small parties' outside the Bulgarian Communist Party. These are today ardently desired by some men of unbridled ambition, various supermen, incorrigible individualists, and even parasites of the workers' revolution.

All workers, all working people, all militant and revolutionary elements in our country, who actually adhere to the principles and tactics of the Communist International, and who are – for one reason or another – still outside the Bulgarian Communist Party and its workers' trade unions, outside the workers' revolutionary movement, are today bound to heed Lenin's powerful call, to become deeply imbued with his ideas as expounded in these two letters, and to rally without hesitation to the ranks of the Bulgarian Communist Party and its workers' trade unions under the banner of communism.

The 'right' and 'left' counter-revolutionaries are today rapidly organizing and mustering their forces – the latter rallied around the 'leftist' Government of Teodorov-Pastouhiov-Stamboliiski, and the former around the Democratic and Liberal bourgeois Parties with their 'military leagues', pseudo-Macedonian and jingoist gangs.

Against the counter-revolutionists who are thus getting organized, we must set up the mighty revolutionary bloc of the Bulgarian proletariat and the remaining working masses, through the Bulgarian Communist Party and its workers' trade union organizations.

History is posing point-blank the question: either with the counter-revolution – for the preservation of capitalism,

or with the workers' revolution – for the abolition of capitalism and through a workers' dictatorship, for the establishment of socialism and the complete triumph of communism. *There is no middle road!*

Everyone ought to find his proper place! Everyone must do his duty!

No splitting of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat! No setting up of separatist groups and organizations! No banking on communism and the communist revolution.

All workers and working people who are ready for a decisive struggle must be in full revolutionary unity through their Communist Party and their trade unions!

This is the supreme demand of the present historic moment.

This is actually the great practical meaning of the two open letters of the great leader of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and the world workers' revolution, which we most ardently recommend to the Bulgarian workers and all working people in town and countryside.

G. Dimitroff

Sofia, May 1919

G. Dimitroff, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 228–232

Published by the BCP. 1952

THE TASKS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

1. THE TRADE UNIONS IN THE PAST

The trade unions sprang up during the early stage of capitalism as an organization aimed at improving the economic conditions of the workers within the *framework* of the existing capitalist system. At first they considered it as their task to fight only the individual capitalists in defence of the immediate professional workers' interests, without affecting the foundations of capitalist exploitation and without going beyond the pale of the capitalist industrial social organization.

The abolition of competition among workers of a given trade, the restricted access of new workers to it and the resorting in extreme cases to strikes – those were the usual methods used by the old trade unions in order to obtain higher wages, shorter working hours and better working conditions.

Failing to see the direct tie-up which exists between the condition of the workers in production and the political and state organization of capitalist society, those trade unions, a classical example of which we find in the former British trade unions, shut themselves up in their narrow professional shell, assiduously avoiding all participation in political battles and in the nation's politics in general, and confining themselves to questions pertaining to their trade. This, of course, subsequently did not prevent them from being quite frequently used, directly or indirectly, for the political ends of the bourgeoisie.

In spite of this innocuous character of the first trade unions the bourgeoisie and its state opposed them vehemently and tried by violence, repression and legalized bans to destroy them, sensing instinctively that they might develop into dangerous class organizations, into organs of the class

struggle of the proletariat for the abolition of the capitalist system.

The rabid acts of violence, repressions and bans against the trade unions, however, far from failed to produce the result expected by the bourgeoisie. A product of the very development of capitalism, having emerged in the struggle between capital and labour and having become a vital necessity for the workers in their defence against capitalist exploitation, the trade unions could not possibly be eradicated. The persecutions against them only intensified the existing class contradictions in capitalist society and revealed them more clearly to the masses of workers. Without the intervention of the trade unions, the strikes were more frequent, spontaneous and turbulent, inflicting immeasurable damage on production, threatening often even the personal safety and property of individual capitalists.

It was precisely this that finally compelled the bourgeoisie to get *reconciled* to the existence of trade unions, while attempting to *tame* them and to turn them into organizations which would regulate relations between workers and capitalists and maintain a lasting peace in industry.

The British bourgeoisie, which for long was complete master on the international market and owned the largest and richest colonies in the world, had ample possibilities, for the attainment of this goal, to mete out certain material benefits to the trade unions which comprised mainly skilled workers, the so-called *labour aristocracy*.

This marked the beginning of the era of collective contracts, concluded between the trade unions and the capitalist organizations and by fixing by mutual consent the conditions and rates of wages and working time, thereby removing for a long time the *danger of strikes* at the enterprises and in the branches of industry affected by these collective contracts. The well-known *wage scales* were established, according to which wage rates were determined in accordance with the average price of prime necessities over a given period, the calculation, however, being usually so made as to keep wages at the lowest possi-

ble level. And in order to involve the workers and their trade unions more deeply in capitalist production, to harness them to it and make them eager collaborators of the capitalists in expending and stabilizing it so as to increase capitalist profit to the utmost, many enterprises resorted to profit-sharing schemes in the form of certain percentages and bonuses granted to the workers. Thus, the capitalists secured a maximum labour efficiency on the part of the workers, safeguarded themselves against their strikes, pocketed fat profits, while all that the workers got was the *illusion* of participating in the profits of the enterprises and, if what they got was inadequate, of attributing it not to capitalist exploitation, not to the greed of the capitalists, not to the capitalist system of production itself and the way the goods produced were distributed, but to their own inadequacy in work, to their failure to put in the necessary efforts for the success of production.

Adopting this industrial policy towards the workers, the capitalists strove to make them believe that an improvement of their condition could be achieved not through strikes, not through a struggle against capitalist exploitation, but *solely* through an increase of capital, through an expansion of production, through constantly growing capitalist profits.

And the majority of trade unions in Great Britain and in several other countries, from bodies for the defence of the workers' interests and for fighting capitalism, were turned into vehicles for the establishment of equilibrium and peace in capitalist production and into an instrument of the nation's capitalists whereby to keep the workers' masses in a state of subordination and bondage, to divert them from the road of the class proletarian struggle and ever to oppose them to the emancipatory workers' revolution.

And when in the middle of the last century, after the founding of the First Socialist International²⁸ and the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels, the proletariat began rapidly to organize itself as a *class of its own* and the trade union movement increasingly adopted Marx's view to the effect that trade unions should

not confine themselves to a partisan war against individual capitalists and to the Sisyphean task of lopping off the *branches* without touching the *trunk* of capitalist exploitation, but should become *schools of socialism* and strive to abolish capitalism itself by playing a *prime role* in the civil war for its downfall, the bourgeoisie adopted a long-term and systematic policy of bribing and corrupting the trade union leaders and the numerous trade union bureaucracy, in order to keep the trade union movement under its influence.

In its press it flattered the trade union leaders as being intelligent and talented workers' representatives, enticed them to come to its sumptuous banquets, courted them in various ways, granted them all sorts of benefits, helped them to enter parliament and kept them firmly in its hands.

It must be admitted that in this way the bourgeoisie quite often succeeded in attaining its goal and in keeping many of the trade unions under its direct or indirect control, of which circumstance it made the widest possible use, in particular during the World War.

2. THE TRADE UNIONS DURING THE WAR

Standing on the positions of their nation's capitalists, the majority of British trade unions, the oldest and strongest trade union organizations, saw in the war the *only* means whereby industry in Great Britain would be able to preserve its dominant position on the world market now threatened by rising and aggressive German capitalism, and to maintain its sway over India and the other rich colonies, which supplied it with raw materials and vast markets for its products.

And the British trade unions placed themselves at the complete service of the imperialist and bellicose policy of their own bourgeoisie. They attempted to stop all strikes, prolonged the expiring terms of all collective contracts and strove to ensure the widest possible development of the war industry. They gave a great number of volunteers from

among their midst and opened special offices for the recruitment of volunteers for the British Army and, when compulsory military service was introduced in Great Britain where it had never existed in the past, they not only did not oppose it, but even enthusiastically applauded this initiative of Lloyd George's as a 'fine' means of forever crushing 'Prussian militarism.'

The German trade unions, on their part, headed by the notorious social-traitor Legien and by the numerous staff of the corrupt workers' bureaucracy, announced that the war of German imperialism against 'perfidious Albion' (England) was at the same time a war for the existence of the working class in Germany, that if the latter were defeated in this war, even the *few* colonies which she possessed compared with Great Britain would be taken away from her, that German industry would be deprived of the raw materials which it needed, its roads to the international markets would be blocked and it would be brought to complete disaster and, together with it, the working class would be reduced to utter misery and unprecedented pauperism and Germany – as Lenin liked to put it – 'instead of exporting *goods*, would be exporting *live men*, its manpower.'

The General Trade Union Committee²⁹ addressed an ardent appeal to the workers in industry and in the Army, urging them to give their all-round support to 'the sacred defensive war' of Kaiser Wilhelm³⁰ and the German imperialists, and demanding of the trade unions to make the workers refrain from all strikes, especially in the field of mining and the war industries.

That is how 'civil peace' between the working class and the imperialist bourgeoisie was solemnly proclaimed. At the very moment when the German capitalists and their joint-stock companies were pocketing billions of profits, when the gold rain of the war was pouring into their safes, the German proletarians were shedding their blood on the battlefields or working day and night in industry for the 'defence of the fatherland,' while their trade unions *invested* their millions in cash (collected over decades in workers' pennies for fighting capitalist exploitation) *in state loans to finance the perfidious war*.

Accompanying the singing of the rabid hymn of the German imperialists and militarists 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,'* the big trade union leaders published a special book, containing articles by the secretaries of the various unions who, with figures relating to their production branches, endeavoured to prove the necessity of Germany's holding out to the end in the war and of her emerging as complete victor, proudly declaring that this would inevitably be achieved, because the war on the part of Germany was *a war which the working class was waging for its existence and its future happiness*. They enthusiastically painted the bright prospects of a military victory for the German workers who would be able freely to travel around the whole world, receiving high wages and enjoying the greatest prosperity! ...

At the same time Gompers's AFL³¹ was carrying on a very intensive propaganda for America's intervention in the war and, when this intervention became a fact, mobilized all its forces in the service of the American millionaires and corporations.

Even the French trade unions which, under the influence of anarcho-syndicalism,³² were considered extreme and irreconcilable enemies of capitalism, in their bulk committed themselves, for similar reasons, to the service of French financial capital in the war, furlled their banners and wholeheartedly embraced the policy of 'civil peace.'

Without dwelling on the betrayal of the trade unions in the other belligerent nations, except for those in Russia, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania which remained completely loyal to the working class and to international proletarian solidarity, we can boldly assert today that if the capitalists in the two warring blocs were able to kindle the holocaust of the world war and drive their peoples into it, if they succeeded in manifesting such titanic forces during its four-year duration, this was due primarily to the fact that they managed in good time to win over the trade unions which had a membership of many millions to their

* Germany, Germany above all!

imperialist cause, and place them at the service of their military policy of conquest.

The old opportunism and auto-syndicalism in the trade union movement; the policy of confining their activity to reforms within the capitalist system; the professional narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness and corruption of the trade union bureaucracy; the education of the workers' masses in the trade unions in a spirit of petty, momentary gains along the road of mutual understanding with the capitalists – all this developed and was brilliantly manifested during the war in the form of a *labour imperialism*, which rent asunder the international solidarity of the proletariat and turned the workers in the different countries into deadly enemies who killed each other for the cause of their common enemy – *world capital*.

This, however, proves the complete bankruptcy of the dominant opportunist policy in the trade union movement in most countries, laying bare before the world proletariat and its workers' organizations with absolute clarity the only salutary road – *the road of intransigent class struggle*, along which, we are glad to say, our own trade unions have been undeviatingly marching from the day of their foundation until today.

3. RESULTS OF THE TRADE UNIONS STRUGGLE

With the trade methods of struggle, the unions in the different countries did, indeed, achieve quite a few results. The despotic arbitrariness of the boss towards the workers at the enterprises was *restricted*. The workers won the right to intervene, through their trade unions, in the settlement of relations between labour and capital. A rise in the *average* wage level was also obtained as compared with the worker's former exceedingly miserable conditions, as well as shorter working hours, which in the past the capitalists could freely prolong to the physically utmost possible limits.

Moreover, the sums spent by the trade unions during periods of unemployment not only alleviate the heavy lot

of the unemployed, but also help to avoid intense competition between unemployed and employed, thus preventing a lowering of wages and the former unrestricted deterioration of general working conditions.

Of course, the benefits derived from the struggle of the trade unions usually go to the skilled and semi-skilled workers, who are those precisely in a position to establish strong trade unions, while the mass of unskilled, general workers enjoy these benefits but little.

How insignificant, in general however, are the results obtained by trade unions over many years of effort and struggle can be clearly seen from the fact that even in the most highly developed capitalist countries, such as Great Britain, Germany and America, the wage rates prior to the war always ranged about the *minimum* necessary for the workers' elementary sustenance, while the working day in most branches of industry was ten, and only here and there eight hours.

The gains of the trade union struggle are, moreover, not only *insufficient* from the viewpoint of the material, cultural and spiritual needs of the working class; they are also *precarious*.

The capitalists have at their disposal various means of *counteracting* the efforts of the trade unions, aimed at improving labour conditions, as well as at *divesting* them of the fruits of their struggle. The general policy of the state, as well as of the conditions in which capitalist production is developing, facilitates their task in this respect.

Thus, they take advantage, above all, of the possibilities offered them by technical progress, introducing and extending the use of women and children in production. These, owing to their smaller power of resistance and lower susceptibility to organization, usually compete with the adult workers and tend to depress working conditions.

For the same purpose the capitalists use the workers from the backward regions and countries whose culture is lower, as well as the helpless and ruined urban and rural petty bourgeois who, owing to their restricted means, are ready to work on terms inferior to those which the trade unions have won.

Compelled to reduce the working day, the capitalists now manage to draw from the workers, even during the shorter working hours, as much of their vital force as before, through piece work and the different special systems of utilizing *every movement* of the worker's body while he is at work. A case in point is the well-known American system, known as the Taylor system, which, however, inevitably leads to the rapid physical degeneration of workers and to a shortening of their capacity for work.

Finally, what the trade unions manage to gain through their professional struggle in the way of higher wages, is by and large taken away from them the next moment as a consequence of the general capitalist policy and, in particular, the introduction and increase of indirect taxes, of import duties and a number of similar means which tend to raise the cost of living.

All these special conditions of trade union struggle have long ago suggested to the more advanced and far-sighted elements among the working class that this struggle should not be waged in an *isolated* way, that it should be *co-ordinated* with the general political struggle of the proletariat, that a *strike* in production should be combined with the *ballot* and the struggle in parliament, as well as with all forms of mass workers' action, that in a word, the *trade union struggle become a component of the entire class struggle of the proletariat*.

And indeed, wherever this has been applied in practice, the trade union struggle has been more successful and surer. But, to be true to historical truth, it must be admitted that, even when the struggle of the trade unions is thus combined, *its limits and chances of success* do not change substantially. Even then, its results, though substantially greater and surer, still remain *insufficient and precarious*. They do not create for the working class in capitalist society the possibility of living well and like cultured men, nor do they even substantially decrease the material and social misery in which it lives.

All improvements obtained through *strikes*, on the one hand, and through *labour protection laws*, on the other, as

long as political power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie, cannot exceed the limits of a given amount of capitalist profit, as otherwise the very existence of capitalist industry would be impossible.

Surveying today the whole history of the struggle of the trade unions, we can see that its only *essential and lasting* result consists in that the workers have *succeeded in resisting the utter exhaustion of their vital forces and in safeguarding themselves against utter physical and moral degeneration to which capitalism is irresistibly pushing them.* The trade unions, however, are not in a position to impose *sufficient and lasting* improvement which would enable the workers' masses to lead a more cultural and happier life *for a long period.*

4. THE NEW CONDITIONS OF TRADE UNION STRUGGLE

The World War created conditions which further impede the struggle of the trade unions and substantially lower even the chances of obtaining practical results which it had prior to the war.

First of all, it nullified most of the previous gains in the working conditions of all the belligerent, and even of neutral nations. Everywhere wages far from correspond to the colossal rise in the cost of living. There is a precipice between the *nominal* and the *real* wage, i. e. its actual purchasing power. There is an unprecedented rise in the price of the necessities of life and a shortage of them, an acute housing crisis and unprecedented misery for the working masses in the defeated as well as in the victorious countries.

Moreover, the war radically upset all economic life. For four years, almost 45 million people, instead of producing goods, were engaged in a terrible holocaust of destruction. More than 20 million producers of goods left their lives on the battlefields or were disabled, i. e. deprived of their former capacity for work. Flourishing regions in the world were devastated. All reserves of raw materials and foods were swallowed up by the greedy war monster. Vast spaces of land remained uncultivated. Three-quarters of the farm animals were killed. The workers who returned from the

battlefields are physically exhausted and morally upset. Trade has been completely disorganized. The former relations between the different economic and industrial regions for the exchange of raw materials and finished goods have been discontinued. The means of communication (railroad, shipping and other communications) have been worn out, etc.

As a result of this disorganization of economic life, many branches of industry today are at a standstill, and others have altogether ceased to function. Mass unemployment is assuming unprecedented proportions in all countries of the world.

Today, in the period of liquidation of the World War, which in effect is no liquidation at all but merely a passing over of the war into *another stage* – into the stage of an imperialist war against the rising international proletarian revolution, capitalism has proved *incapable* of securing peace among nations, of restoring production and securing the elementary survival of the masses. Crushed by the weight of its insoluble internal contradictions, its only *concern* now is to save itself from the revolution, resorting for this purpose to civil war and thereby fanning still further the chaos in production and economic life and infinitely increasing the sufferings of its own people.

On the other hand, the World War irretrievably ushered in the epoch of the international proletarian revolution. We see its beginning now in Soviet Russia. The revolutionary movements which have already started in Germany, Austria and Hungary, as well as the intensified undercurrents in Italy, France and Great Britain, whose echo reaches our ears from time to time, testify to its early spread to other countries as well.

Anarchy in economic life, disorganization in production accompanied by mass unemployment and misery are still further heightened by the civil war, whereby the bourgeoisie is trying in vain to retain its shaken supremacy.

There are no longer any prospects for a return to prewar conditions. The war itself accelerated and revealed the *complete bankruptcy* of the capitalist system of production and trade, of social organization and state government.

History now confronts working mankind with the dilemma: *either to pass over to new forms of production and social organization or to perish under the regime of imperialist barbarity.* The restoration of economic life today is possible only *along socialist lines*, i. e. without the capitalists and *against* them.

But precisely under these new conditions the efforts of the trade unions to improve the conditions of the workers even back to the prewar level have become quite *hopeless* and *helpless*. Within the *framework* of the capitalist system this is *excluded*. For its attainment, the first condition is to *break and go beyond* this framework.

And indeed, how will the trade unions be able to obtain the improvements needed by the workers when economic life today is so upset, when there is such mass unemployment and when the strong and extremely obdurate financial capitalists, whom the war even in our small backward country raised to the position of absolute rulers and lords in economic life, are inclined to see in every movement for higher wages and shorter working hours a *revolutionary action*, aimed *directly* at the overthrow of capitalist rule? What labour laws of a nature to expand and consolidate the gains of the trade union struggle could be enacted by the present-day bourgeois state, which is writhing under billions of war debts and is financially bankrupt?

It is, precisely these peculiar conditions in the trade union struggle at the present-day imperialist stage of capitalism which confront the proletariat and, in particular, its trade unions with the immediate task of *doing away with the capitalist system and the ensuing exploitation of labour.*

The moment is setting in when instead of endeavouring through the trade union struggle *slowly and gradually* to improve the workers' condition within the *limits* of capitalist production, production *itself* has to pass into the hands of the proletariat so as to be organized not for capitalist profit and in favour of a minority, as it is today, but to meet the needs of the working majority and for the general prosperity of those who work.

5. THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL POWER

But it is precisely for this reason that at the present historical moment the struggle for political power by the proletariat *comes to the fore* and all other efforts and tasks of the workers' organizations, including the trade unions, must be co-ordinated with this struggle and be completely subordinated to it. For the replacement of one social and production system by another is possible only by means of political power. The abolition of capitalist exploitation, which is today the immediate task of the trade unions, can be achieved only if the proletariat wrests power from the hands of the ruling bourgeoisie and establishes a proletarian dictatorship exercised by the workers' councils.

But if the *strike* is the strongest weapon of the trade unions for gaining improvements in production, now, when it is a question of seizing political power and proceeding to a radical reconstruction of production and society, not the *strike*, even in the form of a mass political strike, will settle the issue, but the *proletarian revolution*.

Instead of a struggle with *hands crossed* by different groups and the masses of workers, we have to have a struggle waged by the whole proletariat, which it will terminate with *arms in hand!*

To rally the masses, to educate and prepare them for this struggle, while they themselves take a most active part in it under the leadership of the Communist Party, *is today the foremost task* of the trade unions, if they wish to remain true to the interests of the proletariat and to their own role of class proletarian organizations.

6. TRADE UNION NEUTRALITY

In this factual and historical state of affairs, is it necessary to prove in detail that there is no room today for any so-called political neutrality – the neutrality of the trade unions with regard to political parties and political struggles?

Trade union neutrality has always been a purely

bourgeois idea. Under the guise of political neutrality, the bourgeoisie and its agents in the workers' movement (the right-wing socialists and the various 'workers' friends' and social-reformers) have attempted to detach the trade unions from the class struggle of the proletariat and turn them into tools for the maintenance of capitalist rule.

In fact, *never* and in *no country* have the trade unions been neutral. The whole history of the workers' movement bears this out. The trade unions have always either remained true to the proletarian cause and have resolutely fought against capitalism, taking part in some way or other in the political struggles in favour of the proletariat, or have directly or indirectly, in one form or another, been at the service of the bourgeoisie, letting the bourgeois parties use them in their internecine struggles for the plums derived from power, and often even in their fight against the emancipatory movement of the proletariat itself.

What in fact the neutrality of the trade unions amounts to was best seen during the World War, when the 'neutral' and 'free' trade unions in Germany, France, Great Britain and America committed their treason towards the cause of proletarian liberation, by taking part with might and main in the bellicose imperialist policy of their own capitalist classes.

And indeed, can the trade unions be *neutral* in the struggle between labour and capital in which by their very nature they are directly involved?

Still less is it possible today, when class contradictions have reached their peak, when the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are pitted against each other as *class* against *class*, when the period of the international proletarian revolution has been ushered in, to speak about trade union neutrality.

For the trade unions to be *neutral* today towards the political class party of the proletariat means for them to be *dependent* on the bourgeoisie and to be serving some of the bourgeois parties.

For the trade unions to be *neutral* to the workers' revolution which is being implemented means that they will be *helping* the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Either with labour – *against* capital; or with *capital* – *against* labour! Either on the side of the *revolution*, or in the camp of the *counter-revolution*!

There is no middle road!

And in this connexion the *form* in which this takes place is of absolutely no significance; what counts is the *essence* of the matter. The fact that certain trade unions are *formally* considered as *neutral* and *independent* means absolutely nothing: in fact they cannot be such, and will inevitably go either to the *one* or to the *other* side, to the *one* or to the *other* of the two fighting camps.

The historical development of the proletarian class struggle has not only refuted all bourgeois fallacies about trade union neutrality and independence towards the political organization and struggle of the proletariat, but also imposes today a *still closer unity* between the trade unions and the Communist Party, a *complete organic unity* between the professional and political struggles of the proletariat for *the overthrow of capitalism, the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship and the achievement of communism.*

7. THE NEW TASKS OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The example set to us by Soviet Russia where the proletariat has now been exercising its dictatorship for a year and a half and is implementing the country's socialist reconstruction, has shown clearly that the trade unions do not end their historical role and do not cease to exist even when the proletariat has succeeded, through its revolution, in seizing political power. On the contrary, precisely during this *transitional* period of proletarian dictatorship – from the overthrow of the bourgeoisie to the achievement of communism – the trade unions are called upon to play a no less important role. Of course, their role now is profoundly different from what they were doing in the period of capitalist production and under bourgeois rule. Here they cease to be organizations of the proletariat against capitalist exploitation, because the capitalists have been removed

from production or have been rendered absolutely harmless under the regime of proletarian dictatorship.

True, during this transitional period the trade unions will again continue to defend the workers, but no longer through *strikes* but through the organized influence of *Soviet power*. Together with the proletariat, the *trade unions* themselves, as it were, *have come to power*, i. e. become part of the government, organs of *Soviet Government*.

The trade unions will further have to organize the control and distribution of the work force in the different branches of production, under the general plan worked out by the Soviet Government for the whole nation's economy.

In agreement with the Soviet economic bodies, the trade unions will be settling questions referring to the wages and conditions of workers in the different enterprises, will maintain labour discipline in them and work for a maximum increase in labour productivity.

The elaboration of the laws, the fixing of working hours, wages, hygienic working conditions, insurance against employment accidents, sickness, old age, etc., as well as the application of these laws will be another important function of the trade unions.

Theirs will also be the task of taking care of general and professional education, necessary for the training of a numerous workers' technical intelligentsia, without which neither the complete regulation of production, nor its nationalization and subsequent organization along socialist lines is conceivable.

And, most important of all, the trade unions will be charged with the task of organizing the *workers' control* over production which will exist until complete socialization is achieved, and of taking into their own hands, as organs of Soviet rule, in conjunction with the other economic bodies, the organization and management of production and the country's entire economic life.

After the conquest of political power by the proletariat, the trade unions will transfer the centre of their activity to the sphere of the organization of economic life. They will have to prepare the proletariat for the role of organizer of production in the transition from *private capitalist monopoly*

to state monopoly, and from the latter to the socialist organization of economic life and to complete communism.

It will be no exaggeration if we say that without the accomplishment of these exceedingly important tasks on the part of trade unions, *neither a complete nor lasting triumph of the workers' revolution is possible, nor the achievement of communism.*

8. CONCLUSION

The functions of the trade unions prior to the revolution, during the revolution, as well as afterwards during the period of proletarian dictatorship – so important and so complex – imperatively demand that the Bulgarian trade unions become genuine *mass* organizations in composition and in their ties with the broad workers' masses, restoring the *complete* trade union *unity*, and that these masses being firmly welded together, deeply imbued with the ideas and spirit of communism, be fully prepared for the communist revolution and the organized construction of life in the new society.

Our road is indeed not a smooth one. We are still faced with many hard tests.

The great cause to the service of which we have voluntarily dedicated ourselves, however, deserves the utmost efforts and sacrifices on our part.

Let us, therefore, make them without any hesitation, profoundly convinced of the inevitable triumph of the international proletarian revolution and of the fact that all mankind will one day be basking in the sun of communism, which is already shining in the *East*, quite close to us, over vast Russia peopled with many millions of men, with its wonderful purple rays calling to a new life!

Communist Trade Union Library, No. 3

Sofia, February, 1920

G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 348–370

Published by the BCP, 1952

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

On November 7, 1917 (October 25 old style) the Russian workers and peasants, led by the Bolshevik Party, overthrew the bourgeois coalition government established after the February Revolution and transferred all power over vast and multi-million Russia to the Soviets of Workers and Peasants.

This was the *first* victory of the international revolutionary proletariat over capitalism and imperialism, the *beginning* of the world-wide revolution.

This great exploit of the Russian proletariat was received by the enemies of the Revolution both inside Russia and in all the other countries with loud prophecies to the effect that the power of the Soviets would not be able to last more than a few weeks, that it was bound to collapse, mainly because the simple workers and peasants would not be able to cope with the *extremely complex* economic and administrative problems in so vast a country as Russia.

Soon, however, the world imperialists and their tools – from the extreme conservatives to the most leftist socialist traitors – had a big disappointment in store for them. Despite the tremendous internal and external obstacles, the Soviet regime, far from heading for a fall, was growing stronger day after day, boldly introducing radical changes and proceeding with the construction of a Communist system in the country.

Thereupon the imperialists of the Entente resorted to military intervention against the free and self-governing Russian people by financing the counter-revolutionary armies of Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin and organizing an economic blockade of Soviet Russia.

The imperialists were exultant, expecting the early destruction of this nest of the world proletarian revolution which was so dangerous for them. Their agents and their lavishly subsidized press were proclaiming to the whole world the forthcoming erasing of Bolshevik Russia from the face of the earth.

Difficult and critical months set in for the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, months of privations, bloodshed and death. But the Russian workers and peasants created their glorious revolutionary Red Army, an army such as the world had never seen before, which realized that it was fighting not only to defend its own socialist homeland from the imperialist beasts of prey, but also to clear the way for the complete liberation of all working people in the world. This Red Army swept away and annihilated the counter-revolutionary hordes of Kolchak, Yudenich and Denikin.

Yet precisely at the moment when, after this brilliant victory, Soviet Russia was transforming its Red Army into an *army of labour* and was preparing to devote itself wholeheartedly to the process of internal reorganization and to the building of the new system, the imperialists stabbed the Russian people in the back, sending against it the Polish landlords' army, organized and well equipped by the Entente.³³

But even this long-planned and painstakingly prepared heinous attack was repelled by the heroic Red Army and terminated not in the collapse of the Soviet regime, as the imperialists had hoped, but in peace between Poland and Soviet Russia.

The peace treaty signed with Poland now enables Soviet Russia to cope, once and for all, with the last counter-revolutionary army on Russian soil – Baron Wrangel's army, which gravely threatened Southern Russia and is now suffering the blows of the valiant Russian workers and peasants.

Three whole years have passed in incessant and bloody struggles with the imperialist counter-revolution.

It should be stressed again and again that the Russian trade unions have played an important role in this respect.

After the 1917 October Revolution when all the power passed into the hands of the Workers' and Peasants' Soviets, the trade unions ceased to be organizations fighting against capitalist exploitation, which was dealt a mortal blow by the proletarian revolution. They turned into active collaborators of the Soviet regime, into a staunch support of the proletarian dictatorship.

Not only did the Russian trade unions devote all their efforts to the struggle against economic ruin, helping to carry out the socialization of industry, to restore the disorganized transport system and to increase labour productivity to the maximum, but they also took – and continue to take – a most active part in the defeat of the counter-revolution and in the struggle to repel the offensives of the imperialist counter-revolutionary armies. They suffered thousands of casualties on the battlefields, but they spared no effort to supply the Red Army with everything that was needed for victory.

Now that we are celebrating the third anniversary of the Great Russian Revolution, we can venture to say that its cause would have been a lost cause were it not for the admirable contribution of the trade unions.

Devoting all their forces to the proletarian revolution, the Russian trade unions did not, however, shut themselves into their national frontiers. Deeply imbued with the ideas of communism, they felt it their duty to take the lead in the international revolutionary rallying of the trade union movement in all countries under the banner of the Third Communist International and in the name of the Communist revolution and of the world-wide proletarian dictatorship.

It was on the initiative of the Russian trade unions that an International Trade Union Council was set up as the basis for a Red Trade Union International, opposed to the treacherous yellow Amsterdam Trade Union Federation; day after day the International Trade Union Council is rallying greater masses of organized workers in all countries. It was recently joined by the minority of the Confederation of Labour in France, and in the near future this minority will grow into an overwhelming majority.

The revolutionary working class movements in Italy and Great Britain are rapidly drawing the trade unions in their countries closer to the Red Trade Union International. The general revolutionary situation throughout Europe helps to extricate the mass trade unions from the influence of the old treacherous leaders and of the Amsterdam Federation and to enlist them into the ranks of the international revolutionary proletarian front. The trade unions in the Balkan and Danubian countries have already joined the International Trade Union Council without any reservations and they are uniting their efforts in a Balkan-Danubian Trade Union Federation as part of the Red Trade Union International.

Within a few months (July-October) the Moscow International Trade Union Council succeeded in rallying nearly *eight* million organized workers from various countries.

To sum up, the third anniversary of the Russian Proletarian Revolution coincides with the process of the rapid revolutionary rallying of the working class masses in all countries and foreshadows the forthcoming unfolding of the proletarian dictatorship throughout the world.

With the blood they abundantly shed, the Russian proletarians cleared the path for the liberation of all working mankind. Celebrating their great historic achievements, the Bulgarian proletarians will prepare ever more persistently to worthily fulfil their duty – to secure the triumph of the Communist revolution in their own country.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik
No. 100, November 3, 1920
Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works,
Vol. 5, pp. 495–499
Published by the BCP

Prior to the imperialist war, which broke out in August 1914, the general trade unions in the different countries were united on an international basis in the International Trade Union, with headquarters in Berlin. It was headed by the social patriot Legien, President of the German Trade Unions, who is well-known to our workers as he came to Sofia in 1914 to unite us with the Right-wing 'Socialists'.

The individual trade unions for their part had their own international trade union secretariats or federations, forming part of the International Trade Union. But as in the Second Socialist International, so also in the leadership of the International Trade Union, opportunism held complete sway. International solidarity, which was so noisily proclaimed at the different international conferences and congresses, was in fact only an empty phrase. The actual policy of the trade unions in most countries, in Germany and Austria, as well as in England, Italy, France and America, was pervaded by trade union selfishness and social-chauvinism and completely subordinated to the aggressive policy of the imperialists in those countries.

The Great Imperialist War most vividly revealed this character of the International Trade Union and the mass of trade union organizations affiliated to it.

Instead of expressing the international solidarity of the workers throughout the world, organized in the trade unions against the imperialist war, immediately after its outbreak the International Trade Union broke up into two belligerent camps – the one siding with the Entente and the other with the Central Powers.

The trade unions in Germany and Austria, as well as those in the countries of the Entente, placed themselves en-

tirely at the service of the imperialists of their states for war purposes. They proclaimed 'civil peace', stepped up the production of war materials and invested the millions they had on hand, and which in the course of many years had been collected from the workers to fight imperialism, in internal state loans, for the reciprocal annihilation of the proletariat of the battlefields.

The treacherous leaders of the trade union movement Legien (Germany), Hüber (Austria), Jouhaux (France), Appleton (England) and Gompers (USA) were the most zealous advocates of a continuation of the bloody holocaust, the most loyal agents and collaborators of the imperialist plunderers in their own countries.

It can safely be said that the war would never have assumed such gigantic proportions and continued for so long a time if the imperialists had not succeeded, thanks to the treacherous trade union leaders, in hitching the trade unions to their chariot.

But the international imperialist war ushered in the epoch of the world proletarian revolution, the first triumph of which was the Great October Revolution and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship in vast and multi-million Russia.

The imperialists of the Entente sensed at once that their victory in the war been a Pyrrhic victory and that the beginning proletarian revolution was a serious threat to capitalist rule, and was slowly but surely digging its grave.

And just as in waging the war for four long years the imperialists had greatly relied on the treacherous workers' leaders and the mass trade union organizations headed by them, seeing in them a solid buttress for their class, so now faced with the spectre of the revolution, it is on them that they pinned their greatest hopes of diverting the proletariat from the road of the proletarian revolution and of destroying its nest – Soviet Russia.

They set up a special Labour Organization³⁴ at the League of Nations and their social-patriotic agents tried to revive the International Union, which had gone bankrupt during the war, by moving its seat to Amsterdam, calling it the Amsterdam International Trade Union Federation.

This very federation is today the last buttress of imperialism in its fight against the proletarian revolution. It is attempting to keep the workers' masses under the influence of bourgeois democracy, i. e. of the imperialists, and to divert them from the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. This 'international' federation spares no efforts to get the trade union movement back into the old rut of the fight for petty reforms and turn it into a bulwark of the imperialist counter-revolution.

In vain, however! The trade unions in all countries are rapidly becoming revolutionized, not only taking a firm stand with their active support of Soviet Russia and against imperialism, but increasingly realizing that the only way out of the present unbearable situation in their own countries is the forceful overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship.

Against the yellow, treacherous and counter-revolutionary Amsterdam, red and revolutionary Moscow, with its Communist International and the International Trade Union Council set up there, is rising as a powerful centre rallying the militant proletariat in the whole world.

And while every day the mass trade unions are detaching themselves from the influence of Amsterdam one after the other, the Moscow International Council – only five months after its foundation – unites today some 10 million workers organized in trade unions, rallying every day ever newer masses of workers and trade union organizations under its revolutionary banner.

The proletariat of all countries organized into trade unions is today faced with the dilemma: with Moscow or with Amsterdam, which in other words means: with labour or with capital; with the revolution or with the counter-revolution; with criminal imperialism or with liberating communism!

Can there be any doubt that the proletariat of all countries will side with Moscow and against Amsterdam? Only he who does not know the inexorable historical course of events and who has no faith in the future of the proletariat can doubt this.

Moscow will inevitably conquer Amsterdam. And it is

this victory that will secure the final triumph of the Soviet proletarian revolution over capitalism and imperialism. The Bulgarian proletariat, united in the General Trade Union and under the banner of the Communist Party, is fighting for its early realization. We have the co-operation along this line also of the trade union councils in the other Balkan and Danubian countries, which, together with the Bulgarian Trade Union Council, have already set up in Sofia a Trade Union Secretariat of their own, an organ of the International Trade Union Council under the supreme leadership of the Third Communist International – the general revolutionary headquarters of the world proletarian revolution.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik, No. 108

November 13, 1920

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 506–510

Published by the BCP, 1952

A BIG STRIDE FORWARD

The economic, social and political consequences of the imperialist war, on the one hand, and the beginning social revolution, on the other, have confronted the proletariat throughout the world with the supreme immediate task of fighting for the elimination of capitalism and exploitation of hired labour by the revolutionary establishment of an international proletarian dictatorship.

Directed against world capital which is well-organized and still has many forces at its disposal, this struggle cannot be confined to the narrow national limits of individual states. Its success will be secured only when it is organized and waged on an international scale.

The international solidarity of the proletariat, which was destroyed by the imperialists with the aid of their loyal tools – the social traitors in various countries – had to be restored, therefore, and now on new and more solid principles.

Whereas prior to the imperialist war international proletarian solidarity, supported by the Second International and the International Trade Union Council of Legien, Gompers, Appleton and Jouhaux, was usually displayed at showy congresses and conferences, which took flexible, rubber-stamp resolutions, optional even for those who voted them, and was very rarely manifested in action, chiefly in petty material aid during big strikes, today it is imperative to achieve an international rallying of the proletariat for the immediate waging of the revolutionary class struggle, of the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship.

The Third Communist International was born in the flames of the civil war and continues to develop

magnificently before our eyes precisely as an international organization of the proletariat for *revolutionary* action, as a leading body of the world proletarian revolution.

But the Communist International would not be able to fulfil its great historic mission and the social revolution itself would be impossible on an international scale, without the revolutionary rallying of the trade unions in all countries, without wresting the tremendous organized workers' masses from the influence of the yellow Amsterdam Federation, behind whose back the imperialists stand and through which they act.

Fortunately, the trade unions' own struggle under the new conditions, when capitalist production and the entire political, social and industrial system of capitalism have gone completely bankrupt, is inevitably pushing them along the road of the proletarian revolution and towards Moscow. They are no longer faced with the once limited task of fighting for petty gains and reforms within the framework of the capitalist system – that epoch is past and gone. Proceeding from the vital interests of the workers' masses organized in their ranks, they are now faced with the imperative necessity of taking part in the revolutionary class struggle for the abolition of the very capitalist system, which is incompatible with the treacherous and counter-revolutionary policy of the Amsterdam Federation.

That is why the initiative taken by the Russian trade unions in setting up an international centre of the trade union movement at the Communist International, in the person of the International Council of Trade Unions in Moscow, was so soon crowned with brilliant success. More than ten million workers organized in trade unions have already rallied under its banners. A fierce ideological struggle is today raging in the trade unions of all countries, which have joined the Amsterdam Federation, around the question: for *Moscow* or for *Amsterdam*. Every new day brings us the news of the detachment of some trade union organizations from the Amsterdam Federation and of their affiliation with the Moscow International Council and the Communist International. This progressive communist orientation of the trade unions is proceeding everywhere

with much greater momentum and speed than could have been imagined at the founding of the International Council in Moscow last July.

Along with this international revolutionary rallying of the proletariat, however, the *peculiar* situation in countries representing in many respects *integral* regions and called upon to play a *special* role in the international proletarian revolution, as is the case with the Balkan and Danubian states, makes imperative the establishment of closest contacts and complete unity in the organization and struggle of the proletariat.

The first important step was made along this line with the establishment of the Balkan-Danubian Communist Federation as component part of the Communist International.

A new step along this line is also the *Balkan-Danubian Trade Union Conference*, which was convened early in November in Sofia on the initiative of the Bulgarian Trade Union and in accordance with its congress held last September.

A representative of the International Trade Union Council in Moscow took part in this *first* conference of the trade unions of the Balkan and Danubian countries.

With the participation of delegates from Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria, and with the expressly declared consent of the Confederation of Labour in Greece whose delegates were prevented from coming to Sofia owing to the legislative elections which were held at that time in Greece, the First Balkan-Danubian Trade Union Conference in a two-day session examined thoroughly the present situation of the International Trade Union Movement, and more in particular in the Balkan and Danubian countries. It noted with gratification that social-patriotism in the trade unions has been crushed in the Balkans and that the Amsterdam Federation enjoyed no support here among the proletariat and unanimously, in the spirit of the International Council and the theses of the Communist International on the trade union movement, mapped out the principled lines of the general struggle for the proletarian dictatorship to be pursued by the trade unions

in the Balkan and Danubian countries in the present historical period.*

The Conference also established the necessary organizational contact by setting up a temporary Balkan-Danubian Trade Union Secretariat in Sofia at the Balkan-Danubian Communist Federation as an organ of the International Trade Union Council. The temporary Balkan-Danubian Trade Union Secretariat, the immediate guidance of which was entrusted to the Bulgarian Trade Union, took over the tasks of the International Council with regard to the Balkan and Danubian countries and will be working for the revolutionary rallying of the trade unions in those countries in the name of the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship.

The noiseless work of the Conference is of tremendous significance for the forthcoming revolutionary class struggles of the proletariat in the Balkans. It has been placed on solid foundations and what remains is only to further build it up and consolidate it.

In opposition to the unification of the bourgeois classes in the Balkan and Danubian countries which is being affected under the aegis of Entente imperialism, through the so-called Little Entente, the *united* revolutionary proletarian front is being welded and consolidated.

The workers' masses from *below* are fraternally joining hands and are bridging the deep gap between the Balkan and Danubian peoples, dug out by the nationalist and aggressive wars of their bourgeois classes and the imperialism of the European capitalist countries.

A new and decisive stride forward towards the final victory of the international proletarian revolution has thus been made.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik, No. 126

December 6, 1920

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 5, pp. 531-535

Published by the BCP, 1952

* The resolutions of the conference will be published in the forthcoming issues of our paper.

THE UNIONS AND PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

Trade unions came into being and developed in the heyday of capitalism as organizations for the defence of the workers' interests in production within the framework of the capitalist system.

Embracing at first only skilled workers in their ranks, subsequently the trade unions gained such a strong influence among the workers' masses in the advanced capitalist nations that they became a powerful factor in capitalist production in their own countries.

Rejected and rabidly persecuted at their inception, they were later recognized by the bourgeoisie and its ideologists as organizations *indispensable* for the proper development of production, for the maintenance of the *peace and stability* necessary there and for regulating relations between labour and capital, while preserving and consolidating the capitalist system.

Through the influential, narrow-minded and often venal trade union bureaucracy and through petty concessions and lures for the workers, the capitalists succeeded in putting the big and powerful trade unions under the indirect influence of their exploiter policy, by concluding long-term collective contracts with them, in *taming* them, thus securing for many years *normal* work at their enterprises and protecting themselves against frequent and sudden strikes so harmful to their interests.

Matters had gone so far along these lines that long before the imperialist war most of the trade unions, especially in Great Britain and Germany, had lost every aspect and semblance of class proletarian organizations and had turned into an instrument for maintaining the capitalists' *peace of mind* in production, and for *securing* the sources of their fabulous profits.

During the war itself, as a logical consequence of this state of affairs in the most advanced capitalist nations, those under the influence of the bourgeois social-reformists (Germany and Austria), as well as the anarchosyndical trade unions (France), sided completely with their own imperialists, lent most active support to their imperialist and aggressive policy, provided the world with the shameful spectacle of a four-year mutual massacre of the very proletarian masses, whose representatives at international congresses and conferences had been declaiming an nauseam on 'the international solidarity of the proletariat of the entire globe.'

It was in vain that Marx as early as 1848, when writing the Communist Manifesto, and later at the foundation of the First International in 1864, had pointed out the revolutionary road of the trade unions stressing their task as schools of socialism and comparing their role as regards the proletariat with that of the former municipalities with respect to the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

It was also in vain that prior to and during the war the socialists, who had remained true to Marx's revolutionary socialism, were incessantly sounding the alarm against the trade unions' *degeneration* and *going middle class*, etc. Most of these unions had so deeply sunk into the mire of opportunism, and were so far from understanding their historic mission, that they remained deaf to all this and saw nothing in front of them except the petty benefits which they might acquire from the victory of the aggressive policy of the bourgeois classes in their own countries, be it even at the price of the mass massacre of the working classes and of the exploitation and oppression of the proletariat in the other countries and especially in the colonies.

But the imperialist war brought about a radical change in the situation. Capitalist production was completely upset. Devaluation and inflation spread. The cost of living skyrocketed. Real wages sank abysmally. The improvements and reforms gained by the trade unions as a result of long efforts and struggles collapsed irretrievably. All attempts to restore at least the prewar situation proved illusory. The impotence and helplessness of the old trade

unions, which in the past, had been major factors in production was felt most keenly.

On the other hand, the victorious revolution of the Russian workers and peasants ushered in the epoch of the world proletarian revolution. The proletariat in all countries was faced with the inevitable dilemma: either to perish together with moribund capitalism or, by way of revolution and proletarian dictatorship, to organize its life along communist lines, to create a new industry without capitalists, without capitalist profit and without exploitation of the workers.

The old trade union doctrine and practice, according to which a good life had to be guaranteed to the workers within the framework of the capitalist system by *gradually* reforming it, went *completely bankrupt*. They had become *obsolete*. Life imposed *new roads*, i. e. the roads mapped out already by Marx and so persistently maintained for a long time, first and foremost by the Russian Bolsheviks and the Bulgarian left-wing socialists.

Vain are today the efforts of the defenders of capitalism and their social-patriotic agents to keep the trade unions in their old role of beggars and divert them from the road of the proletarian revolution through the Amsterdam International Trade Union Federation and through the so-called International Labour Office at the League of Nations.

The Amsterdam Federation, much like the imperialist League of Nations itself, is rent by the existing insurmountable inner contradictions among the imperialists of different countries and represents a modern version of the legend about the Tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues.

The workers' masses and the trade unions are increasingly marching along the road of struggle, for the abolition of capitalism through the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship, as demonstrated in practice by the victorious Russian proletariat. They are rapidly rallying around the Communist International and the International Trade Union Council in Moscow and are mobilizing their forces for a decisive offensive against capitalism.

While not forsaking the possible defence of the workers

against ruthless capitalist exploitation, the trade unions which have become or are now becoming affiliated with Moscow are *focussing* their efforts and their activity on the revolutionary class struggle and on its feverish preparation so as to carry out their important historic role in the proletarian revolution of their own countries.

It goes without saying that along this line the transport workers' unions, owing to the *nature* of the work performed by their masses, will have to do an all the more important and hard job.

An American communist recently said with a good deal of justification: 'As soon as the transport and mining workers' unions opt for the revolution, we in the United States will see the triumph of the proletarian dictatorship!'

We have no reason whatever to fear that the Bulgarian transport proletariat will *refuse* to fulfil its role, so fateful for the proletarian revolution in our own country. On the contrary. The bitter experience which it gained during the events of last January and February, and the valuable lessons, which it drew from them, are a further guarantee that it will be in the front ranks of the revolutionary class struggle for the proletarian dictatorship in our country.

The unification of the transport proletariat within the ranks of the Transport Workers' Union and under the banner of communism goes to show better than anything else that it is fully conscious of its great duties and responsibilities at the present historic moment.

'Transport,' No. 1, December 20
Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov Works, Vol. 5, pp. 554-559
Published by the BCP, 1952

ADDRESS TO THE FOURTH ALL-RUSSIAN TRADE
UNION CONGRESS ON BEHALF OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF RED TRADE UNIONS

May 17, 1921

I very much regret that I cannot speak Russian, but I hope that you will understand the gist of what I am going to say in Bulgarian. I am happy that in addressing you on behalf of the International Trade Union Council I can, at the same time, greet you on behalf of the professionally organized revolutionary proletariat of Bulgaria and of the proletariat of the other Balkan countries.

I can assure you, representatives of the heroic Russian proletariat, that the Balkan workers, just as the revolutionary workers of Europe and America, are following the road mapped out by the Russian proletariat, the road of a relentless and intransigent struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale. Despite the bourgeoisie's terrible terror and the other brutal persecutions of the revolutionary proletariat in all countries, the latter is rapidly gathering its forces and getting ready to do to its bourgeoisie what the Russian proletariat did in October 1917.

The trade unions in Bulgaria and in the other Balkan countries are organs of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. They consider that the peaceful period of trade union struggle is now definitely over and that in the present profound and unsurmountable crisis in the capitalist world the immediate task of the trade unions is the struggle to seize political power and all the means of production. The duel between Amsterdam and Moscow, now taking place in the entire trade union movement the world over, has ended in Bulgaria and the Balkan countries with the complete triumph of Moscow. The same thing is bound to happen soon in Europe and in America.

We know from the Russian experience that our first

task is completely to neutralize the influence of the Mensheviks and the socialist traitors of all kinds and their bastion, the Amsterdam Federation, because the fact that in Great Britain and Germany, in France and Italy, and in the industrially most advanced America the proletariat is still under capitalist domination is only to be explained by the treacherous policy of the yellow leaders and the opportunism of the trade union bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie and the Mensheviks all over the world always claim that Russia is a barbarous country, uncivilized and incapable of anything. Yet, actually it is from you, from the Russian proletariat, that the civilized European proletariat must learn how to rid itself of the domination of capital; it must begin to act in the Russian way. We, too, constantly learn from your great experience. This experience teaches us, first and foremost, that without trade unions which are thoroughly imbued with the communist spirit and go hand in hand with the Communist Party, the complete victory of the proletarian revolution is impossible, there cannot be a genuine and real proletarian dictatorship, and the socialist organization of production and the creation of a communist society are inconceivable. We are well acquainted with the trade unions as organizations which do not struggle against capitalist exploitation – we know this both from the teaching of our great teachers Marx and Engels and from our own experience. But what we do not find either in the Communist Manifesto, or in the remaining works of our teachers who in their theoretical research were unable to define the precise role and tasks of trade unions in the transition period of the proletarian dictatorship, we are now learning from your experience, the concrete forms of which you are working out in the practical activity of the trade unions in this transition period. The Russian proletariat has experienced and is still experiencing unheard of sufferings, it has made countless sacrifices not only for its own self, but also for the cause of the proletarian revolution the world over. Your sufferings and sacrifices will not have been in vain. Their beneficent results are already being felt in the titanic struggle, which is shaking the entire capitalist world, one of the greatest

manifestations of which is the present colossal struggle of the British miners.

Moscow is the lodestar of the proletarian struggle all over the world. Moscow is the sun which dispels the darkness of impenetrable night in the capitalist world. Moscow has proudly and quite deservedly assumed the lead in rallying the trade unions on an international scale, which is a necessary and inevitable condition for the complete triumph of the international proletarian revolution. Bowing before the precious memory of the countless fallen fighters of the Russian proletariat, we exclaim: Long live the Russian trade union movement, long live its worthy representatives at the Fourth Trade Union Congress, long live the Russian Communist Party, the soul of the trade union movement in Russia, long live the Communist International and its right hand, the Red International of Trade Unions!

*The Fourth All-Russian Congress of
Trade Unions*

*Workers' Publishing House of the
All-Russian Central Trade Union Council, 1922*

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 6 pp. 3-6

Published by the BCP, 1954

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE BALKANS

I

Owing to their particular location as a connecting link between Europe and Asia, the Balkans have long been a battle ground in the struggle between the two European imperialist blocs, one of which is headed by Great Britain and the other by Germany.

In the course of decades these two blocs have done their utmost to utilize the Balkan Peninsula for the purposes of their imperialist policy: for investing their capital, marketing their commodities, obtaining raw materials, and, above all, for laying hands on this convenient corridor between East and West.

In the course of this struggle and under its direct influence, the different Balkan states emerged – Greece, Romania, Serbia (now Yugoslavia) and Bulgaria. One after the other they detached themselves from the old feudal Ottoman Empire but, despite their ethnographic and political differences, they continue to represent an economic region.

Although formally considering themselves independent, the Balkan states have in actual fact, from their very inception been, completely dependent on European capitalism, which has decisively affected their further economic development.

Originally agricultural countries with petty farms, they were soon dragged along by the course of capitalist production and its laws. Galvanized by European capital which in 1914 formed about 60 p. c. of the entire industrial capital in the Balkans, the Balkan states underwent a fairly rapid process of industrialization. It goes without saying that European capital permitted here only the creation of branches of industry, which could in no way threaten it, such as, for instance, the sugar industry, the tobacco in-

dustry, ore and coal mining, the oil industry and a number of other industries, directly linked with agriculture, and serving to produce raw materials and semi-processed goods necessary for European industries. The years from 1900 to 1910 are a particularly characteristic period in the development of industry in the Balkans, when the number of industrial enterprises increased as follows: in Bulgaria, by 115 p. c.; in Romania, by 100 p. c.; in Serbia, by 90 p. c.; and in Greece, by 75 p. c. The Balkan Wars in 1912-13 delayed this process of the rapid capitalist development of the Balkans, and the imperialist war of 1914-18 completely stopped it, dealing a severe and irreparable blow to the emergent Balkan industry.

The present world economic crisis is felt with still greater intensity in the Balkans. Industrially only slightly developed, with completely disrupted economies, the Balkan states are now afflicted with the severe ailment, with which capitalism is afflicted in general. The great territorial expansion of Serbia and Romania, which obtained considerable industrial regions from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, far from mitigating the plight, common to all the Balkan countries, further complicates their own situation, making it even harder and more critical.

Unbearable debts, totalling thousands of millions of leva, burdened the Balkan states in the wake of the war, and their production has been totally disrupted. The rise in the cost of living and inflation are still more pronounced there than in the European capitalist countries. Real wages have dropped by 60 to 70 per cent as compared to prewar days. Unemployment is steadily increasing and exploitation of labour is growing more shameless every day. The capital accumulated during the war in banks, joint-stock companies and also by individual capitalists is chiefly used to speculate in prime necessities, for this activity brings big and quick profits at the expense of the starving working masses. But this only tends to increase the economic ruin and intensify the current economic crisis. There can be no hope of rehabilitating the war-torn economy of the Balkan states within the framework of the old capitalist order.

Owing to the late development of capitalism in the Balkans, the trade union movement there is very young. As a mass movement it has barely existed for two decades.

The trade unions in the Balkan states were founded at the height of the proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie under the direct influence and leadership of the socialist parties, and have always looked upon themselves as organs of the proletariat's class struggle for liberation. From their very inception the trade unions had the opportunity of utilizing the century of experience of the European proletariat and to avoid numerous errors and fallacies, such as existed in the trade union movement of the European countries.

On the other hand, precisely owing to the late development of capitalism and to the existence of trade unions under the influence of the socialist parties in the Balkans, it was not possible for a labour aristocracy to be formed on the model, say, of the British and the American workers; it was also impossible to create a conservative and reactionary trade union bureaucracy, such as we see in the old trade unions of Europe and America, and which does incalculable harm to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat.

This also explains why all attempts to create yellow unions in the Balkan states were unsuccessful, why the trade union movement there is entirely a factor in the class struggle of the proletariat, and also, I repeat, why the Balkan trade unions have ideological and organizational links with the proletarian parties and accept their political leadership. It can also serve as an explanation of the fact that anarchism and syndicalism found no soil for growth amid the Balkan working masses.

Owing to the prolonged and irreconcilable struggle with opportunism and similar trends in the workers' movement – a struggle begun very early and waged with great consistency first in Bulgaria and later in the other Balkan countries too, the trade union movement in the Balkans now embraces the broad proletarian masses in the

name of the destruction of capitalism, and in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It has eliminated the last remnants of the yellow and neutral organizations, and has become a united movement under the political leadership of the communist parties.

No trade unions under foreign influence exist any longer in Bulgaria. The entire proletariat organized in trade unions is united and advances under the tried and staunch leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

In Yugoslavia, the socialist patriots, who had established themselves in the trade union organizations in Croatia and Slovenia, are now suffering defeat after defeat, and the process of unification of the trade union movement in a trade union federation under the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party is approaching its end.

In Romania, the trade unions, which in their revolutionary aspirations have gone far beyond the old wavering Socialist Party, will now, after the creation of the Communist Party, resolutely take their stand on its side.

In Greece, the sole serious professional organization of the proletariat, the General Union of Trade Unions, is marching under the banner of the Communist Party, while the yellow trade unions, which the Greek bourgeoisie utilizes for its own political ends, have completely disintegrated, and all sound proletarian elements are rapidly passing over to the ranks of the General Union of Trade Unions.

An army of workers organized in trade unions and numbering some 150,000 now exists in the Balkans; this army grows day by day and it can safely be said that, far from being an obstacle to the cause of the international proletarian revolution, it is fighting in the front ranks, realizing that in our day the trade unions have one task only: to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for its establishment and consolidation and through it for the advent of communism.

III

At the very beginning of the war, in 1914, the trade unions of the Balkan states broke with the International Association of Trade Unions now called the Amsterdam Federation. Firmly opposing war in their own countries, profoundly imbued with the spirit of international proletarian solidarity, they felt no sympathy for the unprecedented betrayal of the international trade union movement by its leaders Legien, Jouhaux, Appleton, Gompers et tutti quanti and, what is more, considered it their duty to begin an all-out struggle against those flunkeys of the imperialist bourgeoisie. And when the initiative of creating a new international centre of the trade union organizations under the banner of the Communist International was taken up in Moscow, the trade unions in the Balkan states saw in this the expression of their own will and aspirations and were the first to adhere to the International Trade Union Council formed there. Moreover, in order to facilitate the tasks of the International Council, at their conference in Sofia in November 1920, the Balkan trade unions assigned their Balkan Secretariat – set up at the Balkan Communist Federation – the task of being the organ of the International Council in the Balkans.

Propaganda *against Amsterdam and for Moscow* in the Balkan countries is so strong, its influence among the working masses is so great that membership of the Amsterdam Federation is considered as a *shameful crime* by the workers. Not long ago insignificant trade union groups which were under the influence of the Right-Wing Socialists (Mensheviks) in Bulgaria and were in touch with Amsterdam, broke with the Federation, condemning its treacherous policy, and passed over to the trade unions at the Communist Party. The few trade unions in Yugoslavia and Romania, which still maintained a certain relationship with the international trade union secretariats belonging to the Amsterdam Federation, also broke with it, although in most cases their relationship was only formal.

The unionized proletariat in the Balkans is entirely and

resolutely for Moscow and against Amsterdam. It wages its struggle under the banner of the Communist International and considers that in the present period of the beginning international proletarian revolution a new international unification of trade unions under the slogan for Moscow and against Amsterdam can be achieved by an all-out struggle against treachery, as well as against the harmful fallacies of anarchism and syndicalism in the international trade union movement.

The trade unions in the Balkan states will take an active part in the forthcoming International Trade Union Congress in Moscow, fully convinced that this congress will create a united, truly revolutionary international centre of trade unions, fulfilling its special tasks, but on the basis of a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and under the political leadership of the Communist International, and that this centre will become the real headquarters of the international proletarian revolution.

Note: In Bulgaria, with a population of 4.1 million, the trade unions number 40,000 members; in Greece, with a population of 5.5 million, there are 35,000 union members; in Yugoslavia, with a population of 13 million, there are 180,000 union members, and in Romania, with a population of 14 million, there are 175,000 union members.

Mezhdunarodnoe rabochee dvizhenie.

Moscow, Nos 4-6, April-June, 1921

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 6. pp. 20-27

Published by the BCP, 1953

ON THE EVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED TRADE UNION WEEK

*Speech Delivered at a Meeting in the Renaissance Theatre,
Sofia, on November 27, 1921*

The appearance of the beloved leader of the workers' movement was welcomed with a burst of enthusiasm. The workers bore him shoulder-high to the stage. The crowd of thousands rose to their feet and applauded him long and loud. The thrilled audience began to sing the Red Army march and the theatre rang to the song sung by thousands.

Comrades!

The trade unions in the big capitalist states, which were born and developed as organizations for the defence of the workers' immediate professional interests, became, by the actions of the socialist patriots and trade union bureaucrats, instruments for the prolongation of the fratricidal war during the period of the imperialist war. A 'civil peace' was proclaimed, and the proletariat was deluded into thinking that the victory of 'its mother country' would create brilliant prospects for its prosperity, too.

The imperialist war came to an end, but in all countries the proletariat was faced with *unprecedented economic ruin* and its consequences: a skyrocketing cost of living, disastrous inflation and mass unemployment. The panic which gripped the capitalist world in 1917 and 1918, after the triumph of the Russian worker-peasant revolution, is quite explicable. All Europe trembled under the weight of the consequences of the war and at the threatening might and influence of Soviet Russia. At that moment the victory of the proletarian class would have been possible with slight efforts and sacrifices. In Germany and Austria power was actually in the hands of the proletariat. But the bourgeoisie was saved by the socialist traitors and the trade union bureaucrats, who turned the powerful trade unions

with their many millions of members into an instrument to restore bankrupt capitalism.

The bourgeoisie pulled itself together and began to prepare for resistance against the attacks of the revolutionary proletariat, and later for an offensive *against the workers revolutionary movement and against Soviet Russia*, the bearer of the international revolution. Today capital is on the go everywhere. It is on the offensive to reduce wages, to lengthen the working day, to take away all the workers' gains of the past, and to destroy the workers' organizations by attacking and massacring the workers' leaders and militants and by dissolving the workers' organizations. Yet, even today the socialist patriots and the trade union bureaucrats, gathered in the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation, continue more faithfully than ever to collaborate with the bourgeoisie.

In this situation, the enthusiasm with which the workers of all countries welcomed *the initiative of the Russian trade unions to form a red Trade Union International* is comprehensible, and it is also easy to understand why after only one year the latter succeeded in drawing into its ranks nearly 20 million unionized workers of all races and from all parts of the world, wherever capitalism has set foot.

The struggle between Amsterdam and Moscow is the most significant fact in the workers' movement the world over in 1921. Amsterdam is losing every day because of its betrayal and ineffaceable shame, while Moscow is winning ever more adherents, because it is the centre of the international proletarian revolution.

The First Congress of the Red Trade Union International mapped out a programme of action for the revolutionary trade union workers in all countries. It resolutely came out for remaining in the old trade unions and for working to revolutionize them, as well as against national separatism in the trade union movement, against class collaboration and reconciliation with the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, it put forward the slogan of internationalizing the struggle of the trade unions, so as not to let the proletariat be beaten bit by bit; it raised the slogan of

a united front of the proletariat in all countries for the defence of the workers' interests and against capitalism. Now that the bourgeoisie is rallying all its forces in the face of the danger threatening it, once again the traitors of the Amsterdam Federation and the Second International are breaking the front of the proletariat by expelling entire sections and union solely because they have come out in favour of Moscow. *The establishment of a united front of the proletariat* in all countries and in the whole world is the supreme imperative of the moment. In 1918 the Russian revolution failed to grow into a European revolution, but even today we may safely assert that the revolution was kindled in Europe, that it is the sole way out of the worldwide plight produced by capitalism. Today the capitalist world is a chaos. Owing to the devaluation of the German mark, cheap labour and the great exploitation of the German worker, Germany has today become a public market at which everything that represents the future of the German economy is sold for a mere song. The crisis has grown acute in the victorious nations as well. Cheap German goods increase unemployment in Great Britain, America and elsewhere. Countries with depreciated currencies are unable to supply themselves with raw materials for their industry and to purchase what they need from other countries; on the other hand, those whose currency rate is high suffocate for lack of markets capable of absorbing their expensive products. The growing need of markets impels the imperialist states to *new conflicts*. Wherever you may look in the world today, you will see only causes of new wars. The great imperialist bandits are ready even today to go for one another, and the world is faced by the danger of an even worse holocaust at any moment.

However, no matter how much its interests may be divided, the bourgeoisie is united against the revolutionary proletariat in its countries, and against Soviet Russia, the focus and mainstay of the international revolution. Today we observe the fact that those who were formerly gripped with panic in the face of the rising revolutionary tide, now speak in one voice of the bankruptcy of bolshevism and its economic policy. Soviet Russia has, indeed, been compelled

to alter the course of its economic policy under the pressure of the isolation in which the Russian people have been since the revolution as a result of the delay of the revolution in the advanced capitalist nations, for which the socialist patriots bear the blame. But in Russia today it is not the bourgeoisie, but the workers and the peasants who rule under the leadership of the powerful, intelligent and far-sighted Communist Party.

There you have a proletarian dictatorship.

The Soviet government of workers and poor peasants has in its hand transport, foreign trade, heavy industry and, last but not least, the powerful armed forces of the Russian people, the victorious Red Army. And the upshot is, oddly enough from a historical point of view, that the proletariat, which has taken power in its own hands and is exercising its dictatorship, is now, during a transition period, compelled to harness the bourgeoisie in its service, as a pay-off for the past when for centuries the proletariat had to work for the bourgeoisie!

It is true that the Russian people are suffering today, and suffering greatly. The Russian proletariat has won its freedom, but it is forced, in the present transition period, not to eat its fill and to sacrifice everything for the future of communism. You ought to see the *Russian trade union workers* who do not indeed eat their fill, but are proud masters of their country and of their labour, and firmly await the triumph of the proletariat in the other countries; you ought to see the *Russian Communist Party*, in which all, to the last worker, stand steadfastly at their difficult posts; you ought, at last, to see the Russian Red Army, which has no peer in history, to realize that the Russian Soviet Republic stands firmly on its feet, but also to realize at the same time that a terrible responsibility for the great sufferings of the Russian proletariat weighs on the proletariat of the other countries, particularly of the advanced nations.

The supreme task of forging a united revolutionary front confronts the proletariat today, so that it may not only fend off the attacks of capital, but also pass over to a victorious offensive against it.

This is precisely *the task of the Red International Trade Union Week.*

Unless the big trade unions in the capitalist countries are drawn under the banner of the revolution, the triumph of the social revolution and the creation of a socialist economy in these countries are not conceivable. In this respect we are more fortunate. The most conscious part of the Bulgarian proletariat is marching under the banner of the revolution and of communism. But *our trade unions have still not embraced the big masses of the Bulgarian working class,* so that they may represent the mighty force necessary for the triumph of the revolution in Bulgaria. Let us carry the living appeal for the rallying of all workers in the ranks of the revolutionary trade unions wherever a worker's heart beats, for the defence of the workers' interests, for the salvation of mankind from perishing under the weight of capitalism, and for the triumph of communism and the happiness of all working mankind – *that is our supreme duty at the present moment.*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 124

November 28, 1921

*(An abridged version of this
speech was published in the paper)*

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 6, pp. 101–106

Published by the BCP, 1953

IN DEFENCE OF SOVIET RUSSIA AGAINST
THE PROTECTION OF WRANGEL'S TROOPS
IN BULGARIA

*Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Sofia Proletariat
Called by the Central Committee of the Bulgarian
Communist Party on March, 31, 1922*

Comrades, in the course of four years, Kolchak, Dénikin and all the other mercenaries of allied capital, felt the iron fist of the Red Worker-Peasant Army upon them. Wrangel, shamefully beaten, fled on allied ships to Constantinople.

But Soviet Russia has not yet been left in peace. The capitalists, bankers, and multi-millionaires of Europe and America are preparing a new campaign against Russia. They are not able to send their own peoples who have clearly declared: We do not want to fight against the Russian people! But they want to make use of the blood of the small nations, the Balkan and especially the Bulgarian people.

Comrades, Sofia is becoming the headquarters of the commander-in-chief of their army. Their law courts try people and condemn them to death. This army has occupied all the strategic points in Bulgaria. Disarmed Bulgaria is occupied, the captive of an armed foreign army of 20,000 men. Our government spends millions on that army. While in the Volga region 20 million Russian peasants are starving, Wrangel's staff buys up Bulgarian food to wage war against the starving people in Russia. When the *Osvobozhdenié** Co-operative was buying food to save the starving people, our bourgeois parties raised a disgusting howl about it. Where are they now to protest against the buying up of food by Wrangel? They help him. The *narodnyak* bankers and *chorbadjis* embrace the black generals and hatch plots with them against the Russian and the Bulgarian peoples. They want to utilize Wrangel's army

* Osvobozhdenié - liberation

against Bulgarian bolshevism, too. They are preparing to organize a *coup d'état*, to proclaim a military dictatorship and to involve the Bulgarian people in a war against their Russian brothers, Comrades, you may be quite certain that this time, too, the Red Army will trounce Wrangel according to his deserts! But in that case Bulgaria may also become a battlefield. All the worse for those who bring about such a war. There is no Bulgarian worker or peasant who would shoot at a Russian worker or peasant! They would know at whom to aim their guns! The Bulgarian Communist Party and the entire working people demand of the government: To have Wrangel taken by the ear at once and thrown out like a rag! To have his troops disarmed! To have the Russian soldiers and cossacks sent back to their own country, which has forgiven them and awaits them for peaceful and beneficent labour!

The Bulgarian government is bound to fulfil this order of the working people: The Bulgarian government lies when it says that Wrangel's troops are not armed. And Wrangel may be hiding in Sofia at this moment. Down with the criminal adventures against the fraternal Russian people! Down with the Bulgarian and the Russian reaction! Long live the fraternal alliance between the Bulgarian and the Russian working people! Long live the Great Russian Revolution and its heroic Red Army!

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 227,
April 1, 1922

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 179-181
Published by the BCP, 1953

Owing mainly to the treason of the Socialist Parties in the big capitalist states, the international bourgeoisie has succeeded in preserving its class rule against the relentless pressure of the revolutionary proletarian movement in Europe, which broke out in the wake of the victory of the Russian Revolution and the aftermath of the general war.

Having avoided the immediate danger of revolution in 1918 and 1919, the international bourgeoisie quickly recovered, rallied and collected its forces, so that in 1920 it passed over from the *defensive* to the *offensive* against the proletariat. It not only proceeded to deprive the proletariat of the concessions it had been obliged to make in the period so critical for it, but also attempted – and this continues along all lines to this day – to transfer the burden of the war heritage onto the shoulders of the toiling masses.

This general capitalist offensive is expressed, first and foremost, in an encroachment on *the wages*. While in the countries with a high currency rate and with paper money that has not or has only slightly been devalued, such as America, Great Britain, France and so on, the bourgeoisie is working for a reduction of wages, in the countries with a depreciated currency, such as Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and so on, it firmly opposes an *increase* in the existing wages so as to adjust them to currency devaluation and the rising cost of living. In the one case as in the other, the aim is to reduce *real wages* to the lowest possible minimum.

In the second place, the capitalist offensive is directed at *lengthening the working day*. The eight-hour day, which was solemnly sanctioned by a special international convention, at a time when the bourgeoisie was in danger of being

toppled from power, is now the subject of constant, systematic and most flagrant encroachments on the part of the capitalists.

The offensive of capitalism is also manifested in the endeavours of the bourgeoisie to transfer *the burden of taxation* in various forms, and particularly by a fabulous increase in indirect taxation, onto the proletariat and the remaining toiling masses.

In a word, capitalism is trying to extricate itself from the *blind alley* in which it landed particularly after the general war and the ensuing world economic crisis, *by intensifying the workers' labour to an unprecedented and fabulous extent, by a maximum exhaustion of the strength and health of the working masses, and by the physical and cultural degeneration of the proletariat and reducing it to a state of barbarity.*

And it should be stated that in its capitalist offensive against the proletariat the international bourgeoisie acts *quite unanimously*. Its *united front* in this case is manifested at every step, *despite the national, economic and other contradictions* which exist in its midst. The recent lock-outs against the workers of the metal industry in Great Britain, Germany, Denmark and elsewhere are a new proof of the existing united front of the capitalists, regardless of whether they are in the victorious or in the defeated countries, or, finally, in the countries which remained neutral during the war.

There is nothing more obvious than the necessity of the proletariat's *appearing fully unanimous and forging its own united front against the united front of the capitalist bourgeoisie* for its self-preservation above all.

That is precisely why the slogan of a united proletarian front against the offensive of capitalism, put forward by the Communist International and the Red Trade Union International is accepted ever more widely by the working masses in all countries, as the only way out of the present plight for the proletariat.

The socialist patriots, particularly in Germany and Great Britain, are doing their level best to frustrate the establishment of a united front of the proletariat, because this would mean the end of their common cause with the

bourgeoisie. They most zealously spread wide amid the toiling masses under their influence the slander that the united front policy is dictated by the present situation of the Russian Soviet Republic, when even the last of the workers exposed to the severe blows of the capitalist offensive on his own back cannot fail to realize *that the united front is imposed by the vital interests of the proletariat of the entire world.*

In Bulgaria, where besides the Communist Party no other *workers' party* exists and where the question of a united front against the capitalist offensive is reduced therefore to *common action* between the communist trade unions and a few neutral organizations, chiefly of civil servants, and *mainly to the rallying of the unorganized toiling masses*, the socialist patriots are also trying by hook or by crook to obstruct the establishment of a united proletarian front.

However, life is stronger than the coterie reckonings of the socialist patriotic cliques in the various countries. Under one form or another, in one way or another the united front of the proletariat *will be created without fail.* And once this is achieved, *the offensive of capitalism will be stopped in its tracks.* It will then be the turn of the offensive of the proletariat, the final *reckoning with capitalism and the complete triumph of the international proletarian revolution.*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik.

May 1, 1922

Signed: G. D.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 6, pp. 184-187

Published by the BCP. 1954

STATEMENT AT THE TENTH SESSION OF THE
SECOND PROFINTERN CONGRESS³⁵

November 29, 1922

We entirely agree with the main principles of the theses. Certain changes are, indeed, necessary, but it is better that they should be made in committee.

However, the Bulgarian delegation considers it necessary to have it stressed still more in these theses that it is not only premature, but extremely harmful at the present stage of the trade union movement to turn the production unions into sections of the United General Union; intense struggle still faces them for the partial demands of the workers and to fend off the blows of the capitalist offensive in every branch of production, frequently under quite different conditions; and the chief and immediate task now is to rally the masses by production branches so as to organize resistance and to extricate them from the influence and leadership of the reformists.

Secondly, it is necessary to condemn federalism still more resolutely as an outdated organizational form of the trade union movement, which no longer corresponds in any way to the present conditions of the class struggle and the tasks of the trade unions.

It is self-evident that it will be impossible in France, Italy and Spain to transform traditional federalism into centralism at one sweep, just by a decision of the congress. No one entertains such illusions, but painstaking and methodical work is necessary to centralize, that is as quickly as possible to adapt the organizational forms of the trade union movement in all countries to the present conditions and needs of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

All the adherents of the Profintern ought long ago already to have understood that the proletariat can

successfully fight centralized capital in the present period only if it has at its disposal centralized mass production unions.

The objections raised against centralism by the Italian Comrade Vecchi are actually of a certain importance only as regards mechanical and bureaucratic centralism. But no communist supports a mechanical and bureaucratic centralism of this sort. The objections raised by Comrade Vecchi do not refer to proletarian centralism, which is an inevitable historical necessity at the given stage of the class struggle waged by the proletariat of all countries, and also a prerequisite for its victory.

Thirdly, the Bulgarian delegation insists on a more detailed elaboration of the item on information and *liaison*, specifying the necessary organs and funds by means of which the Executive Bureau of the Profintern should be in constant and lively touch with its organizations and adherents, so that it may really guide the activity of the revolutionary trade unions and their struggle on an international scale.

Furthermore, the Bulgarian delegation proposes that the theses be supplemented with a special paragraph on the Balkans, to read as follows:

In the Balkans, with the exception of Bulgaria where the trade union movement is united and has joined the Profintern, the renewal of work for the restoration of unity in the trade union movement is imminent. In Yugoslavia and Romania, more particularly, the restoration of the revolutionary trade unions, defeated in 1920 and 1921, will have to be achieved under most trying conditions: white terror, rabid reaction and fierce resistance of the reformists. These difficulties will be the more rapidly and successfully overcome, the more the restored trade unions rally the working masses more closely on the basis of an energetic struggle for their daily interests.

In Greece, where the Confederation of Labour has virtually adopted the Profintern platform, the task of the adherents of the latter is to wage an intensified struggle against the treacherous policy of a handful of yellow nationalistic leaders, who still maintain their influence in

several unions, which continue to follow them. It is, first of all, necessary to wrest the organization of the dockers and sailors from their hands and draw it into the common Confederation of Labour.

In Turkey, where the workers are chiefly organized in national trade unions (Turkish, Greek and Armenian), the main task of the adherents of the Profintern is to work strenuously to unite these unions in general trade unions by production branches, regardless of nationality and on the basis of the class struggle.

In the existing close economic and political interdependence among the Balkan states, success in the struggle of the proletariat in the Balkans depends chiefly on the joint action of the trade unions of all the Balkan countries. It is therefore a task of prime importance for the adherents of the Profintern in the Balkans to secure the possibility of such joint action, which must later also be given the organization form of a Balkan federation of trade unions, representing part of the Profintern.

*Bulletin of the Second Congress of the
Red International of Trade Unions
Moscow, 1922*

*G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 6, pp. 409-412
Published by the BCP, 1953*

THE UNITED WORKERS' FRONT

Even on the eve of the European War the unity of the proletariat in the key countries of the world was not complete. With their reformist policy, their tactics of class collaboration and their nationalist ideology, the Second Socialist International and the Trade Union International were incapable of creating a united workers' front against capitalism either in the individual countries or on an international plane.

However, the disgraceful and treacherous betrayal committed by the staffs and the chief leaders of these two international proletarian organizations and of their affiliated trade unions and parties, at the declaration and during the whole course of the imperialist war, in proclaiming and maintaining a so-called *civil peace*, i. e. siding with the bourgeoisie of their own countries and placing the organizations they led at the service of the defence of the *capitalist homeland*, ultimately destroyed what feeble unity of the workers' masses had been attained up to that time.

But even after the end of the war and the glorious triumph of the proletarian revolution in Russia, instead of quickly re-establishing a united front of the long-suffering and seething workers' masses, in order to secure the triumph of the revolution throughout Europe, the treacherous socialist leaders and trade union bureaucrats once again sided with their national bourgeoisie, helped it to preserve its class domination and to start along the road of restoring capitalism which was shaken by the war and tottering in its foundations, at the expense of an even fiercer exploitation and enslavement of the proletariat, exhausted and bleeding to death.

For five years now the reformists and Amsterdam

bureaucrats have been in alliance, in one way or another, with the bourgeoisie in their countries and at a time when it has recovered, rallied its forces, and started a rabid drive to lengthen working hours, reduce real wages and deprive the workers of all their prewar gains, when it is planning new military and imperialist adventures. These heroes of high-sounding phrases against capitalism and war are backing the offensive of capital by all possible means, paving the way for fascism, justifying the aggressive actions of their national imperialism and preventing the establishment of a united workers' front against capitalism and imperialism, against fascism and war.

While voting loud protests and long resolutions at their international congresses in Rome and the Hague, against the intention of the French imperialists to invade the most important German industrial area (the Ruhr), and for the preservation of peace, while threatening to organize an international general strike in case of such an invasion and danger of war, the leaders of the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation not only failed to contribute to the creation of the first prerequisite for the success of such a serious action, a *united workers' front* but, on the contrary, they brought about a split in the General Confederation of Labour in France and in the General Trade Union in Czechoslovakia and, by persecuting and expelling from trade unions the oppositional elements and sections, they are methodically preparing a split in the German Trade Union.

At the same time, they have stubbornly rejected every proposal of the Red Trade Union International and the Communist International for a general international conference or an international workers' congress, with all workers' parties and trade unions represented, in order to successfully organize an action against the Ruhr invasion, against the offensive of capital, against fascism and the new imperialist war threatening the world.

All along the line and in every country, the reformists and Amsterdam leaders are working with a diligence worthy of a better fate against the unity of the proletariat, against the building of a united workers' front, all the time with a view to keeping intact their alliance and their community of purpose with the bourgeoisie.

The heroes of the Second Socialist International and the Amsterdam International Federation are ready to form a united front with Mussolini and his fascist bands in Italy, with Poincaré in France, with the government of Cunow and Stinnes in Germany, with the bourgeois reaction in Czechoslovakia, with the Serbian hegemonist bourgeoisie and its police in Yugoslavia, with the bloc of factory-owners, bankers and profiteers in Bulgaria (in joint electoral tickets with the leaders of the Populist and the Democratic parties, as it happened yesterday), but they refuse to adopt a united front with the communist and revolutionary proletariat, to fight capitalism, to fight against war and for peace.

And when the French imperialist armies invaded the Ruhr and Europe was threatened with a new war, when therefore the time had come to proceed with the implementation of the loud resolutions for an international general strike, the Amsterdam men of the Entente countries virtually sided with the French invaders and oppressors, while the secretary of the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation, Edo Fimmen, declared in a tearful voice that the Federation *was incapable of carrying out its resolutions and with unprecedented cynicism blamed the workers' masses themselves for it who, he said, were indifferent, intent on their own selfish daily interests and reluctant to fight for major issues.*

At the same time, *the most immediate interests* of the proletariat of all countries, the interests of its self-preservation and self-defence, of repulsing the rabid offensive of capital, of securing its bread, shelter and freedom, as well as its *major class interest* – its final liberation from the chains of capitalist exploitation, both *demand imperatively the immediate formation of a united front in the trade union and political struggle, on a national and international scale.*

History now places the proletariat of all countries and of the whole world before the dilemma – either, in spite of everything, to restore its united front in the fight against the offensive of capital or, if it is not equal to this, to abandon itself to the mercy of an insane and savage gang of capitalists and imperialists and be turned into cattle for decades to come.

And the latter would inevitably happen, were it not for the sound class instinct of the proletariat itself, were the latter unable to draw the lesson from its past bitter experience, were it not for the Communist and the Red Trade Union International, and the Communist parties, the revolutionary trade unions, and the opposition wings in the reformist trade unions, who are all working with perseverance and devotion for the formation of a united workers' front.

We must state now that new and considerable successes are scored every day in this respect.

Already powerful workers' opposition trends are being formed within the Social Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions themselves, resolutely standing for a united front. The masses down below are already joining hands, regardless of differences in political opinion and organizational affiliation, for a common struggle through the factory councils in Germany and France, in Italy and Czechoslovakia and many other countries.

The International Workers' Conference in Frankfurt (Germany) in March this year, the purpose of which was to organize a united international action of the proletariat against the Ruhr invasion, against fascism and against the new imperialist war now being planned, testified most convincingly to the growing popularity of the idea of a united workers' front. Although the conference was boycotted again by the staffs of the Second International and the Amsterdam Trade Union Federation, representatives of the factory councils in Germany, France, England, etc., *among whom there were many Social Democrats and Amsterdam men*, did take part in it, together with the representatives of the Communist International, the Red Trade Union International, of the communist parties and the revolutionary trade unions of various countries.

The break-up of the coalition of the Social Democratic Party with the bourgeoisie in Saxony and the forming of a socialist government³⁶ with the support of the communists and with a workers' programme, drawn up by the Saxon factory councils, also showed that the united workers' front, from a slogan rallying the proletariat, is becoming

more and more of an *actual fact*, and assuming the important role of a key factor in the political development of Germany which is now heading for a final rupture of the alliance between Social Democracy and the bourgeoisie and the setting up of a *workers' government*. Only such a government could cope with the terrible crisis which has befallen the German people after the occupation of the Ruhr by the French imperialist armies, and the responsibility for which lies precisely with the bourgeoisie and the reformist staffs.

Today we can safely say that amidst the international proletariat no idea is more popular than that of the united workers' front, for the worker's masses are realizing every day more clearly that the *key* to the solution of all problems concerning the bread, peace, freedom and future of toiling mankind, *lies exactly in a realization of the united front of the proletariat in each country, in Europe and the whole world.*

Neither the repulsion of the offensive of capital, nor the elimination of savage fascism, nor the staving off of the new imperialist war, not, lastly, the triumph of the liberating proletarian revolution, *would be possible* without a *united workers' front* and the joint action of all proletarians and working people in town and village. This is why the *united workers' front* is to be the first great and historical slogan of this year's May Day demonstrations in all countries.

The Bulgarian proletariat, on its part, under the leadership of the Communist Party and the General Trade Union, is following boldly and persistently the tactics of the united workers' front in all aspects of its struggles and is daily building its indestructible union with the rest of the toiling masses in town and village. On May Day it will once more scornfully reject the divisive attempts of the ideologically and politically bankrupt bourgeoisie, of the raging demagogues and oppressors of the Agrarian Union, of the Right-Wing Socialist careerists who have sold out to the bourgeoisie, and of the handful of confused anarchists, and it will manifest powerfully its firm and unshakable will to be *united*, and in a *sound and lasting alliance* with the masses of small owners in town and village, *in the*

struggle against the urban and rural bourgeoisie, for its own self-preservation and self-defence and for setting up a workers' and peasants' government — the real government of the working people in Bulgaria.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik, No. 259

May 1, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7 pp. 95-101

Published by the BCP, 1953

WHICH WAY?

The time was when most artists, painters, actors, musicians, etc., owing to the peculiar character of their work and their prospects of a good career, could consider themselves as it were aristocrats of intellectual work, and keep quite aloof from the proletariat, from its struggle for existence and its emancipatory movement.

They were then prone to consider themselves even as part of the ruling class, its spoilt children and lucky favourites of fortune, who had nothing in common with the exploited and oppressed of present-day society, and required no organization or struggle to defend their rights and interests, since they wholly relied on their own talent and the protection of the powers that be and of various patrons of the arts.

Imbued to the marrow of their bones with bourgeois individualism and superman psychology, overestimating the significance of their own spiritual superiority, feeling firmly entrenched on the heights of Parnassus; they would often look down with scornful condescension on men doing ordinary manual and intellectual work and would thank God (like the scribes and Pharisees of yore) that he had not created them after the image of those 'poor in spirit' slaves of capital.

It was so once.

But is there anyone today who does not realize that these days are gone forever, in other countries as well as at home?

Capitalism, after becoming complete master in the sphere of material production, laid a heavy hand on the theatre, music, painting and the whole of art. The capitalist principle – the maximum possible profit – became

predominant in the sphere of the so-called production of spiritual values.

The men of art were turned into exploited proletarians, into objects of capitalist exploitation, into profit-makers for capital and, they tumbling from the lofty heights of Parnassus landed in the squalor and mud of today's hard reality.

The fate of stage actors became linked not only with that of the prompter, unseen by the audiences, but also with the fate of the members of chorus and orchestra, of stagehands behind the scenes, and of all the other workers in a capitalist theatrical establishment. The fates of orchestra members at a place of entertainment became linked with that of the waiters serving the customers. The fate of the painters working at a studio or a lithographer's or zincographer's shop, at one enterprise or another – with that of the rank-and-file members of its staff, etc.

The fate of the one-time 'aristocrats of labour' in the sphere of art in general is becoming more and more closely linked with the fate of the entire nation's proletariat.

And it must be said that the havoc, caused by the great war, as well as the dire consequences of the profound economic crisis occasioned by the war, have not only obliterated, by and large, the once existing difference between the material and social status of the men of arts and that of other intellectuals, but they have plunged them into a material and social misery and an uncertainty of the future worse than what numerous categories of skilled manual workers have to bear.

And when one takes into consideration the fact that those working in the arts, due to the character of their work, which is not purely mechanical, have to put their feelings, their hearts and souls into what they are doing, have to express their inner life in it, then it becomes readily apparent that, apart from material privations, they have to suffer moral torments unknown to either the manual worker or the ordinary intellectual.

Thus the status of the so-called aristocracy of labour in the arts has undergone a profound change. This change naturally makes necessary the subordination of their in-

dividualism to the vital need of collective action for common self-defence.

The new situation, the new times call for *new ways and means*. They imperatively point to the road of organization and struggle for the 'favourites of fortune' as well, for those who once considered themselves above organization and struggle.

It is an old truth that *the way of life determines the way of thinking*. However, experience shows that the change in *thinking* always occurs after a corresponding change has taken place in *the way of life*.

The way of life of actors, musicians, painters, etc., has changed considerably, while their way of thinking, of most of them at least, continues *unaltered*. They still feel linked to the parasitic bourgeoisie as if by a navel cord and alien to the masses. They are slow to rid themselves of bourgeois ideas and by force of habit still follow the suggestions of individualism and the psychology of the superman, continuing to seek individual means of securing their existence and warding off the severe blows of life.

The force of the *old* pulls them *backward*, while *life* impels them to go *forward*. Bourgeois prejudices and superstitions prevent them from embracing the *new outlook* that their altered way of life demands.

Thus they are now at a *crossroads*, whence two roads are open to them – *the old road* of resigned service to capital in expectation of its charity, and *the new road* of organized struggle against capitalist exploitation, of unification of all the men in the arts and their siding with the proletariat fighting for freedom and happiness.

While standing at this crossroads, most of the men in the sphere of art are also in the unenviable position of *cross-eyed persons*. Their *right* eye looks with hope and expectation at their old god – capital, while their *left* casts uncertain and hesitant glances at the working people advancing confidently along the road of proletarian emancipation.

Which way? – This is the crucial question that now stares in the face every actor, musician and painter, the whole of the proletariat engaged in the arts.

And the major task of the *Artist* newspaper at the present moment is precisely this – to help the mass of workers in the arts to *become conscious of themselves as proletarians*; to accelerate the process of *attuning* their way of thinking to their *altered way of life*; to cultivate in them the feeling of *solidarity* and the idea of *common action*, in place of their *notorious individualism of intellectuals*; to help them all start as soon as possible *along the road of organization and struggle, through a general trade union of the men of art, the road of unity between the workers of the hammer, the sickle and the pen, between the workers of material production and those of production of spiritual values, the road of emancipation of working mankind and of art itself from the regime of decaying capitalism.*

A task both difficult and complicated, it is true. *But a task worthy of the efforts of the greatest talents and the noblest ambitions.*

And it must be executed – *for the sake of the salvation of the thousands of suffering artists, the salvation of art itself and the triumph of the great emancipatory cause of the working people in our country.*

Artist No 2, June 4, 1913

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 136–140

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE UNITED FRONT AND THE OFFENSIVE OF CAPITAL

The idea of a united front of the working masses is now emerging from the sphere of theoretical explanations and ordinary political propaganda and entering the phase of its impending practical realization.

To begin with, the intensified offensive of capital lends great urgency to the immediate establishment of a united front. No matter how it may be appraised, the political change which occurred on June 9³⁷ let loose the forces of this offensive quite obviously and beyond any doubt. The capitalists felt their hands completely untied in the different sectors of their exploitative activity – in industry and trade, in banking and joint-stock companies, in speculation with prime necessities, in real estate and landownership. They are working feverishly to remove all legal barriers from their road and are intensively preparing to shift the burden of taxation and reparations onto the shoulders of the toiling masses from town and countryside.

The first results of the growing offensive of capital, of its complete freedom of action, are already apparent. Real wages are falling, while the cost of living is rising. Bulgarian workers are left without work and bread, while alien elements, and especially people from the defeated White Russian army of Wrangel, increasingly man the factories. Working days are being arbitrarily increased and existing labour legislation is trampled upon. The liberty of small tradesmen and pedlars is being encroached upon and assistance to small artisans is pigeonholed, while the slightest restrictions on big business and stock exchange speculation are removed. The peasants are being deprived of the land which had been given to them, while the big landowners are given the possibility, despite the existing

Land Act,³⁸ of gathering sheaves from the fields of the peasants who have cultivated these lands with much toil and sweat. Instead of improving and extending the Law on Housing in defence of the working people and the poor house-owners, everything is being done to prepare its abrogation. The capitalist monopoly on food, clothing and shoes, and fuel, exercised by the banks, joint-stock companies and private businessmen, is spreading its tentacles over the whole country in order to further raise the prices of these necessities, so vital for the subsistence of the masses during the winter. The export of foods and the customs policy are prompted not by considerations for the nation's economic rehabilitation and for securing available stocks for home consumption, but solely by the insatiable thirst of export firms and interested speculators for quick and big profits.

The selfish interests and greed of a capitalist minority more than ever threaten the elementary subsistence, the existence and future of the Bulgarian working people, the whole working intelligentsia and all non-capitalist elements of the country.

In these conditions can the majority of the people, living in privation, afford to fold their arms and remain indifferent and impassive to their plight? Should they let themselves fall prey to the capitalists and become victims of their furious onslaught, because of differences in programme, policy and tactics which now exist between them? What genuinely popular leader could be so frivolous as to recommend that?

Actually the working people and their intelligentsia are not organized and united in a political party of their own. A large part of them are in the ranks of the Communist Party or follow its banner, another considerable part is in the Agrarian Union, a third – in the Social-Democratic Party, a fourth, though quite small, part, no doubt constitutes the majority of the Radical Party.

These parties differ from one another and particularly from the Communist Party in their final programme goals and demands, in their general conceptions and political tactics, which lie at the root of their mutual struggle. The

irreconcilable differences between them, as parties of the working people, concern their final aims however, and the ways and means of their realization, while between all these parties and the party of capital lies an impassable abyss – the abyss of the deeply opposed interests of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and of the capitalist bourgeoisie, on the other; the abyss between the exploited and his exploiter, between the slave and his master.

That is why the parties of the working people, insofar as they intend to remain true to the interests of these masses, are implacably opposed to the capitalist parties and seek to establish contact among themselves in their common work and struggle.

Could anyone seriously deny that today, when the masses and the whole people's intelligentsia are in such a sad plight and are exposed to such severe trials and terrible dangers, their parties should join in a common struggle and together face the offensive of capital in the name of a concrete, common programme on the vital problems of wages, working hours, subsistence, land, housing, taxes, reparations, and so on.

Differences in the final programme goals and demands of parties of the masses are not and cannot be such as to prevent their common work and struggle, their united front in defence of the masses, as long as the other parties are really guided, like the Communist Party, by the interests of these masses and are ready to sacrifice their anti-popular coalition with the capitalist parties – the Democratic Union and the National Liberals.

Without abandoning any major programme goal of the struggle, without impairing its independence as a party and without asking the Social-Democratic, Agrarian and Radical Parties to forsake their programme goals, the Communist Party proposes a united front, firmly convinced that at present this is the surest means of warding off the onslaught of capital, of saving the working people from the threatening privations and dangers and of leading the country out of the blind alley in which the capitalist bourgeoisie has landed it.

In practice the united front does not mean a retreat from general party principles, nor a party effacement, but merely the acceptance of a general, concrete, anti-capitalist platform in defence of the working people and a joint struggle to implement this platform.

Prior to June 9, when the Agrarian Union was entirely in the hands of the ruling peasant bourgeoisie, which bitterly opposed the working people from town and countryside, it was obviously out of the question to set up a united labour front. Today, however, this obstacle, as well as many other obstacles, no longer exist. After what has taken place, the Agrarian Union can no longer remain a tool of the peasant bourgeoisie and is bound to march together with the working people. Otherwise, it is doomed.

The deck is cleared for a united front. And this united front of labour against capital will come into existence, because the needs of life and the will of the working people will impose it with an iron necessity.

Woe unto those parties and party leaders who want to be representatives of the Bulgarian working people, but who, prompted by party and personal interests and considerations of safeguarding their coalition with the capitalists, should be so thoughtless as to oppose the united front of labour.

They will thereby sign their own political death sentence.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 67

August 22, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 200-207

Published by the BCP, Sofia, 1954

THE UNITED FRONT AND BOURGEOIS REACTION

In Bulgaria, as is generally known, the capitalists are but an insignificant minority. Even if we added to them the ideologists of capital and all the other individuals and groups who have a direct stake in pursuing a purely capitalist policy and in the existence of capitalism, they would in no case exceed a *fourth* of the country's total population.

Yet it is precisely this capitalist minority which wants to rule, to guide the fortunes of the people and country and to consolidate its class domination over the great majority of the working people.

And since, after the wars and disasters, after the telling blows dealt to the bourgeois parties and their complete bankruptcy in the past, the capitalist minority has no chance of winning over the masses in the name of a national programme, it sees the only prop of its power in violence and terror inside the country and in blind servility to imperialism and the foreign conquerors outside it.

The ludicrous merger of some of the old bourgeois parties in the so-called *Democratic Union* did not, of course, change matters one iota. It just made the reactionary intentions of the capitalist minority all the more palpable to the people.

In these conditions the parliamentary regime becomes highly inconvenient for the capitalists, an obstacle to the offensive of capital and the policy of exploitation, robbery and repression of the popular majority. Legality stifles and kills them. They are against the democratic principles of government, proclaimed long ago by the great French Bourgeois Revolution. They are against parliamentarism and constitutional liberties. They are against legality. They

are for the bourgeois dictatorship of capital. The clerical newspaper *Pravda*, frank to the point of cynicism, openly advocates that the 'intelligent' capitalist minority, not the 'ignorant popular majority', not the 'mob', should govern the country.

Following the example of other countries, the Bulgarian capitalists and their parties are now resorting to the *last means* of preserving their class rule and of keeping the state power in their hands – *fascism*, which is the complete negation of democracy and of all political rights and freedoms of the masses.

Well aware that genuinely free elections would undoubtedly return a great majority of working people's representatives to Parliament, the 'new government' of the Bulgarian capitalists hastens to organize fascist cadres and begins to commit outrages against the working people in the country. The unqualifiable atrocities in Turnovo, Berkovitsa, Bratsigovo, Peroushtitsa and elsewhere, the inhuman treatment of and the harsh sentences passed on defendants in connexion with the events around June 9 are, no doubt, merely the *beginning* of the fascist onslaught of the Bulgarian capitalists. Those who think that fascism is directed only against the so-called 'communist peril' bitterly delude themselves. They will have to pay dearly for their error and political short-sightedness.

Fascism is far from being only *anti-communist*, it is at the same time *anti-popular* in essence. Its function is to secure politically the success of the offensive of capital, of the exploitation and plunder of the masses by the capitalist minority and to consolidate the rule of this minority over the popular majority.

If fascism were to establish itself firmly in Bulgaria and to cope with the 'communist peril', its beastly blows would be felt also most painfully by the other political parties and economic organizations which are ready to defend the interests and rights of the working people in any way or form. Neither Social-Democrats, nor Radicals would be able to avoid these blows, unless they consented to become the blind tools of the Bulgarian capitalists.

The example of Italy (the classical country of fascism) is

the best proof of this. Today Italian fascism deals Socialists and other radical elements no less heavy blows than Communists.

Today, however, the masses and the working intelligentsia, as well as their political parties and economic organizations, have one vital common interest: with joint efforts to preserve their freedoms, rights, honour and life by curbing the rising bourgeois reaction and its most typical manifestation – fascism, at its very inception.

Can the existing programme and other differences between the popular parties in Bulgaria be an obstacle to the implementation of this urgent task? Can and should these parties let the working people be crushed by the fascism of the capitalist minority and be subjected to complete physical and moral degradation, can and should they let the country be plunged into anarchy and turned into a prey of foreign conquerors, for the sake of profit-hungry capitalists and of their ideologists and supporters, just because of differences and wranglings, say, on the question of socialization and public ownership, or on the future forms of popular self-government?

Which Agrarian, Social-Democratic or Radical leader, who has not severed his ties with the people, would have the temerity to maintain such a groundless and senseless thesis?

Will the other parties of the working people, in particular the Social-Democrats and Radicals, who today are allies of the capitalist parties and help to strengthen bourgeois reaction and to form and organize fascism, grasp the significance of the united labour front, advocated by the Communist Party?

Will they understand that the vital interests of the working people dictate to them to discontinue their anti-popular coalition with the parties of the capitalists – the Democratic Union and the National Liberals, to cease to play the role of fig-leaves covering up the impudent nudity of bourgeois reaction and fascism, and to accept the salutary united front, proposed by the Communist Party?

The answer to these questions will be given to us in the near future.

But even today anyone who is well acquainted with and follows our political life can see clearly that all the working people – from workers, peasants, artisans, small tradesmen and clerks to physicians, lawyers, engineers, professors, retired officers and even generals, who make a living by their own labour – instinctively sense the peril threatening them and the country and seek salvation in a joint struggle for self-defence against the common foe.

Not only the offensive of capital but this important reason as well render the united labour front an inevitable necessity. Whoever opposes it now is against the interests, rights and security of life of the working people, against the freedom and independence of Bulgaria and is a pitiful tool of reaction and fascism, of the capitalist minority against the immense popular majority.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 68

August 23, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 208–212

Published by the BCP, 1954

The coup d'état of June 9 ushered in a profound political crisis, the beginning of which dates back to the September 1918 disaster but which, like glowing embers under ashes, was temporarily suppressed during the Agrarian regime, to flare up again now.

The big question put now on the agenda for immediate solution by the ever sharpening political crisis is the *question of power*. To whom should power belong in Bulgaria: to the *capitalist minority* or to the *vast, working people's majority*? Or, in other words, who should preside over the fortunes of the people and of the country, who should direct political developments: *the capitalist class* or *the working people*?

Of course, this crucial question cannot be solved the way some generals are accustomed to settle their questions in the barracks, nor the way some professors organize their university seminars. The solution of political questions and social problems depends, in the final analysis, on the real needs of life and the real balance of power of the political forces clashing at a given moment.

There are two ways of settling the present political crisis: the *capitalist* solution of the crisis and the *popular* one, i. e., a solution indicated by the masses. There is no and there cannot be any middle road today.

But how does the capitalist class propose to solve the political crisis? The actions of the present government speak for themselves. The capitalist solution of the crisis is prompted solely by the desire of the capitalists to retain power at any cost, without paying any attention to the needs of the working people and the nation. All the capitalists are interested in their profits and wealth, the consolidation of their class domination and the possibility of freely exploiting and plundering the working people.

They want a government run entirely by the banks and joint-stock companies, the stock exchange and the offices of the industrial Union, the Balkan Insurance Company, the Association of Tobacco Exporters and various other business firms. Using state power, they strive to subordinate the nation's whole economic, cultural and political life to the interests of capital.

And inasmuch as the great majority of the people is obviously against such a solution of the political crisis, the Bulgarian capitalists and their parties, who seized power by non-parliamentary means, do not rely now on parliamentary means to retain it.

Almost three months have passed since the coup d'état, but the 'saviours' of the people from the Agrarian tyranny are still not ready to set a date for parliamentary elections and continue to hold the usurped power in their hands. They are doing their level best to eliminate the Agrarian Union from the future elections and, if they can manage it, also the Communist Party – the two biggest political parties in Bulgaria. They intend to hold elections not on the basis of the proportional system, but of its crude Agrarian counterfeit. They are feverishly putting the electoral machine into shape and have already launched a pre-election campaign of terror, in order to deprive the people of the possibility of freely manifesting their will, and to secure, by hook or by crook, a parliamentary majority for the capitalist minority which is now running the country.

The capitalist solution of the political crisis, however, is bound to lead to a *military* or *fascist dictatorship*, with all its incalculable internal evils for the people and the country, as well as external perils for their liberty and independence, and for peace.

The other, the *popular* solution of the political crisis means handing over power to the working people, to the great popular majority, which alone has the right to govern itself, and the country and to dispose of its fortunes. This solution means also to direct the economic, cultural and political life of the country, as well as the social development, in such a way as to satisfy the needs and secure the rights, liberties, life, well-being and peace of the working

people, subordinating the selfish interests of capital and the capitalistic minority to this great goal.

This is the only correct solution of the present political crisis from the viewpoint of the interests and future of the working masses, the whole working intelligentsia and all non-capitalist elements, as well as from the viewpoint of Bulgaria's national independence, the liberation of the enslaved Balkan peoples and the lasting and secure peaceful relations with the neighbouring peoples and countries.

This solution of the political crisis, salutary for the people and the country, is possible in present conditions, however, only through a united labour front as proposed by the Communist Party – the united front of the working people and their political parties and economic organizations, from the Communists to the genuine Radicals who have not surrendered to the Democratic Union.

The Social-Democratic and Radical Parties, which still continue to participate in the government of the capitalist parties, must make up their minds now and choose one of the two possible solutions of the political crisis – the one which inevitably leads, through their coalition with the Democratic Union and the National Liberals, to military or fascist dictatorship, or the other which, through the united labour front, will provide the country with a truly popular rule, with a government of workers and peasants.

The choice of the Social-Democrats and Radicals will soon become clear.

But even today there is no doubt that the entire working people, including the mass of those who follow the Social-Democratic and Radical Parties, will join unanimously the united labour front and, despite all counteractions, no matter where they come from and what their nature may be, this front will finally be realized for the good of the people and the country.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 69

August 24, 1923

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7. pp. 213–216

Published by the BCP, 1954

FEAR OF A UNITED LABOUR FRONT

Our proposal to the Social-Democratic Party to form a united labour front has aroused great alarm in the headquarters of the bourgeois parties and in their editorial offices.

The aims which the Communist Party is supposed to pursue with this proposal are now being subjected, as we can see, to various interpretations, some of which are down-right ludicrous. The old political fortune-tellers and the young prophets from the bourgeois editorial offices are still racking their brains, which are not too sound anyway, in order to discover these objects.

Some have proclaimed the Communist proposal as insincere, as a 'clever manoeuvre' of 'good tacticians' aimed at sowing confusion within the Social-Democratic Party and at disorganizing its ranks.

Others have sought in this proposal a proof of the Communist Party's retreat from its basic principles, maximum programme and 'Bolshevik' methods, a retreat carried out by the Communists in order to preserve their party from, 'disintegration' and to save their 'heads and skins!'

A third group, as for instance the bankrupt Democratic financial expert Lyapchev,³⁹ has even gone so far as to discover in the proposal of the Communist Party a 'moral degradation' of Bulgarian Communism.

It all seems rather strange and funny. The enemies of the Communist Party, who tirelessly hatch plots for its destruction, are now expressing their deep regret at the 'moral degradation' of Communism and its representatives, just because of the advocated united front tactics.

At the same time, the ideologists and 'heralds' of Bulgarian capitalism in the editorial offices of the twelve

bourgeois newspapers are doing their level best to 'save' the Social-Democratic Party lest, to their great distress, it 'swallow the communist bait' and perish, i. e., lest it cease to play the role of an abettor and accomplice in the crimes and outrages of the capitalist class against the Bulgarian working people.

Examining the past role of this party in our political life and stressing the valuable services it has rendered to the bourgeoisie before and during the June 9 events, the *Pryaporets*, organ of the self-dissolved Democratic Party, stated not without foundation and with great profundity a fortnight ago that, had there been no Social-Democratic Party in Bulgaria, *the bourgeoisie would, in its own interests, have had to take measures for its creation.*

The present alarm in bourgeois circles is, of course, quite comprehensible. The united labour front is a deadly weapon against the reactionary capitalist encroachments and class domination of the bourgeoisie, a weapon the latter feels levelled directly at its heart. It is a real threat to capitalist bankers and profiteers, big real estate owners and big landowners, to all those who want to fatten like parasites on the labour of the great majority of the people.

The guesses of the old political fortune-tellers and the young prophets of capitalism as to the intentions of the Communist Party in applying the united front tactics are, however, quite superfluous, because these intentions are not and cannot be a secret.

The matter, ye wise scholars and professors, is quite simple and clear, simpler than the simplest thing in the world.

The united labour front is indispensable in order to secure the bread, life, rights, liberties and future of the working people. It is indispensable in order to protect the working masses, the entire working intelligentsia and all non-capitalist elements from the exploitation, plunder and oppression of the capitalist minority, to foil its planned military or fascist dictatorship and to establish a genuinely popular power of their own. The united front is indispensable in order to forestall any new military adventures and perils and to guarantee the political freedom, national in-

dependence and peace of the country, as well as its fraternal relations with the neighbouring nations. And last but not least, the united front of the working people is indispensable in order to give an impetus to the development of society towards the complete emancipation of the people and the country from the yoke of capitalism.

The Communist Party, which today is the largest and a truly popular party in Bulgaria, the vanguard of the Bulgarian working people, merely performs its duty towards itself, towards the people and the country and fulfils its historical mission by first taking the initiative and working tirelessly and devotedly for the realization of a united labour front, for aligning all political parties and economic organizations of the working people in our country in a phalanx against capital and reaction.

As a party of the masses, the Communist Party feels no need to act behind the scenes, in dark and hidden corners, behind the back of the people, like the bankrupt staffs of the old bourgeois parties, loathed by the working people, which have now donned a new garb – the Democratic Union.

The Communist Party advocates and works for a united labour front quite openly, before the eyes of the whole world, because it does not engage in dark, anti-popular actions, unlike the 'Unionists' and their allies of the National Liberal Party, who have perforce gathered under one roof and are prompted by fear of the people to indulge in such actions.

How can one speak in this instance of lack of sincerity on the part of the Communist Party, when the latter always acts in accordance with what it propounds?

The needs of the working people and the interests of their liberation movement are the supreme law for the Communist Party. These very needs and interests have found a theoretical expression and political embodiment in its basic principles, in its minimum and maximum programme; they always and invariably underline its tactics and give them their real content. Only the forms of the Communist tactics vary, depending on the changed political situation and on the new conditions of struggle.

The general hue and cry of the capitalist bourgeoisie against the united labour front and its frantic fear of its practical implementation are the best proof of the correctness of the Communist Party's tactics and the timeliness of its proposal for a united front.

Bebel, the unforgettable leader of the German proletariat, once said that he could best orient himself as to whether he was on the right road by what the class enemies of the proletariat had to say about him and his line of conduct.

Likewise today the Communist Party is gratified to state that it is on the right road with its united labour front tactics, all the more so as the capitalists, as well as their parties, ideologists, professors and lawyers, have adopted towards it a negative attitude of extreme alarm.

In spite of its numerous foes, the united labour front will become a reality, because life itself makes it a virtual necessity.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 71

August 27, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 217-221

Published by the BCP, 1954

UNITED FRONT OR CLASS COLLABORATION

After the setbacks and bitter disappointments experienced in the past, the well-known ideologists and advocates of class collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in our country are triumphant today and, with a feeling of rare self-satisfaction, want to show the world that the Communist proposal for a united front of labour confirms the rightness precisely of the tactics of class collaboration and may even cover up all the harm they have done to the interests of the masses through their partnership with the bourgeois parties.

A vain and rather rash triumph of superficial politicians who have evidently learned nothing new from life and have not forgotten their old favourite associations!

It is clear that the conclusions drawn by these gentlemen in this case are based on an inadmissible confusion and identification of the united front of labour proposed by the Communist Party with the tactics of class collaboration.

There can be no greater delusion than this, and no grosser distortion of the united front idea, because it should be stressed immediately – *the united front and class collaboration*, far from being identical, are, on the contrary, two tactics *profoundly opposed, quite incompatible and mutually exclusive*.

And indeed, the united front of labour means the joint work and struggle of the working masses and their political parties and economic organizations for definite concrete demands and aims, the realization of which is possible only *by combating* the bourgeoisie, capitalism and their parties, and not by *collaborating* with them.

On the other hand, class collaboration, even in its best

form, is nothing else but the subordination of the needs and interests of the masses to the class interests and aims as well as to the class policy of the bourgeoisie, in return for temporary and minor compensations for certain parties, groups or even individuals.

The united front of labour aims at pooling the efforts of the proletariat and of all the working people, groups and elements in present-day capitalist society in defence of their vital interests and rights, which happen to coincide at a given moment, against the capitalist bourgeoisie and its reaction, while class collaboration disorganizes the working people, undermines their parties and organizations, facilitates the bourgeoisie in its plans for exploitation and oppression, and buttresses its class rule over the great majority of the working people.

The united front of labour is created in the name of a concrete platform for guaranteeing bread, life, rights, liberties and the future of the working people, while class collaboration leads to using the masses as a bargaining counter for the achievement of interests and aims which are alien to them.

The united front of labour frees the broad masses from the political influence of and dependence upon the capitalist bourgeoisie, leads to the complete isolation of capital and its parties, thus paving the way for the final liberation of labour from the yoke of capitalism.

Class collaboration, on the other hand, subjects the masses to the capitalist bourgeoisie, consolidates its class positions, saves it from critical situations in which it may find itself at a given moment owing to the dissatisfaction of the majority of the people, so that it can then proceed with its policy of exploitations, spoliation and oppression with renewed vigour and greater brutality.

Class collaboration means under all circumstances the actual sell-out of the vital interests and the independence of the proletariat and of the poor urban and rural masses against a 'mess of pottage' for the aims of the bourgeoisie and capitalism.

Just as in other countries, class collaboration in Bulgaria incontestably proves that the coalition

governments of the bourgeois parties with the Social-Democratic Party or other petty bourgeois parties are *always* temporary governments *for the defence and salvation of the bourgeoisie* from popular movements threatening it at a given moment.

That is precisely how the bourgeoisie itself has always considered the Social-Democratic tactics of class collaboration, and it resorts to it only when and insofar as it finds itself in a tight spot and feels the need to divert and paralyze the popular movements directed against its policy of exploitation and oppression and against its class rule.

Once it succeeds in overcoming the difficulties and dangers and in getting back firmly on its feet, the bourgeoisie immediately dispenses with the collaboration of the Social-Democratic Party and, after having attained its ends, kicks it out of office without much ado.

Examples of this, both in our country and abroad, are so numerous and generally known that we need not cite them here.

The united front of labour, as proposed by the Communist Party, is the very reverse of the tactics of class collaboration, so assiduously pursued by the Social-Democratic Party, and has nothing in common either with electoral compromises or with government coalitions of the bourgeois parties and the Social-Democratic Party. What is more, the first conditions for the realization of the united front between the Communist Party and the other workers' or petty peasant parties and organizations is that the latter sever their ties with the bourgeoisie and its parties and reject all collaboration with them.

The united front of labour is based not on the idea of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie but on the *intransigence* of the working people towards the capitalist bourgeoisie and capitalism, which they show in their everyday life with regard to all big questions concerning bread, clothes and housing, taxes and reparations, political rights and freedoms, peace and war.

That is why the united front of labour, far from running counter to an uncompromising class struggle between

labour and capital, is actually one of the forms in which this struggle is conducted under the given circumstances.

The united front of labour against capital and its parties and not class collaboration with the bourgeoisie – that is today the supreme behest of the moment and of the vital interests of the working people. And precisely for the realization of the united front the first and inevitable condition is – *to reject resolutely the tactics of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and break up the government coalition with the Democratic Union and National-Liberal Party.*

Those who do not want to or cannot understand that, or do not find it in their interest to realize it, will undoubtedly remain opponents of the united front, will sabotage it and try to prevent its practical implementation.

It is precisely for that reason that the Social-Democratic Party finds itself today at a crossroads and goes through internal convulsions, because it has to make its choice between its former bourgeois tactics of class collaboration and the tactics of the united front of labour.

Some of the Social-Democratic Party leaders may find it very convenient to follow the tactics of collaboration with the bourgeois parties, of backstage bargaining for portfolios and deputy mandates and for exploiting the electoral dowry 'proportionately' in the forthcoming elections, as the Populist organ *Mir* cynically advises them. But for the Party members, who more than once have experienced the evils and shame of these tactics, it will not be too difficult to grasp the profound difference between the united front and class collaboration and to adopt the only salutary tactics of the united front of labour based on an uncompromising class struggle against the capitalist bourgeoisie.

When solving these questions, which are fateful to the working people, there is something stronger than the personal wishes, concepts and calculations of the leaders – *the needs and behest of the masses.*

Putting forward its proposal for a united front of labour and doing its best for its realization, the Communist Party

relies, above all, precisely on its great ally in this case –
dynamic, inexorable and incorruptible life.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 72

August 29, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 222–227

Published by the BCP, 1954

UNITED FRONT OR POLITICAL SPECULATION

In its proposal to the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, explaining the necessity of a united front of the working masses, asks it, in case it too recognizes that necessity and is ready to accept in principle the proposal made, to *appoint its representatives for a meeting with the representatives of the Communist Party with a view to drawing up a detailed programme of joint action* (See the proposal published in *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*, No 62, and *Narod*,⁴⁰ No. 186).

That was on August 16. Since then two weeks have already elapsed. The Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party is still examining the communist proposal within the four walls of its office at sessions deliberately interrupted by intervals of several days, without having taken so far any decision and without having appointed its representatives for a meeting with the representatives of the Communist Party at which to draw up the already mentioned detailed programme of joint action.

At the same time, however, the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party is assiduously carrying on negotiations with the government on the distribution of portfolios, in case of a cabinet reshuffle, and of deputy mandates for the future Chamber, availing itself at these negotiations of the communist proposal for a united front and of its own protracted 'discussion' at the Central Committee.

The articles written by the Social-Democratic leaders Pastouhov, Sakuzov and Djidrov in the newspapers *Narod* and *Epoha*,⁴¹ full of hazy riddles and vague hints, without

touching upon the question of a united front in its essence, evidently aim at exerting influence upon the backstage bargaining with the government by suggesting that if it does not take into consideration their claims, the Social-democratic Party may finally decide to accept the communist proposal for a united front.

The entire conduct of the Social-Democratic leaders in this case, expressed in clear and understandable language, means just this: 'either you give us one portfolio more by dropping the National Liberals from the cabinet and guaranteeing us the corresponding number of seats and other concessions and advantages as well, or else – *we shall side with the Communists.*'

The working masses, which are impatiently looking forward to the creation of a united front, are faced today with *an unworthy political speculation with the Communist Party proposal for a united front.*

Not the united front of the working masses in defence of their vital interests and rights, but quite different concerns now preoccupy the responsible Social-Democratic leaders who still pretend to have nothing against a united front and to care little about participating in the government together with the bourgeois parties.

The official organ of the Social-Democratic Party, *Narod*, which is making strenuous efforts to prepare its rank-and-file psychologically for a rejection of the communist proposal by means of an unscrupulous campaign of slanders, intrigues and instigations against the Communist Party, in connexion with the negotiations between the Social-Democratic representatives and the government explicitly states in its issue of August 27:

'Here again we are touching upon the *cardinal issue*. The present government should make up its mind whether to go with the Social-Democrats or with the National Liberals. It should know that unless it gets rid of the National Liberals it cannot count on the support of the Social-Democrats. And we think, quite apart from all other considerations, that this is of importance also for the forthcoming congress of the Radicals and for the future participation both in the government and the Democratic Union.'

Let us leave aside the fact that you cannot find a single sober-minded member of the Social-Democratic Party

capable of understanding why the Social-Democrats should actually refuse to participate any longer in the government side by side with the National Liberals, when they are ready to go hand in hand, for instance, with the Populist bankers, speculators and tycoons, or the Democratic industrialists and merchants who, as is known, are neither less reactionary nor more conciliatory towards the interests and rights of the workers and working people. not with 'cleaner hands' than the National Liberals.

What matters in this case is that at the present moment when the working masses have to bear the intolerable burdens of the high cost of living and speculation, of poor housing conditions and oppressive taxes, when they smart under a regime which deprives them of political rights, a regime of violence and cruelty, inhuman verdicts and political murders, when their very existence, their rights and liberties, their life and future are at stake, and when in self-defence they strive for the creation of their own united front against capital, reaction and fascism – at this precise moment the *cardinal* issue for the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, who are negotiating with the government, is to eliminate the National Liberals from the cabinet in order to get one more portfolio and facilitate their electoral combinations with the Democratic Union.

If the government were to decide to part with the National Liberals and if the cardinal issue of the Social-Democratic leaders were thus favourably solved, the Social-Democratic Party would then remain in the cabinet and would continue to 'collaborate' with the bourgeois-capitalist regrouping which is taking shape in the Democratic Union, finding itself in a *united front with capital, reaction and fascism, against the united front of the working masses.*

And when Pastouhov, in connexion with our articles on the united front, cries out hypocritically in *Epoha* of August 29: '... more to the point,' the Social-Democratic leaders, by their own behaviour, raise the big question before the workers, artisans and peasants, before the working people's majority within the Social-Democratic Party: not with whom the government will side (with the

Social-Democrats or the National Liberals), but which road their own party should embark upon – the road of backstage bargaining with the government and the representatives of bourgeois-capitalist coalition so as to obtain portfolios and deputy mandates, or the road of establishing a united front of labour through frank public discussion of the question concerned, adopting in principle the communist proposal, and through serious negotiations between the representatives of the Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party with a view to working out the necessary concrete and detailed programme of joint action in defence of the working masses.

The present government has definitely decided *what course to take*. Only the politically naive people may not see it as yet.

It is now up to the workers, artisans and peasants, the working people inside the Social-Democratic Party who obviously feel the necessity of a united front, to decide.

It is their duty to save their party, to put an end to the shameful political speculation with the communist proposal, and to impose on their party an orientation along the road of the rapid realization of a united front of the working masses against the bourgeois-capitalist coalition.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 73

August 30, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 228–232

Published by the BCP, 1954

THEIR FRONT

Experiencing an irresistible feeling of indisposition and fear of the independent struggle of the working people, the Social-Democratic leaders are trying to replace the necessity of the united labour front by some *middle* front of theirs between *reaction on the right*, in the face of the National Liberals, and *reaction on the left*, as supposedly incarnated by the Communists.

Narod, in its issue of August 29, describes this front as follows:

We shall not be won over as allies by *reaction*, neither by that on the right, nor by that on the left. At this moment we do not seek the happiness of our country in some offensive, whether of capital against labour, or of labour against capital... On the contrary, today we seek a *compromise between labour and capital, advantageous to both parties*, which will enable us to get out of the vortex of civil war and will make it possible for the productive forces of the economy to prosper by means of peaceful labour. In this way, new public wealth will be created and the general well-being will be raised, providing a more favourable soil for socialism. *On this front we are ready to collaborate with all moderate currents of democracy, which do not destroy, even in the name of lofty illusions, but build, though slowly.*

We leave aside the question of the inextricable confusion, to put it mildly, which this position represents in theory and its utter absurdity in the light of historical facts.

Much more important is the fact that the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, who pretend to represent an exploited and oppressed class in present-day society, come out against the united front of the working people in defence of their immediate and vital interests and rights

just so as to preserve for the future too their coalition with the Democratic Union – the new political bloc of the capitalist bourgeoisie in Bulgaria.

A united front with the 200,000 workers, peasants and other working people, who march under the banner of the Communist Party, is *impossible*, because they represent 'reaction on the left', but it is, of course, quite possible with the capitalists, bankers and profiteers, with the usurpers of the rights, liberties and power of the working people, with the oppressors of the masses and the hangmen from the Democratic Union.

There *cannot be* and *must not be* an alliance with the biggest party of the working people majority, but there *can be* and *must be* with the party of the capitalist minority in order – as the *Narod* puts it – to get out 'of the vortex of civil war, to create new public wealth, to raise the general well-being and provide a more favourable soil for socialism.'

Not with the working people, who actually create all public wealth and are objectively the real bearers of socialism, but with the capitalists, bankers and profiteers who, in one form or another, appropriate the wealth created by the people – this is *their front*, the front of 'compromise between labour and capital, advantageous to both parties.'

Of course this front of the Social-Democratic leaders, which they, what irony, have the temerity to recommend *in the name of socialism* is nothing new. This is the well-known old front of coalition with bourgeois parties, always practised to the detriment of the interests and rights of the working people.

Is it necessary to delve into the past in order to recall 1908, for instance, when on the basis of this very front, the right-wing socialists paved the way for 'democracy' i. e., helped the Democratic Party to assume power, or 1919, when the bankrupt bourgeois parties had to be saved from being tried by a people's court for their countless crimes and for the wars and disasters the nation had suffered through their fault?

What the said front of 'compromise' between labour

and capital means in practice is revealed still more eloquently by the most recent facts.

In the light of these facts this is how the front of the Social-Democratic leaders actually looks:

– When the export of grain, cheese, eggs, tobacco and other products is organized and the working masses are subjected to still greater starvation for the sake of the fat profits of a few banks and two or three dozens of big exporters, the Social-Democratic Ministers remain unperturbed in their armchairs in the Council of Ministers, in the interests of... 'increasing public wealth, raising the general well-being and providing a more favourable soil for socialism.'

– When the 8-hour working day is abolished and labour legislation is trampled upon, the Social-Democratic Ministers keep wisely silent so that 'the productive forces of the national economy may prosper.'

– When indirect taxes are increased and the people are still more tax-ridden, the Social-Democratic Ministers postpone their party tax programme 'until a more propitious time' in order not to break up 'the compromise' between labour and capital.

– When the law on housing is circumvented or definitely suspended and the hands of the big real estate owners are united to exploit and terrorize the tenants, the Social-Democratic Ministers consider this as 'an inevitable evil' for the sake of preserving 'the advantageous compromise' between labour and capital.

– When the lands, given to the poor peasants, are again taken away from them and the Land Act is abrogated, the Social-Democratic Ministers *recognize* the right of inviolability of the private property of big landowners.

– When elections are held, not according to the proportional system but in virtue of the reactionary Agrarian law on elections, the Social-Democratic Ministers do not consider this *sufficiently important* to make the Social-Democratic Party abandon the great cause of 'compromise' between labour and capital.

– When, finally, violence, atrocities and political assassinations are committed against the working people

and their leaders, when inhuman, barbarous and completely unlawful sentences are passed on workers and peasants, on Communists and Agrarians, when meetings are banned and the newspapers of the working people's parties are confiscated, while conspirative, armed bourgeois organizations and fascist gangs are set up, etc., the Social-Democratic Ministers approve of this, present it as 'Communist exaggerations, fabrications and lies,' because 'the supreme interests of the nation' demand that 'reaction on the left' be crushed by all means of violence and arbitrariness.

At the same time the Government and its screen – the Social-Democratic Party, accompany and camouflage all this by blatant demagogic promises and gestures to the working people.

Indeed, it must be admitted, *a compromise between labour and capital, wonderfully advantageous to both sides* (that is, to the working masses, too!), where in the best of cases *capital gets the egg, and labour – the egg-shell.*

But is not this precisely 'the advantageous compromise' the country has been 'enjoying' for the past three months?

Can someone be found, even within the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party, naïve enough to believe that if the Social-Democrats were to have *two* or even *three* Ministers, in the cabinet of the bourgeois capitalist bloc, instead of one, their role would be different, when along with them there would be three times as many representatives of capital and the government would inevitably pursue a capitalist policy?

The front, which the Social-Democratic leaders recommend to their party for the future too, is nothing but *their present front, signifying nothing else but collaboration with, abetment and support of capital and reaction and an unqualifiable betrayal of the interests of the working people and socialism itself.*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 75
September 1, 1923
Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 7. pp. 236–240
Published by the BCP, 1954

WHICH IS BETTER?

The Social-Democratic leaders want to pass off their participation in the government of the bourgeois coalition before their own Party and the masses as merely a matter of political and practical experience. This is how they formulate it: *Is it not better for the working people, is it not more in consonance with their interests, to retain and strengthen the positions already won (their present participation in the cabinet with one minister) than to retreat and possibly to aggravate the conditions of the struggle?*

'This point deserves today', says the Central Committee of the Social-Democratic Party, 'the undivided attention of the workers' masses and their leaders. *The political and economic strengthening of the working people in their aspiration towards freedom and prosperity depend on a correct understanding of this point*' (our italics).

It goes without saying that what the Social-Democratic leaders mean by a correct understanding of this point is that their Party should continue its participation in the bourgeois coalition government, even at the risk of frustrating the united labour front, provided that the National Liberals drop out of the government.

Let us for the moment disregard the fact that the participation of workers' parties in a government headed by the bourgeoisie, far from being purely a matter of political and practical experience, is, on the contrary, one of the basic and crucial problems of class struggle and of the emancipatory proletarian movement, which has long been resolved – and in the negative – by Marxist theory, and has been sufficiently illustrated by the practice of the Social-Democratic parties themselves.

Let us assume for a moment that the point is really one of expedience only, a matter of *what is better* for the working masses at the present moment.

We are ready to admit at once that the participation of the Social-Democratic Party in the present government does secure certain privileges for it, for its leaders, for part of its intelligentsia, for individual persons and groups. More than this – the Social Democratic Minister of Communications could do a number of favours to railwaymen and postal workers close to him and his Party pertaining to their official status, he could also obtain some minor concessions concerning labour in general, which in the eyes of the ruling bourgeoisie would have to play the role of a *lightning rod*, deflecting from it the blows of the people's dissatisfaction, or they would have to serve as a guise of the capitalist policy of exploitation, plunder and bourgeois dictatorship.

It is, however, obvious that we are not concerned with privileges of this sort here. They might be of the utmost interests to K. Pastouhov and his colleagues who strive for a successful political career precisely in this field, but for the masses, even for those in the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party, they are worth no more than, say, counterfeit revenue stamps.

'We are concerned in this case with real gains as regards the political and economic strengthening of the working people and their aspiration towards freedom and prosperity,' as the Social-Democratic Central Committee has chosen to put it.

Well then, it is precisely here that the following preliminary and elucidating questions arise: who does not know that the Social-Democratic Party was asked to participate in the present government not because it represents a major political force, *whether numerically* or in its influence on the masses, not because it has a considerable staff of intellectuals, but only because, on June 9 and thereafter, it has been necessary to the bourgeoisie as a *window-dressing* for its forcefully imposed government to deceive the masses as to its essentially capitalist policy, to prevent a rallying of the masses (to the very last of their

organized forces), to split and weaken them still further, so as to be able the easier to harness them to the yoke of its policy of exploitation and oppression?

Don't the workers, peasants, craftsmen and honest intellectuals of the Social-Democratic Party realize that this is precisely what the bourgeoisie expects of the Social-Democrats' participation in the present coalition government?

Is this not what they read every day in and between the lines of the influential bourgeois newspapers such as *Slovo*, *Mir* and *Pryaporet's*?

Do they not ask themselves why the government has been postponing the parliamentary elections for three full months now, and why it does not dare to fix a date for them before it has finally secured *the all-out support* of the Social-Democrats and Radicals in the election campaign against the masses?

On the other hand, the major problems that vitally concern the existence and the future of the masses, the problems of subsistence, cost of living and speculation, housing shortage and tax burden, of political rights and liberties, of peace and relations with other countries, these problems have never been and cannot be solved for the good of the masses through bargainings in Ministerial offices and parliament lobbies.

Is it possible that the Social-Democratic leaders should be unaware of the old political and historic truth that the solution of these big problems has always been and still is the result primarily of the real balance of the main social forces locked in conflict – the proletariat and the other working people, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other, that the extent of the *pressure* which the masses are in a position to exert determines the magnitude of the concessions that the bourgeoisie is forced to make in this respect?

But precisely by participating in the bourgeois coalition government, by sharing the responsibility for its anti-popular policy and by deceiving the masses as to its real nature, the Social-Democratic Party puts up a *great obstacle* to the rallying of all working people and to the political

manifestation of their united force, tends to introduce disorganization, dissensions and discord in their midst, to weaken and paralyze their struggle, to reduce their pressure on the capitalists, bankers, merchants and speculators – and thereby directly and indirectly, to increase the forces, strengthen the positions and prolong the domination of the capitalist minority in the country.

The upshot of it all is, instead of a 'political and economic strengthening of the working people in their aspiration towards freedom and prosperity,' *a political and economic strengthening of the bourgeoisie*, with the aid of the Social-Democratic Party, for an intensified exploitation of and greater tyranny over the working people.

But there is even more to it. The question is not put point-blank: who should be in power – the *capitalist minority* which appropriates the public wealth, or the *working people's majority* which creates the public wealth.

And now, when this *most important of problems for the people and the country* is to be solved, the participation of the Social-Democratic Party in the bourgeois coalition government, its commitment to the bourgeoisie, to its policy and its regime, *blocks* the way of the masses, to the establishment of their own power as a majority of the people, to the *winning of their foremost and strongest position – a workers' and peasants' government* – and *assists* the consolidation of the *usurpers' power* of the capitalist minority, as well as its parliamentary legalization through the coercive and bogus legislative elections that are now being prepared.

Is it not therefore obvious to every unbiased worker, craftsman and peasant, to every honest Socialist, that in this case there are only two roads open – either with the working people's majority and hence a united labour front, as proposed by the Communist Party, or with the capitalist minority, and hence preserving the Social-Democratic Party's participation in the bourgeois coalition and its government?

In the former case the Social-Democratic Party would be doing its duty as a political organization of a part of the working people, in the latter – it would have to play the unenviable role of the 'wise' animal, which has been in-

vited to the wedding feast to carry firewood and water to the bourgeois guests, thus betraying not only the working people, but also its own working rank and file, as well as socialism itself, in the name of which it claims to exist as a separate political party.

What is more expedient, *what is better for the masses* – here is indeed the crux of the matter which the Social-Democratic leaders on their part raise as a *central* question in their discussions of the united front.

Can there be, however, any other right answer to this question but this – *a break with the bourgeois coalition, with kowtowing to the bourgeoisie and, by means of the united labour front, to move towards a workers' and peasants' government, towards a real 'political and economic strengthening of the working people in its aspiration towards freedom and prosperity'?*

And this answer suggests itself precisely because it is not the personal convenience and the political career of the Social-Democratic leaders that are at stake, but the interests, the rights and the future of the three quarters of the whole Bulgarian people.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 78

September 5, 1923

Signed by: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 243–248

Published by the BCP, 1954

This is the meaning of the campaign the reactionary bourgeois press has lately launched, in order to outlaw the Communist Party and to bar it from participation in the future parliament.

One of the most zealous apostles of this obscurantist cause is the 'Sower' from the populist newspaper *Mir* who, for all his bold challenge of 'declining Communism' and his matchless cheek and impudence has been afraid – like his worthy colleague the 'Ploughman' from the priests' paper *Pravda* – to come out openly with his name before the people whom he is out to save from the terrible Communist peril. The sly hypocrite knows well that 'life is a wheel' and has not the courage to sign his name and thus publicly to assume the responsibility for the *storms* which he is so zealously *sowing*.

This valiant and patriotic 'Sower' is the one who voices the great impatience that has gripped the bankers' and speculators' circles. On their behalf and on his own, he demands that the Communist Party be outlawed *at once, right now*, so that it might not be able to take part in the forthcoming parliamentary elections, because supposedly, unless this is done now, it will *never* be accomplished.

'Communism in Bulgaria has to be stamped out precisely at the present moment...' says the 'Sower' (*Mir* of September 7, this year). *'If the present opportunity is missed, this will be an unforgivable mistake that may cost us dear'* (our italics).

And he concludes:

'Bulgarian democracy must defend itself so as not to perish ... but for this, it is necessary to proclaim that ... Communists are not worthy and have no right to be in parliament' (our italics).

Faithful to his Byzantine hypocrisy, the 'Sower' begins his instigating article with the following statement:

When we insist that Communists should not be admitted to parliament, we are prompted, not by a feeling of hate, to which we are quite alien, but by supreme state and public interests (our italics).

Thus, in order to preserve 'the supreme state and public interests' and to save itself from perishing, 'Bulgarian democracy' must *instantly* proclaim that Communists (as well as Agrarians, of whom the 'Sower' obviously thinks that this is already done) 'are not worthy and have no right to be in Parliament.'

'The supreme state and public interests' and the interests of 'Bulgarian democracy' therefore demand that three quarters of the Bulgarian people should be deprived of their political and electoral rights, that *more than 700,000* voters – workers, petty peasants and craftsmen, civil servants and other working people – should be barred from participation in the elections and from parliament.

But is there today a person politically so naïve as to fail to realize that the 'supreme state and public interests' referred to are nothing else but the utterly selfish interests of plunderers and oppressors – of the capitalists and bankers, the merchants and speculators, the contractors and real estate owners and landowners, and that this 'Bulgarian democracy', with the destiny of which the 'Sower' is concerned, is in fact the bourgeois-fascist reaction now raising its ugly head in Bulgaria?

It is precisely the interests of this capitalist minority, which usurped the popular power through the coup d'état of June 9, and which is well aware that, *in case of regular parliamentary elections, it would be cast off by the genuine popular will like a rag*, that today demand the forming of a 'parliament' without the participation of the working people's majority in it – against the latter's will, against the people's freedom and independence and against the social development of the country.

But do the bankrupt bourgeois politicians, who have lost their heads for fear of the masses, fully *realize* what the consequences of this might be?

For what does it mean actually for the two largest political organizations of the people – the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union – not to be admitted to parliament?

If you close the doors of parliament to three-quarters of the Bulgarian electorate, you get, not a parliament in the sense of bourgeois democracy, but a gathering of representatives of capitalists, bankers, merchants, speculators, contractors, big landowners and real estate owners, or merely a political assembly of the leaders of the Democratic Union and the National-Liberal Party.

What will then remain of the *validity*, the authority and the binding force of the decisions of such a 'parliament'?

If the bourgeois parliament today still enables the bourgeoisie, although it is a minority, to govern and rule, it is precisely because the *fiction of the popular* character of parliament still exists and, on the other hand, because the parliamentary system of government creates a *minimum* of conditions for carrying on the class struggle.

Do away with this *fiction*, eliminate this *minimum* of conditions for a more or less free class struggle by not admitting the popular parties to parliament, deprive the working people of the opportunity to elect the representatives whom they want and whom alone they trust – and your ill-starred 'parliament' will remain suspended in the air together with the entire bourgeois government. Doing this, you will cut the *branch* onto which you are holding and plunge headlong into the abyss you are digging for your opponents.

The ancient Greeks said, 'Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first deprive of his reason.'

There is every reason to believe that the demented leaders of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie are now in a similar position. History, which has doomed their class to perish, strikes at their reason first.

Trying to save the usurping power of the bourgeoisie with remedies prescribed during the dark Middle Ages, the bourgeois reactionaries remind one of the insane man who tried to stop with his hands the torrent rushing down the

mountain side with elemental force and who was finally carried off by it himself.

And indeed, at the present 'most opportune moment' for turning the Communists out of parliament and for the stamping out of Communism, no one is in a position to *accelerate* so much and make so disastrous the downfall of the usurping bourgeois power, as are the bourgeois reactionaries themselves, the sundry 'Sowers' and 'Ploughmen' from the Populist *Mir*, the priests *Pravda* and the other bourgeois editorial offices, who in their insanity and despair advise the bourgeoisie to *finally* abandon the ground of its constitution, of its own parliamentarism and legality.

Were it not for our concern to spare the people and the country the terrors of a civil war, the brand of which the bourgeois reactionaries are so recklessly flourishing, we might quite calmly have wished them good luck!

Peoples have never perished, not even under the regimes of greatest tyranny. The Bulgarian working people will also find a way of defending themselves against the usurpers and oppressors and of finally becoming the complete masters of their own destiny.

Woe be, however, to the bourgeoisie for whom the great book of history is sealed with nine seals.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 82
September 10, 1923
Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov Works, Vol. 7, pp. 259-263
Published by the BCP, 1954

OPEN LETTER TO THE BULGARIAN WORKERS AND PEASANTS

Dear comrades, after the great revolutionary struggle which, for the time being, failed to bring liberty to the masses, we were compelled, like many other fighters, to leave you in order to continue the struggle for the great cause of our people. Although temporarily separated from you by distance, we feel that, in view of the role which we were called upon to play in this struggle, we ought to address this open letter to you.

Our first words to you are:

Heads up! The bloody vengeance taken by the White-guard mob in its fear of being deprived of power will not succeed in crushing the fighting spirit of toiling Bulgaria. Defeat will teach us how to win. In spite of all, Bulgaria will yet have a government of workers and peasants.

The very parties of the capitalists and landlords, ever clamouring for 'law and order,' staged an *armed coup d'état* on June 9, thus *starting a civil war*. The events of September represent only an *important episode* in this civil war and can have no other outcome than the *final victory of the toiling masses* over their bloody oppressors, exploiters and plunderers.

The toiling peasants and workers in Bulgaria were united in two large political organizations for the defence of their vital interests: the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The White-guard government made use of its relatively easy victory of June 9 to deal a heavy blow to the Agrarian Union. Its notables in towns and villages were all arrested, a large number of them were treacherously and fiendishly murdered, thousands of workers and peasants, treated as insurgents, were subjected to cruel beating, thrown into

prison, and delivered to the courts of class-revenge. The very Agrarian Union, the numerically largest political party in Bulgaria, was dissolved, its journals were banned and it was legally barred from engaging in any political activities.

Considering the menace of the Agrarian Union as no longer extant, the government of generals and bankers turned its attention to the other mass organization of the working people – *the Bulgarian Communist Party*. On the very morrow of June 9 it arrested a large number of Communists for their active opposition to the coup d'état and subjected them to even greater torments than those endured by the Agrarians. The government used its officer leagues and conspiratorial gangs to hold these Communists in a continuous state of terror. It is a well-known fact that, on a certain evening in Turnovo, all Communists were seized by the police and carried off to the military barracks, to be beaten to death by disguised officers. Another equally well-known fact is the assault of the fascist gang in Berkovitsa and the acts of terror which it perpetrated upon the Communist population of the town and county during a whole week and under the patronage of the government. A large number of similar assaults are known to have taken place in other towns and villages. The entire toiling population, unwilling to recognize the new self-established government, lived in a continuous state of terror, intimidation and coercion. No village could be sure of peace, no worker or peasant was certain of his life.

At the same time the agents of the greedy and plunderous bourgeoisie, who had misused the state power to suit their rapacious purposes, also exerted themselves to the full. *The large landowners engaged in a campaign to regain the land which had been expropriated. The large real estate owners raised a hue and cry, reclaiming the liberty to skin the poor lodgers to the bone. The big profiteers and exporters laid hands on the available bank deposits, so as better to rob the workers and the poor peasants. The exploitation of hired labour also became more ruthless than ever. In short, the urban capitalists and the large peasant-landowners became the undisputed masters of the*

country. All this tended to intensify the opposition of the working people against the new regime. On the other hand, the broad masses were especially dissatisfied with the foreign policy of the government, formed by the *same old nationalist parties and war-like elements which had thrust the people into two military catastrophes*. The incessant conflicts with Soviet Russia and the neighbouring states kept the people in a state of constant alarm lest *Bulgaria be involved at any moment in a new and even more disastrous war*.

In these conditions the bourgeoisie, rallied around the new regime, had to 'legalize' its status through a general election. But it could entertain *no hopes* of winning over the confidence of the people, so long as the Communist Party stood firmly on guard, bravely defending the rights and interests of entire toiling Bulgaria. The menace of the Communist Party was now even greater since, after proclaiming a united front of the working people from town and village alike, it extended a brotherly hand to the Agrarians and helped them to restore their shattered organizations, thus giving concrete expression to the alliance between the urban proletariat and the toiling peasants. Indeed, the common interests and the general distress of the urban and rural masses *actually cemented the nation-wide alliance between the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party*. The government of bankers, generals and professors then decided to provoke the Communist Party and to settle accounts with it, as it had already done with the Agrarian Union. To this end the government trumped up the charge that the Communist Party intended to carry out a coup d'état on September 16, and, on the pretext of forestalling it, *mass arrests* of Communists were made on September 12.

We, who occupy responsible and leading posts in the Bulgarian Communist Party at the present historic moment declare that *the Communist Party had not organized any general or partial armed action against the government on September 16 or 17, or any other later date*. On the contrary, the Communist Party was assiduously getting ready for the electoral campaign, because it was a well-known fact that in free elections the majority of the working people in the country headed by the Agrarian Union and the Com-

unist Party, would surely defeat the usurper government and establish a worker-peasant rule of their own. The government which seized all Party archives could find no proof of such a decision and will never find such proofs unless it trumps them up, because they do not exist. But it needed the pretext to square its accounts with the Communist Party and it found it in a concocted accusation, without considering the horrible consequences which its provocation could have for the whole nation.

This aggression against the Communist Party, involving the arrest of thousands of its members in town and countryside, the closing down of the workers' clubs, trade unions and co-operative societies, the confiscation of their archives, the banning of the whole Communist and workers' press, and the prohibition of all Communist agitation and of all movements of Communists and workers in the countryside, exhausted all patience. *It was clear that the government would not permit any legal struggle. Not only the Communists, but the broad masses, too, felt their rights encroached upon and jeopardized.* Many Communists in the countryside, threatened with arrest and torture, fled to the mountains, followed by a mass of sympathizers. The White-guard government unceremoniously proclaimed them bandits and sent troops to pursue and exterminate them.

The Communist Party retaliated by declaring a *24-hour mass strike of protest in the towns and by organizing mass meetings of protest throughout the country.* The government however, mobilized all its forces to stifle this protest. Its brutal actions provoked bloody incidents in Sofia and certain other localities. The widespread and unprecedented terror which reigned in Bulgaria led to the further intensification of the general discontent and to the repeated occurrence of bloody collisions, until the latter gradually assumed the character of a people's uprising against the raging government which had declared war upon the entire working population...

At this critical juncture, when the government smothered all possibility for legal struggle and *the masses rose spontaneously in many places,* the Communist Party faced a test: *to let the masses rise alone and be beaten separately, or to*

side with them and try to generalize the movement, to unify it and to give it political and organizational leadership. The Communist Party, fully conscious of what hardships such a struggle and what difficulties such organization would involve, as a party of the toiling masses, could have no other choice but to embrace the cause of the people and, notwithstanding the extremely unfavourable conditions, to give the signal for common nation-wide action with the Agrarian Union on September 23.

What was the watchword of the uprising? Everybody knows that it stood for the overthrow of the present self-imposed, coercive government of usurpers and its replacement by a government of workers and peasants.

The aim of the struggle was not to set up a dictatorship or to establish a Soviet regime in Bulgaria, as the present government maintains with wile, but to abolish the raging military dictatorship and to form a broad democratic government from the midst of the great majority of the Bulgarian people, the toiling masses. And nowhere in the course of the struggle did the insurgents establish a Soviet regime in the districts where they had taken over local power, as the government consistently misleads. Only general revolutionary committees of the worker-peasant government were set up.

The watchword issued by the Communist Party was taken up by the masses, which followed its lead, as well as by the peasants, adhering to the Agrarian Union, and by the entire toiling population. The masses rose as one man to secure their political liberties, to safeguard their vital interests and to establish a government of their own.

The revolutionary struggle of September represented, in the real sense of the term, a *general movement of the people* with all its characteristic features. The people, striving for the realization of a lofty ideal, *never resorted to pillage, vandalism or acts of personal revenge.* The banks were strictly guarded, property was duly protected, the few enemies of the people here and there were rendered harmless, being held in arrest – but nowhere were they maltreated or killed, not a single hair fell from anybody's head. *It is a calumny that extraordinary committees had been put up and that death sentences had been pronounced.* The prisoners were kept

safe, the wounded of both sides were conscientiously tended, even the lives of the captured members of the Wrangel gangs hurled by the government against the people in revolt, were magnanimously spared.

After an epic struggle which lasted nearly a fortnight, the people's uprising was crushed by the government, which was amply provided with artillery and machine-guns and had managed to mobilize numerous bands of reserve or non-commissioned officers and thousands of Wrangelite counter-revolutionaries, while the armament at the disposal of the insurgents was woefully inadequate.

Having mastered the situation, the panic-stricken bourgeoisie gave vent to its terrible wrath and enmity against the working people who had ventured to shake the foundations of its domination.

Before our own eyes the infuriated gangs of the bourgeoisie commenced an orgy of wholesale extermination of the insurgents. They did not even pity the wounded or non-combatants, the women and the children. They did not even spare the villages and the property of the working people in the districts in revolt.

However, it is not our intention to dwell on the bloody reprisals of the now triumphant mob of White-guards – you, who groan under it, are more familiar with its outrages. These reprisals will be cruel, barbarous, fiendish, and will surpass in horror the atrocities committed by the White-guards in all other countries. They will thereby dig still deeper a *bloody furrow* between the class of oppressors and exploiters, on the one hand, and the working people, on the other.

And never, never again will there be peace between them.

Only the overthrow of the bloody monarchist government of bankers and generals and the establishment of a government of workers and peasants will give atonement and bring appeasement to the people and the country.

Dear comrades, we all fought together in the great cause of the people. We are now defeated, but the struggle continues and the final victory is nearer than the enemy suspects. The Bulgarian working people will never come to terms with the White-guard regime of an insignificant, rapacious and coercive minority – whatever high-sounding

phrases it may adorn itself with and whatever 'democratic' reforms it may pretend to introduce. We will benefit from the lesson of our defeat and tomorrow we shall be stronger than yesterday, while our enemies will continue to lose ground.

Imbued with unwavering faith in our cause, which is *a sacred cause of the people*, we, all the working people, will heroically stand the pains and sufferings of defeat and with redoubled energy and greater enthusiasm, will rededicate ourselves, to the service of the people's cause, never resting till victory is achieved.

We will again gather together and dress our thinned and shattered ranks. We will quickly heal the wounds inflicted by the enemy.

With common efforts and sacrifices we will help the widows and orphans as well as the families, now fallen in distress, of the comrades who were compelled to seek refuge abroad.

We will not waste our forces in isolated acts of terrorism, being convinced that victory can be attained only through the organized struggle of the working people, and that the overthrow of the White-guard government and the final victory of the worker-peasant government will constitute the most cruel revenge on the gaolers of the people.

We will particularly cherish and strengthen the *alliance of all the working people in towns and villages* – an alliance sealed during the events of September by the blood shed in common by the many thousand combatants who gave their lives for the cause of the people.

Let us not fall into dejection, despair and pessimism.

Heads up, brave combatants!

Long live the worker-peasant government!

Long live toiling Bulgaria!

October, 1923

Vassil Kolarov
Georgi Dimitrov

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 1

October 27, 1923

G. Dimitrov Works, Vol. 7, pp. 266–276

Published by the BCP, 1954

AFTER THE UPRISING

The September Uprising of the toiling masses in Bulgaria was suppressed with fire and sword and drowned in blood. The people who had risen in fight against the bourgeois-fascist rule of usurpers and intruders, for a workers' and peasants' government, were temporarily defeated, mainly because they were not quick enough to concentrate their forces and because they were compelled to wage their armed struggle practically bare-handed, while Tsankov's government, which had gathered around itself all dark anti-popular elements from inside and outside the country – from the bankers and profiteers to counter-revolutionary generals and professors, from Wrangelists and venal members of the Macedonian organization to the base careerists of the Right-Wing Socialist Party – had the entire armament of the country at its disposal.

Five thousand Communists, Agrarians and valiant sons of the people – savagely killed, 15,000 workers, peasants, teachers, priests and other intelligent servants of the people – arrested, inhumanly maltreated and maimed; thousands of families – ruined and plunged in distress, masses of women and girls – subjected to dreadful outrages; many towns and villages – devastated: the whole country – from Bourgas and Stara Zagora to Ferdinand and Berkovitsa – bathed in blood and tears: indescribable outrages and atrocities the like of which the Bulgarian people had not experienced even during the five centuries of Ottoman bondage – this is the short but terrible and disgraceful balance of the barbarous revenge of the raging ruling clique of bankers and profiteers, military and monarchists in Bulgaria!

The suppression of the uprising, however, as well as the atrocities perpetrated and the mass slaughtering of the most advanced and active part of the Bulgarian people,

have failed to strengthen the position of the usurpers' and oppressors' government, nor have they helped to either solve or eliminate the political crisis in the country.

On the contrary. As a result of the September bloodshed, the position of Tsankov's government has been all the more shaken under the immense weight of the moral defeat his terrorist and anti-popular policy has suffered. The cart of his 'democratic union', undermined by internal dissensions and factious rivalries, is now more than ever creaking. The Social-Democratic Party, which serves to conceal this government's shameful nakedness, is rent by a sharp and painful crisis. The electoral diversion resorted to by the government, which keeps the country under a regime of martial law and ruthless terror, only testifies to the complete elimination of the very last semblances of bourgeois parliamentarism and to the final establishment of an undisguised military-fascist dictatorship, *incapable of coping with its internal contradictions and with the most vital problems of the existence, freedom, peace and independence of the people and the country.*

At the same time, the internal situation of the country, which followed the uprising, is insupportable and cannot go on for long. Bulgaria has been turned into a fief of a handful of bankers, profiteers and exporters, and a *barbarous dungeon* where the best part of the people has been imprisoned and the doors of which are gaping wide to swallow up new hundreds and thousands of the nation's most faithful sons.

Entire regions of the country have been turned into cemeteries and burnt to ashes by the raging fascist authorities. There is absolutely no security not only for the freedom, but also for the *honour, property and life* of all who oppose the ruling military and monarchic clique of bankers and speculators. Political assassination is methodically practised all over the country. Its victims now are not only Communists and Agrarians, but also bourgeois opponents of the arrogant rulers, as was the case with the recent political assassination of Dr. Genadiev.⁴² *The heavy bloody paw of raging reaction has gripped the whole economic, social and political life of the nation.*

The postwar economic crisis weighing on Bulgaria has naturally become sharper and more painful for the working majority of the people and for the country under this regime of personal, civil and political insecurity. No one can seriously contemplate a picking up of production and a growth of the productive forces, while the living factor of economic life – the workers and peasants and all the working people – is exposed to ruthless extermination and ruin; while, owing to the outrages and killings perpetrated upon the masses and to the savage terror they are still subjected to, their will for intensive and productive labour has been poisoned; when thousands upon thousands of working forces, instead of being in the factories, workshops and fields, have been thrust into prisons and driven away to mountains or abroad; while the national economy has been deprived of large masses of until recently able-bodied men, owing to the mass murders, maltreatments and maimings; and while hundreds of villages have been devastated, pillaged, and left without food, seeds, working animals and implements.

Only speculation in prime necessities, the bankers' and exploiters' monopoly, and the barefaced spoliation of the workers' masses and of the small producers in town and village can prosper in the dark villainous times that have descended upon the country.

And the results of all this are at hand. At the very moment when the grain is bought from the peasants at extortionist low prices, the price of bread for the urban and rural consumer is constantly going up. The cost of living is soaring. The exploitation of labour is being intensified by cutting down wages and arbitrarily lengthening the working day. The tax burden is to be again increased. *Profiteers, capitalists and landlords are raging! The life of the workers, peasants, craftsmen, civil servants and of the working intelligentsia is becoming unbearable, worse than it has ever been in Bulgaria.*

As for Bulgaria's international status, it is also most uncertain and may become the source of dangerous surprises for the Bulgarian people. After the masses and their two parties (the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union)

have been barred from *overt participation* in the nation's political life, the latter has not only become the prey of the rulling bankers and profiteers and military-monarchic adventurers, but it is also turning into a *helpless tool* of the Western imperialists and of the well-known conquerors of the Balkans. Tsankov's government, which opposed the masses with cannons and machine-guns, and by means of the September bloodshed dug a deep and impassable gulf between itself and the people, and which has only a handful of bourgeois fascists and the Wrangel and Macedonian bands to rely on within the country, is turning into a pitiful pawn of those very imperialists and conquerors and, in order to be able to keep the power against the people's will, will have to kowtow to them, satisfying all their wishes and whims.

It is no accident that precisely at the moment when the bloodshed by the people has not yet dried, when the governmental grave-diggers have not yet managed to bury the dead bodies of those massacred by White-guard bands, and when the foreign minister is returning from his long tour of European capitals, triumphantly declaring that all Europe now has complete confidence in Bulgaria as a country that has successfully coped with 'bolshivism' at home — *at this very moment the chief reparation committee has decided that Bulgaria should pay an immense sum, amounting to more than 1,000 million leva, to meet the expense of occupation, which has not been provided for either in the peace treaty or in the agreement on reparation payments and in order to impose the paying of these expenses, the committee has confiscated the last Bulgarian instalment against the reparation debt.*

In vain does the government press complain that this is a punishment the Bulgarian government has not deserved. Not so, gentlemen! The measure taken by the reparation committee *is a natural consequence of the bloody crushing of the people's movement.* It is a clear indication of what the Bulgarian people have yet to expect at the hands of the Western imperialists, while they are under the bloody regime of the present usurpers' government. The foreign conquerors know well that, after the temporary triumph of fascist reaction in Bulgaria, they can freely impose

anything upon the country and the people, through their *obedient servants* ironically bearing the name of *Bulgarian government!*

This is to say that the military and monarchic clique of bankers and profiteers, avid for wealth and power, has landed the country in a *blind alley* and has brought the Bulgarian people to the brink of the *abyss* of internal ruin and external economic and political enslavement.

The way out of this *blind alley* and the salvation from the *gaping abyss* lie in the immediate liberation of the country and people from the reactionary and bloody gang of plunderers of the people and adventurers now in power, and in the *establishment of a government of the working masses.*

Thus the problem of power – *who is to be the master of the country, the working majority of the people or the capitalist minority of exploiters* – remains as pressing now as it was on June 9, and at the time of the September Uprising, and it calls today for a rapid solution.

In spite of the numerous precious victims from its midst, in spite of the rivers of blood, the Bulgarian working people, using to best advantage the valuable lessons from their temporary defeat in September, united in a strong and indissoluble fraternal alliance of workers, peasants and all the working people, will find the strength to resolve the great task that life and history have set them – *they will finally establish a workers' and peasants' government in Bulgaria!*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 2

November 7, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 277–282

Published by the BCP, 1954

TWO APPEALS TO THE WORKING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

The following two appeals were sent to the respective international organizations and have already been published in the Communist, Socialist, Agrarian and other European and Balkan workers' press, sympathizing with the popular uprising in Bulgaria.

*To the Secretariat of the International Trade Union Federation
in Amsterdam*

*To the Executive Bureau of the Red Trade Union International
in Moscow*

Dear Comrades,

The usurping government which was set up in Bulgaria through the coup d'état of June 9, to consolidate its power, has launched a monstrous reactionary campaign against all the working people and particularly against the workers' movement in our country.

This campaign reached its climax when, on September 12, on the false pretext that the Communists planned to stage a coup d'état on September 17, the government arrested more than 2,000 labour militants, workers and peasants, and tried to arrest as many others, who managed to hide as soon as the arrests started; when it closed down the workers' clubs, disbanded the workers' organizations, and suppressed the workers' press.

The 24-hour strike of protest called on this occasion was drowned in blood by the authorities. No less brutally did they treat the meetings of protest.

All avenues for legal struggle and self-defence of the workers' masses were blocked and brutal violence was rife throughout the country, in town and village.

This is what precipitated and made inevitable the

September Uprising of the working people against the usurping and oppressive government, and for the establishment of a genuinely popular government of workers and peasants in Bulgaria.

In spite of the insurgents' rare unity of purpose and unusual enthusiasm, in spite of their unparalleled readiness to fight for their freedom to the last, they were routed by the government gangs, mainly because of a shortage of arms, while the government had plenty of artillery and machine-guns at its disposal and made use of the ten thousand Russian Wrangelite officers and soldiers on Bulgarian soil, and of part of the Macedonian armed organization.

After smashing the people's uprising in this manner, the government is now wreaking barbarous vengeance on the unarmed population. The prisons are packed with nearly 15,000 workers and peasants. The people arrested are subjected to the most savage maltreatment. Some of them are being shot without trial or sentence. The families of many of the insurgents are being murdered. Even old men, women and children are not spared. Whole villages are bombarded and set on fire. The population which has fled to the mountains to save itself from the raging governmental gangs is being shelled and machine-gunned. All railwaymen and other workers and civil servants, members of our trade unions, are being dismissed and interned in the interior of the country, where they are doomed to starve together with their families.

The monstrous atrocities and crimes perpetrated by the government of bankers and generals defy description. And in order to justify in some way these atrocities and crimes, the government is now spreading the most fantastic tales about outrages, pillages and killings having been committed by the rebelling people, while the truth is that the revolutionary authorities nowhere committed any atrocities, pillages or killings, nor did they take personal vengeance on their enemies. Not a hair was touched of the few arrested enemies of the uprising and government representatives; the banks and state properties, as well as all other properties, were scrupulously guarded and even the life of the captive Wrangelite officers was

magnanimously spared, as the people fighting for their freedom did not want their sacred cause to be stained in any way.

On behalf of the entire Bulgarian proletariat and of the thousands of victims of the ruling butchers, we address to the International Trade Union Federation in Amsterdam and the Red Trade Union International in Moscow, and to all the affiliated trade union organizations in Great Britain and France, Germany and Austria, in Belgium, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, in the Scandinavian countries and Russia, in Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania, as well as in all other countries, an earnest and insistent appeal to raise their voice of protest against the unheard-of vandalism of the Bulgarian White-guard and fascist government and to lend all possible aid to the Bulgarian proletariat in these trying times, as well as to the thousands of rebelling workers and peasants, who have taken refuge in Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece and Turkey.

We are confident that all trade unions, irrespective of their political tendencies, will not be slow to show their international proletarian solidarity to their Bulgarian brothers, who are now living through the horrors of a most savage white terror, by immediately rendering them their material and moral aid.

Relying on this valuable support, the Bulgarian proletariat will be able the easier to bear the heavy blows of the raging bourgeoisie, the sooner to heal the wounds of its defeat, to stand up again firmly on its feet and to shorten the difficult road to its final triumph over reaction and capitalism.

October 5, 1923

Secretary of the General Trade Union in Bulgaria

G. Dimitrov

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 3
November 11, 1923

G. Dimitrov Works, Vol. 7, pp. 283-286
Published by the BCP 1954

TO THE WORKING MASSES THE WORLD OVER,
TO THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS IN THE
BALKAN STATES

After the temporary crushing of the people's uprising in Bulgaria against the military-monarchist and banking clique which holds the reins of power, a large number of revolutionaries, workers and peasants, persecuted by the bloody vengeance of the brutal gangs of White-guards, has been forced to seek asylum in the neighbouring countries.

In Yugoslavia there are about 1,000 refugees already and their number is constantly growing. Even larger numbers have passed into Turkish and Greek territory, some have probably managed to penetrate into Romania and other more distant lands.

The escaped revolutionaries, who do not feel defeated since the cause of the working people in whose defense they rose in arms can never be defeated, and who are planning to go on serving the same cause from abroad, are exposed to two great dangers, well-known to every fighter for liberty, for the elimination of which dangers they rely on their brethren in fate and ideals – the workers and peasants of other countries, and primarily of the neighbouring Balkan states.

The first and gravest danger arises from the international solidarity of the ruling classes. When the bourgeoisie is faced by rising masses of workers, it spits on the principles of international law, forgets its centuries-old liberal traditions and becomes an accomplice of the bloodthirsty butchers of the people. Aren't the Bulgarian emigrants, too, threatened by the terrible danger of being handed over to their hangmen?

For the time being the Yugoslav Government is showing hospitality and tolerance to the Bulgarian revolutionaries who have fled to Serbia. But is there any

guarantee that this attitude will be maintained and not altered in exchange for certain concessions on the part of Tsankov's government?

We have no information as yet as to how the Bulgarian refugees are received in Turkey and Greece, but as far as the Romanian Government is concerned we know that it has closed its frontiers to the Bulgarian revolutionaries. But if some of them have managed to enter Romanian territory in spite of the ban, do they not stand in daily peril of their lives?

The right to asylum abroad (*le droit d'asile*), consecrated not only by the laws but also by the traditions of all civilized nations, can only be safeguarded for the Bulgarian revolutionaries if the working masses of other countries take them under their protection. In addressing a heartfelt appeal to them for their fraternal aid and protection, the Bulgarian emigrants rely on being backed, in this heavy hour of trial, by the public conscience in the person of the workers' and democratic organizations all over the world.

But their appeal goes further than that. The civilized world ought to know that power in Bulgaria is in the hands of a government of White-guards and fascists, who have stained their hands with the blood of countless victims and whose lust for revenge will not leave their enemies alone even beyond the confines of the country. After June the Ninth they basely assassinated Stamboliiski and a number of other Agrarian leaders who were in prison; they murdered Halachev, the Communist leader in Pleven, most brutally and then cynically condemned his corpse to death; they sent hired assassins abroad to kill the escaped Agrarian leaders; this is how the former Minister Daskalov⁴³ perished in Prague and the deputy Matov in Istanbul. After this government had organized unprecedented massacres of thousands of prisoners and wounded and had perpetrated indescribable atrocities and cruelties on thousands of arrested people after the crushing of the September Uprising, it is now again sending hired assassins to pursue abroad the few leaders of the revolutionary movement, both Communists and Agrarians.

who have managed to escape. According to verified information, such emissaries have already left Sofia. At this moment, when certain governments, prompted by their own selfish and imperialist aims, are backing Tsankov's government closing their eyes to its cruel outrages against all workers in Bulgaria, her sons rely on it that the masses of workers and peasants the world over will raise their voice in strong indignation against the bloody regime that wields the power in Bulgaria and will impose the moral and political isolation of its brutal and base backers.

But the Bulgarian emigrants are also threatened by poverty. The escaped fighters, the predominant majority of whom are poor workers and peasants, are already suffering great want. Until they manage to get jobs, which are difficult to find in view of the present economic crisis and with unemployment rife in all Balkan countries, they will also need the material assistance of their foreign brothers. Such assistance is also needed by their families, their wives and children, who have remained in Bulgaria without any means of subsistence, surrounded by the class hatred and the insatiable lust for vengeance of the fascist gangs. They appeal for such immediate aid and are firmly convinced that they will get it.

In this way, by taking under their political protection the Bulgarian revolutionaries who have escaped abroad and by lending them and their families material assistance, the working masses of all the world will give their answer to the Sofia Jesuits and butchers who, by sowing death, horror and destruction in our unhappy country, are trying, first, through innumerable base slanders and trumped up accusations, to blacken the brave and selfless fighters for its liberty and welfare, and secondly, to do away, physically, with their leaders by means of hired tools.

Vassil Kolarov, Georgi Dimitrov

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 3

November 11, 1923

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 287-290

Published by the BCP, 1954

WHO RULES BULGARIA?

Since the coup d'état Bulgaria has actually *two governments*. The official government of Professor Tsankov represents a *cloak* which conceals from the eyes of the people and from the outside world the other, the *real government*.

This government is the so-called 'convention of ten' which consists of persons loyal to the Koubrat Military League⁴⁴ and is in cahoots with the autonomist right wing of Todor Alexandrov. This 'convention' is something like *the mailed fist* of big business in Bulgaria against the working masses and their political parties and organizations and is firmly linked with the same big banks and export firms which *financed* the preparation and execution of the coup d'état of June 9, particularly with the association of tobacco exporters, which is the most powerful capitalist organization in Bulgaria.

The 'convention of ten' holds directly in the hands the *Ministry of the Interior* through General Roussev, the *Ministry of War* through General Vulkov and the *Foreign Ministry* through Colonel Kalfov, these being the *three key ministries* in any government. It also can count completely on Prime Minister Tsankov, himself, who has long been a man of the banking circles.

On all major issues the Government is faced with a *fait accompli* and pays the role of a mere *rubber stamp* of the 'convention's' decisions.

Whenever any of the Ministers attempts on his initiative to carry out certain measures in his ministry, which are not to the liking of the banks and the export firms, he is forced to desist from his initiative. A typical case in point are the orders concerning *export and stock-exchange*

speculations issued shortly after the coup d'état by the Minister of Finance P. Todorov, a member of the Radical Party. On the very next day these orders were either completely *revoked* or *corrected* in favour of the big businessmen and profiteers on the pretext of having been 'misprinted' in the *State Gazette*.

It is precisely this 'convention of ten', inspired and well paid by big business, both Bulgarian and foreign, and kept carefully concealed behind the scenes, which is in command of the policies and actions of the government and which *disposes of the liberty, honour and life of the citizens and of the fate of the country*.

The well-known rather odd and forcible merger of the parties of Populists, Democrats and Radicals in the Democratic Union was *its work*. Those of the old party leaders who attempted, as is common knowledge, to resist this forcible merger, rapidly folded their banners when threatened with assassination.

The wranglings concerning the distribution of seats in parliament between the parties of the coalition and its functionaries were also settled through the intervention of the 'convention'. The Right-Wing Socialist Central Committee, *subjected to its pressure* the very next day, *resumed* the broken off negotiations with the Democratic Union on the sharing of government parliamentary seats, *giving up its excessive claims*.

The blow dealt to the Communist Party on September 12 of the current year was decided upon and organized by the 'convention of ten' through its Minister of the Interior General Roussev and only then sanctioned by the Government.

The great number of political assassinations since June 9, and more particularly during the September events, as well as the murder of Genadiev, were also engineered by this 'convention'. In the case of Genadiev's murder, as we learn from reliable sources, the 'convention' made use of an old 'sentence' issued by Todor Alexandrov's general staff, which could not be executed in 1920-21 and which was later left in abeyance owing to the change in the political situation without being quashed... .

In order to ensure its position as a *de facto* government for the future, too, the 'convention of ten' is now trying to impose on the governmental candidates in the elections *special declarations of allegiance* to the Democratic Union, by virtue of which declarations those government deputies who might differ with the Democratic Union in the future parliament *are liable to lose their seats*.

This then is the *actual* government of Bulgaria which, hidden in the dark and wielding its power behind the scenes of the official administration, whose colourful stage sets are the 'leftist' parties of the Right-Wing Socialists and the Radicals, *conducts the present regime of bourgeois fascist reactionaries*.

Naturally, the existence of such a *backstage government* which, we must say, is becoming increasingly inconvenient even to certain bourgeois circles who are already feeling the pressure of this clique of bankers and profiteers on their own backs, *does not in any way relieve the official government of its general responsibility, nor does it diminish the constitutional and factual responsibility of the government as a whole and of all its individual members for all the crimes perpetrated against the working people so far and for the black reaction now raging in the country*.

Quite on the contrary, the responsibility of Tsankov's government, of all its members and the parties that support it, is *all the greater* for agreeing to be *tools* of and serve as a *window-dressing* for such a terrorist and conspiratorial government, so unbearable and dangerous for the people and the country.

The existence of the 'convention of ten' only goes to show that Bulgaria, instead of having a normal government backed by broad social strata, is being ruled by a clique of bankers and profiteers through a power concealed in the dark, not responsible to anybody for its actions and hence *capable of all conceivable crimes and adventures*.

All working people in town and village, in the whole country, who have the right to vote, will bear this in mind now that the government coalition, eliminating all possibilities for free electoral campaigning, is trying through the forthcoming elections to *legalize* the rule of this

'convention' of bankers and profiteers created by the coup d'état of June 9; with ever greater energy, endurance and perseverance they will continue their struggle for their own and the country's liberation from a situation so unbearable and so fraught with interior and exterior dangers, and for the creation of a genuine popular rule in Bulgaria – a *government of workers and peasants.*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 3

November 11, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 291–295

Published by the BCP, 1954

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS?

The lessons which the September Uprising taught the working masses and more particularly their political organizations, viz. the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union, are many and of great importance.

All these exceedingly valuable lessons may be summed up in a few main points.

First – the September Uprising showed that, in order to overthrow the usurpers' rule of bankers and profiteers and to establish a government of workers and peasants, what is needed is, first and foremost, *unity of purpose and common action* of the working people and complete realization of a *united front* between the urban proletariat and the rural toiling masses, as well as between their political organizations and more particularly between the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union.

Second – the September Uprising also proved that a government which is in complete control of the state apparatus and the nation's armed forces cannot be toppled by the working people merely by *numbers, unity of purpose and a readiness of the risen masses to make sacrifices*. What is further necessary is the possibility of speedy and mass armament and the *isolation* of the government to such an extent that it cannot employ against the people *the main body* of the army and other armed forces such as the Wrangel units and the Macedonian gangs which it used during the September events.

Third – the September Uprising demonstrated that, given the first two conditions, the armed struggle of the masses can count on success if there is *united political leadership* in the struggle throughout the country, if there is firm cohesion, complete understanding and mutual con-

fidence among the political parties at the head of the uprising

Fourth – the September Uprising proved lastly that *the moment* for starting decisive mass actions, as well as *the methods* of struggle for the elimination of the usurping and tyrannical power, is usually determined not by *the will* of the people's parties, however powerful and numerous they may be, but by the ruling clique which holds the power in its hands, by the conditions which this clique creates; therefore the parties which stand at the head of the people's movement must *always* be ready to take up the decisive struggle whenever it becomes *inevitable*, they must be in a position *quickly* to switch from one type of methods to another in accordance with the changing needs and conditions of the struggle and with the actions of the usurpers' government.

It is these basic and extremely valuable lessons of the September Uprising, gained unfortunately at the cost of so many victims and so much bloodshed, that now have to be utilized *to the full* by the working masses themselves, by their two mass political parties and more particularly by the Communist Party – *in order to pave the way for the final victory of the people.*

For no one can now delude himself that the Bulgarian people will succeed in freeing themselves from the present usurping, barbarous regime by means of *elections* and *other well-known parliamentary methods*, much less by such 'elections' as are to be held on November 18. This is quite out of the question in the present period of complete liquidation of parliamentarism to which the bourgeoisie in all countries is resorting. Even in such a democratic country as republican Austria, Prime Minister Seipel made no bones about having it understood on the eve of the last legislative elections that, if his bourgeois government of bankers failed to gain the necessary parliamentary majority, he would not hand the power over to another government but would be compelled to govern the country through a dictatorship.

After everything that the now ruling usurpers have done in our country since June 9 and especially during the September events, in order to keep the power in their

hands at all cost, can there be anyone so naive as to believe that, even if the working masses should by some miracle gain a parliamentary majority in the forthcoming elections, Tsankov's government and the backstair 'convention of ten' are going to bow *voluntarily* before *the will of the people* and allow the formation of a genuine *popular government*?

The present usurping and despotic government, which ruthlessly tramples on the Constitution and the laws, which does not care a hoot about the principles and the most elementary requirements of parliamentarism, which consciously bars all ways and avenues to legal parliamentary struggle, which rules the country with fire and sword and turns cannons and machine-guns against the people, which resorts to the most cruel coercion and to mass political murders – such a government can only be overthrown by *the total forces of the masses*, the expression of which through *the ballot* is, as matters now stand, impossible or at least wholly inadequate. Never has the popular saw that one nail drives out another had a truer practical application and a better justification.

The utilization of the valuable lessons of the September Uprising for the liberation of the people and the country from the unbearable rule of usurpers and tyrants will depend, however, primarily on the Communist Party. How soon this will be achieved will depend on how quickly the party organization is restored and its disrupted ranks are brought to order, on how strong will be *the unity* within the party itself, in its leadership, in its actions and struggle.

We realize quite well that party unity is bound to be somewhat upset after all we passed through during the September events. The re-appraisal of all existing party values after such events is not only fully comprehensible but also quite indispensable. Differences of opinion and arguments on party tactics are matters of course in such cases.

However, the supreme interests of the working people's movement and the future of communism in Bulgaria demand that all this should be speedily overcome within the ranks of the Party and under strict observance of Party discipline. Through comradely communist self-criticism, dis-

regarding all side issues and personal factors, with a view only to the great interests in the struggle for liberating people and country from the usurpers' power and the rampant reaction, as well as for the formation of a government of workers and peasants *the Party must of one accord synchronize its tactics and all its activity with the historic lessons of the September Uprising.*

This is the *key* to the solution of the present problem of Bulgaria.

For the rest – our enemies themselves are doing more than enough by their *monstrous crimes and boundless follies* against the Bulgarian working people and against the country.

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 4

November 18, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol 7, pp. 301–305

Published by the BCP, 1954

THE UNITED FRONT

One of the foremost achievements of the Bulgarian working people during the past few months is undoubtedly the establishment of a *united front* between the urban proletariat and the peasant masses, and particularly between the two mass political organizations – the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party.

The vital necessity and the great significance of a united front of labour became particularly clear and indisputable both during the coup d'état of June 9, 1923 and the September 1923 Uprising.

It should be emphasized quite openly that the coup d'état of June 9 could be engineered successfully *only* because the Government of Stamboliiski and the leadership of the Agrarian Union had *themselves* unwittingly and in every possible way sabotaged the establishment of a united front between the town and the village, between the urban proletariat and the working peasants, thus involuntarily paving the way for and facilitating the task of the clique of bankers and profiteers engaged in the coup and its military and Macedonian agents.

It should also be noted that the important *political* reason for the failure of the September Uprising lies in the fact that it was provoked and imposed *before* the process of building the united front of labour and fraternal alliance between the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union, which had started after June 9, was *completed*.

At the price of thousands of casualties, at the price of the people's bloodshed in abundance, the September Uprising *consecrated* and *cemented forever* the united front between the proletariat and the peasant masses, as well as the joint action of the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union in the struggle against the bourgeois-fascist reaction, and for a worker-peasant government.

The elections of November 18, on their part, proved in a striking way the *force* of the united front of the working people and the *great progress* made by it within a relatively short space of time.

The road of the united front is already clearly outlined. The building up of a united front by enlisting all the other organizations of workers, employees and artisans as well is rapidly reaching completion, and will inevitably lead to the final victory of the people over the raging bourgeois-fascist reaction, to the formation of a worker-peasant government.

This is precisely the reason why the people's enemies, the hangmen and killers from among the ruling coalition are *frightened to death*, particularly after the elections, by the united front of the working masses. And today they are making superhuman efforts to *destroy* it, to *divide* the workers and peasants who are waging a common struggle, and especially to *separate* the Agrarian Union and *oppose* it to the Communist Party, knowing well that in order to *rule* over the people they have first to *divide* and then *strike* their blows separately.

With this aim in view the bourgeois-socialist coalition and the numerous 'well-wishers' and 'saviours' of the people, which applied such inhuman methods of terror and mass murder during the September and October days, are today resorting to methods of violence and black reaction, to methods of political corruption and vulgar demagogy on a large scale.

In order to carry out their dark schemes, their main efforts are now focussed on making use of the same right-wing elements in the Agrarian Union which before June 9 had supported, within the Union and the Government, the policy of the peasant bourgeoisie, the policy of sabotaging the united front of labour, which policy brought the Agrarian government and the leadership of the Union into a constant conflict with the working masses in towns and villages, and hence also with the Communist Party.

Can one find today a single sincere and sober-minded Agrarian militant ready to deny that it was *precisely* the Agrarian government which handed over the cities to the

organizers of the coup by dissolving the *communes* (communist municipal councils) and strengthening the position of the bourgeoisie, facilitating both the coup of June 9 and the failure of the September Uprising, by disorganizing the Transport Workers' and Miners' Union and persecuting the proletariat?

Will the Agrarian Union now revert to this wrong policy which was so disastrous for the working people, a policy whose main champions paid for it with their own heads?

Are they ready to forget so quickly the bloody lessons of the June and September events for which they paid so dearly?

Is it not clear to every worker and peasant in Bulgaria, that after all that has happened in the country during the past six months, *it would be sheer madness and an unqualifiable crime towards the vital and supreme interests of the Bulgarian nation to repeat the old fatal errors and help in any way the enemies of the people in their efforts to disrupt the united front of the working masses and the fraternal alliance between the Communists and the Agrarians?*

No, the not so numerous apostles of the peasant bourgeoisie and the secret friends and collaborators of the bourgeois-socialist coalition within the Agrarian Union are mistaken if they think that they will again be able to push the Union and the peasant masses on to the dangerous and disastrous old road.

The working people of towns and villages and their vanguard in the ranks of the *Communist Party* and the Agrarian Union will guard, for all that, *as the apple of their eye*, their united front because they are fully aware *that only in this way will they be able to free themselves from the barbarous regime of the people's hangmen and killers, and become their own masters of their labour, life and future.*

Rabotnicheski Vestnik No. 7

December 12, 1923

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 321-324

Published by the BCP, 1954

LENIN AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' MOVEMENT IN THE BALKANS

From its very inception the workers' movement in the Balkan states, particularly in Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, was under the influence of the revolutionary movement in Russia. The first organizers and leaders of the working class in these countries were direct pupils of the Russian Marxists. The best cadres of the workers' intelligentsia were educated under the influence of Russian Marxist literature, on the one hand, and the heroic struggle of the Russian revolutionaries against tsarism, bourgeoisie and opportunism, on the other.

But it is, above all, to Lenin and his pupils that the workers' movement in the Balkan states owes its clear-cut, pronounced revolutionary character. The struggle of the Balkan proletariat during the last few years is directly bound up with the name and great work of Lenin.

As early as the beginning of the imperialist war Lenin captured the hearts of the militant Balkan workers by his uncompromising fight against imperialism and its social-patriotic abettors. His bold and prophetic appeal to save toiling mankind by means of a proletarian dictatorship found a profound echo among the broad working masses of the Balkan states.

When in May 1917 Lenin raised the historical slogan 'All Power to the Soviets,' the Balkan proletariat saw in him its leader, as well.

After the October Revolution, of which Lenin himself was the brilliant personification, his name became a banner of the liberation struggle of the Balkan workers and peasants.

His classic books; 'State and Revolution' and 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism' became a vademecum of the militant workers in the Balkans.

Lenin's great idea of an alliance between the workers and peasants, which was completely embodied in the Russian Revolution and secured the victory of the first revolution of the workers and peasants in the world, was and continues to be a happy revelation for the Balkan working masses. It lit like a beacon the road to be followed by the proletariat of the Balkan countries in order to achieve victory in its struggle for emancipation.

When in September 1923 the Bulgarian working people staged an armed uprising against the ruling bourgeois and fascist reaction and fought for the establishment of a government of workers and peasants, they were inspired precisely by this idea. The uprising failed owing to the enemy's superiority in armed forces, but the alliance between the workers and the peasants was consolidated for ever, sealed with the blood of thousands of fighters who perished, and is now a pledge of the near and final victory of the Bulgarian working people.

Nowhere else is the national question so confused and entangled as in the Balkans, where different nationalities have become so mixed and intermingled within the confines of a territory that they represent a veritable mosaic. The national question is a basic question of Balkan policy. The bourgeois classes and dynasties in the Balkan countries, as well as in the imperialist great powers, have always exploited and continue to exploit the existing national conflicts for their aggressive ends, fomenting hate in one nationality against another and setting them one against the other.

Lenin gave a crystal clear and correct solution to the national question, which found its expression in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Lenin's idea of the self-determination of peoples, including the right of secession and the setting up of the larger nationalities as separate states, shed a bright light upon the entangled national question in the Balkans, as well. The working people in the Balkans clearly saw that this question can fully be settled and that its solution is possible not on the basis of dividing the Balkans among them, as practiced by the Balkan bourgeoisie and dynasties, but only by the free joining of all

nationalities inhabiting the Balkan Peninsula in a federal union, securing them complete freedom and the right of self-determination.

Thanks also to the teaching of Lenin, the militant workers of the Balkan states now realize more clearly the necessity of unity in their political and economic struggle. Thanks to this teaching, the trade union movement in the Balkans has not become a tool of the various bourgeois parties, but has a revolutionary class character, in which all group, individual and temporary interests are subordinated to the general interests, tasks and aims of the working class.

If opportunism plays so insignificant a role in the workers' movement of the Balkan states and exerts so weak an influence upon the working masses as nowhere else except in Russia, this is explained by the fact that it follows the road indicated by our great teacher and leader, Vladimir Ilich Lenin.

Today, when every worker and peasant in the Balkan states mourns the loss of Lenin, Lenin's ideas are spreading across the whole Balkan Peninsula. These ideas are a lodestar in the dark night of the bourgeois and fascist reaction, which now rules and rages everywhere, and portend an early victory of the Balkan Union of Republics of workers and peasants.

Krasnii International Profsoyuzov No. 1-4, 1924

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Collected Works, Vol. 7, pp. 341-344

Published by the BCP, 1954

A SOCIALIST BALKAN CONFERENCE

At its session of February 17 this year in Luxembourg, the Executive Committee of the Socialist Workers' International decided to call a conference of the Socialist Parties of the Balkan states. This conference was held on March 12 and 13 in Bucharest. Besides the representatives of the Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Romanian Socialist Parties, the conference was attended by Friedrich Adler⁴⁵ and Tseretelli⁴⁶ as representatives of the Socialist Workers' International. The Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* of March 18 published an official communiqué on this Balkan socialist conference. This communiqué reveals that the conference was called to discuss the grave accusations levelled at the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party for its participation in the bourgeois-fascist coup d'état of June 9, 1923 and in the bloody suppression of the popular uprising in September and the brutal murder of several thousand Communists and members of the Agrarian Union. Alongside with this inquiry, the conference was to review and discuss the situation in the Balkans.

This peculiar conference passed no decisions either on the one or on the other question. In connexion with the accusations against the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, which were the subject of discussion for two days, the Bulgarian delegation offered not only oral explanations but submitted a written declaration, too. In this unprecedentedly hypocritical and cynical declaration the delegates of the BSP justified its participation in the June coup d'état and the bourgeois-fascist government as being 'in the interests of democracy.' They defended Tsankov's government against the accusation that it was a fascist government and declared that it was not responsible for the atrocities and mass murders committed in September

and that these atrocities were perpetrated by irresponsible factors, for whose deeds neither Tsankov's government, nor the Social-Democratic Party which was a member of it at the time, could be held to account. In the end the Bulgarian delegation declared that the BSP was fighting and would continue to fight for the victory of democracy.

It is quite unnecessary to point out that these declarations from beginning to end run completely counter to well-established and indisputable facts.

1. Today it is no secret even to the representatives of the Socialist Workers' International that the coup d'état of June 9 was not staged to set up a democratic regime, but *to hand over power to the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and, more particularly, to banking and finance capital, and that this was done against the will of the masses.*

2. The bourgeois-socialist government that came to power after the coup d'état, far from establishing a democracy, subjected the nation to a regime of most rabid political and social reaction, gave banking and speculating capital a free hand to rob the masses, and launched ruthless mass persecutions the like of which had never been seen in Bulgaria. *This government deliberately provoked the masses to armed self-protection in order to drown in blood the two largest popular parties, viz. the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union.*

3. The vile murder of thousands of Communists and Agrarians was committed under the leadership of the *bourgeois-socialist government through the state organs, through reserve officers and state employees mobilized by the government, through the Wrangel White-guard units and the gangs of the Macedonian autonomist organization, with whose support the coup d'état itself was carried out and on whom the government of conspirators still relies.* Nine-tenths of the murdered Communists and members of the Agrarian Union were liquidated not during the Uprising, but after it – *after they had been arrested by the official organs of the government – on the decision of the so-called 'civil committees'.* These civic committees were formed of supporters of the government.

4. Even after June 9 the Socialist Party engaged in a furious persecution of the Communist Party and the

Agrarians, it endorsed the provocations of the government and the mass arrest of Communist militants on September 12th. In those days, when thousands of the sons of the people were being killed and another 15,000 Communists and Agrarians were pining in prison, the Social-Democratic Party raised no protest against the 'irresponsible factors' who were perpetrating these atrocities, nor did it leave the government but cynically continued its campaign and declared both in its press and through its Ministers in the government that Communists and members of the Agrarian Union had 'got what they deserved'. While those under arrest were being basely killed, the Social-democrat Sakyzov said that he himself as well as the Socialist Party fully approved and supported the measures taken by the government in order to re-establish peace and order in the country.

5. When, after the victorious bloody campaign against the working people, the ruling parties were dividing the seats for the parliamentary elections, the Socialist Party, in order to get a greater number of seats, referred to its valuable services in crushing the September Uprising and in annihilating 'the dangerous internal enemies', viz. the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union.

6. Even now, when the Socialist Party is no longer necessary to the bourgeoisie and has been compelled to leave the government coalition, it continues to endorse the persecution of Communists and Agrarians. It completely approved the government in its attempt, on the basis of the draconian State Protection Law, to incite the Supreme Court of Appeal to take a decision, by virtue of which not only the Communist Party, but also other organizations of the working class, such as the General Trade Union, the *Osvobozhdeni*⁴⁷ workers' co-operative and the newly-founded Party of Labour⁴⁸ were to be dissolved.

And in the face of all this, the Socialist Balkan Conference, which discussed the conduct of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, refused to take any decision whatever. It contented itself with stating that the representatives of the Socialist Workers' International.

The fact that the Balkan Socialists and the representative of the Socialist Workers' International refrained

from denouncing the treacherous and shameful policy of the Socialist Party is tantamount to *tacit approval of the fascist role of the Bulgarian Socialists*. At the same time, it is a proof that the Socialist Workers' International itself, now headed by Friedrich Adler, *remains an organization of traitors to the working class and to socialism*.

On the extremely serious situation in the Balkans and on the Macedonian question, the most complex, most important and most burning issue for the Balkan nations, the Socialist Conference contented itself with a mere 'exchange of views'. The representatives of the three socialist parties which participate directly in the nationalistic policy of the bourgeoisie in their own countries, accused each other of nationalism and chauvinism, without reaching a common stand on the tasks of the socialist parties in the Balkans at the present moment and on the solution of the national question.

The general trend of this 'exchange of views' on these problems boils down to a support of the status quo in the Balkans, a support of the situation created by the imperialist peace treaties. A peaceful solution of the existing national problems is aimed at from this basis. Not a word in defence of the national-liberation movements of the oppressed peoples in the Balkans; not a word in defence of national self-determination; not a word against the aggressive policy of the Balkan bourgeoisie towards Macedonia, Albania, Thrace and the Dobroudja; not a word against the policy of assimilation and violence which the Serbian bourgeoisie is pursuing in Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia, the Romanian bourgeoisie – in the Dobroudja, Transylvania, Boukovina and Bessarabia, and so on and so forth; and lastly, not a word concerning the free unification of the Balkan nations into a federative Balkan republic, which alone could pave the way to the solution of the entangled national problems in the Balkans and secure the national freedom and independence of the Balkan nations. Not a single word about this!

The Socialist Balkan Conference in Bucharest, which actually was no Balkan conference at all, has proved once again that the Socialist Parties of the Balkan states are far

removed from the struggles of the masses, that they are linked with the nationalist aggressive policy of their bourgeois classes and *are unable to show a way out of the present unbearable plight in the Balkans and to solve the national question.*

The Communist Parties in the Balkans, united in their Balkan federation, which always act in full agreement with the Communist International, remain the only loyal defenders and leaders of the social and national liberation struggles of the working people in the Balkans.

Inprekor No. 43

April 8, 1924

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 7, pp. 353-358

Published by the BCP, 1954

I

The Bulgarian Communist Party (formerly called the Social-Democratic Party of the Left-Wing Socialists) grew up and developed in a long and relentless struggle against Menshevism and other trends alien to the workers' movement in Bulgaria. Steadfastly following the path of revolutionary Marxism, in 1903 it went through the painful split with the Right-Wing Socialists (the Bulgarian Mensheviks) who raised the banner of class collaboration and wanted to turn the party of the proletariat into an ordinary petty-bourgeois reformist party. It also underwent two serious internal crises, in 1905 and 1907, as a result of which the so-called 'liberals' and 'progressives' were expelled from its ranks, because they opposed the Party's centralism and iron proletarian discipline.

After purging the reformist elements from its ranks, the Left-Wing Socialist Party won the sympathies and support of the working people in Bulgaria through its intransigent struggle against the aggressive nationalistic policy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie during the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and greatly increased its prestige among the masses as a result of its intrepid struggle against the imperialist war.

Owing to its model organization, its systematic agitation and propaganda activity among the urban workers and rural toilers, owing to its skilful combination of the struggle for immediate interests with the general anti-capitalist struggle of the proletariat after the European War, the Bulgarian Communist Party extended and deepened its influence and became a party of the masses in the true sense of the term. In a country with no more than 5 million inhabitants in 1922-23, the Party had nearly 40,000 members, comparatively strictly selected. Its ties

with the peasant masses were so broad that *two thirds of its membership consisted of toiling peasants.*

In spite of merciless persecution, it managed to rally over 200,000 electors out of a total 900,000 around its nominees under the banner of its revolutionary programme. The entire trade union movement and strike struggle in the country were under its exclusive influence and leadership. It set up a workers' co-operative which within three years gained 70,000 members. Its press and Marxist literature by far surpassed those of all the other communist parties both in quality and quantity, with the exception of Russia's, of course.

Unflinchingly defending the working people's interests and linking their everyday struggle with the struggle for Soviet power, in 1922 the Bulgarian Communist Party began to penetrate still more extensively the rural masses and to unite them with the urban proletariat. This growth of the Party and its steadily growing influence among the toiling peasants caused terrific embarrassment amid Stamboliiski's agrarian government, which actually was becoming increasingly estranged from the peasant masses. The government intensified its persecution of the Communist Party and the workers' movement, persecutions which reached their climax during the parliamentary elections in the first half of 1923. The victory of Stamboliiski's government was an unprecedented one. The defeat of the bourgeois parties was truly disastrous. The Communist Party retained all its forces and significance. Stamboliiski thought that he had already succeeded in coping with the bourgeoisie and that the only enemy of his rule which had to be destroyed was the Bulgarian Communist Party. The government worked out a bill on the 'agricultural communes', according to which the property of all communist peasants who refused to break with the Communist Party was to be confiscated. It launched a frantic campaign against the trade unions and simultaneously set up trade unions of its own. The question of dissolving the workers' co-operative Osvobozhdenié was also contemplated. The prisons were crammed with persecuted communists. The government collected even the arms, formely distributed

among the adherents of the Agrarian Union. Meanwhile, Stamboliiski's government left the army and the gendarmerie, as well as the entire government machine, in the hands of officers loyal to the bourgeoisie.

This paved the road both psychologically and materially for the military-bourgeois coup d'état of June 9, 1923.

The Bulgarian Communist Party, which resisted the anti-workers' policy of the Agrarian government and its brutal persecutions, while not quite obvious of the danger that came from the bourgeois bankers and profiteers, *imperceptibly weakened the front against the bourgeoisie*. After the parliamentary elections in the spring of 1923, in which the bourgeois parties obtained only 20 mandates, the leaders of the Communist Party were so impressed by Stamboliiski's victory that they considered the danger of a bourgeois coup d'état as being eliminated for a long time to come and concentrated all their efforts against Stamboliiski's government, which they believed to have become altogether a government of the rural bourgeoisie.

In spite of the fact that, thanks to its vigilance, the Bulgarian Communist Party succeeded twice in rallying the masses on time and since 1922 succeeded twice in frustrating military-bourgeois attempts at a coup d'état, its leaders were completely taken unawares when the coup d'état actually took place.

In 1922 the Bulgarian Communist Party adopted a correct stand on the planned coup. In spite of the hostility shown by the Agrarian government towards the working class, it was ready to join the Agrarian Union and even Stamboliiski's Agrarian government in an armed struggle against a possible bourgeois coup. The Party acted properly. And in 1922, when the bourgeois military alliance, assisted the Wrangel units, had even fixed the date on which it would strike, it was forced to desist from its planned coup. But after Stamboliiski's great parliamentary victory in the spring of 1923, the Communist Party *actually failed to appreciate* the significance and force of the Agrarian Union and ascribed this victory primarily to the machinations of the government's administrative apparatus. It also *underestimated* the ties of Stamboliiski's government with the

peasant masses. It failed to do all that was necessary to form a unified front with the masses of the Agrarian Union and completely ignored the Social-Democratic Party, which all the same had a certain influence among the employees, working intellectuals and part of the petty bourgeoisie. Nor did it take a definite stand on the Macedonian question at the proper time, whereby it allowed the autonomous Macedonian organization to fall into the hands of the bourgeoisie and become its tool in carrying out the coup.

Instead of mobilizing all its forces jointly with the Agrarian Union and even with its government to fight against the bourgeoisie, *the Party leadership intensified the struggle against Stamboliiski's government and the Agrarian Union.*

With these erroneous tactics, we leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party *greatly facilitated the successful outcome of the coup.*

Thus the coup d'état of June 9 came like a bolt out of the blue for the Party's leaders, *at the very moment when they expected it least.*

Instead of rallying the Party masses under its influence and the masses of the Agrarian Union for an armed uprising to paralyze the coup, *the Party leadership adopted a passive stand and left the revolting peasants to the mercy of fate.*

Under the influence of Stamboliiski's anti-workers policy the Party leadership *failed to notice the forest beyond the trees.* It failed to understand and appreciate the major historical fact, *the decisive struggle for power between the working people, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other,* behind the fact that the existing Agrarian government was already discredited in the eyes of the working class.

A revolutionary party like the Bulgarian Communist Party, which had not yet managed to overcome the heritage of its Social-Democratic past and lacked the necessary revolutionary experience, did not fulfil its supreme revolutionary duty at the crucial moment: *always and everywhere to stand at the head of the working masses in their struggle against the bourgeoisie.*

The passive behaviour of the Bulgarian Communist Party on June 9 was a *fatal error* which bore dire consequences both for the Party itself and for all Bulgarian working people.

This error was *paid for during the events of June and especially of September by thousands of victims precious to mankind and streams of workers' and peasants' blood.*

II

As soon as it received the first report on the fatal error made by the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Executive Committee of the Comintern intervened and firmly condemned it. At that time the leading circles in the Party and the majority of its members considered this condemnation as unfair, as a result of insufficient information on the part of the Comintern on the actual state of affairs in Bulgaria.

This severe condemnation, however, helped the Party to correct its unified front tactics towards the Agrarian Union and to direct its efforts towards preparing a decisive struggle for the overthrow of the regime of June 9. Decisive steps were taken to set up a united front with the Agrarian Union and with that section of the petty bourgeoisie and working intelligentsia which was under the influence of the Social-Democratic Party. Utmost efforts were made to clarify the Party's position on the national question (especially the Macedonian question), to extricate the thousands of Macedonian emigrants, from bourgeois influence and to wrest Todor Alexandrov's Macedonian autonomous armed organization from Tsankov's government. The masses made feverish preparations along all lines for the inevitable and impending armed struggle. *The eyes of all the working people were turned towards the Communist Party.*

However, the bourgeoisie, having laid hands on the state apparatus, quickly mobilized its forces and launched an all-out offensive against the Communist Party and the working masses. The counter-revolutionary attack took place on September 12 and a general blow was dealt to the

Party. Its central and local leaders were unexpectedly arrested, its clubs were closed down, its press was banned and, finally, its adherents in town and village were subjected to brutal persecution. *The September Uprising* was the inevitable reaction of the masses, led by the Communist Party. But the attack of the government on the masses precipitated their revolt before the minimum preparations had been completed. In contrast to June 9, the Communist Party boldly and firmly took the lead of the uprising, lending it a positive political purpose: *the overthrow of the government of the June coup, the government of the bankers and exploiters, and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government in Bulgaria*. But in spite of the boundless heroism of the insurgents and their readiness for self-sacrifice, *the September Uprising was suppressed and drowned in blood*.

The events thus elucidated like Bengal light the historical error made by the Party on June 9 *confirmed irrefutably the validity of the Comintern criticism*.

Last January the Executive Committee of the Comintern again subjected the June and September events to a thorough review in connexion with the new situation in Bulgaria and the tasks of the Bulgarian Communist Party. It confirmed its former position on the June 9 events, approved the Party's tactics in the September Uprising and noted that the Party had overcome its Social-Democratic heritage and had managed to pass from agitation and propaganda to bold revolutionary action.

The Party itself passed through a long period of internal regeneration in the wake of the June and September events. The errors were clearly understood, all lessons of the June and September events were drawn and the tactics with regard to the peasant question, the united front and the national question were completely corrected. In short, the entire Communist Party *unanimously* adopted a correct revolutionary orientation. *All* the members of the Central Party Committee in the period which preceded the June and September events *agreed without exception* that the Comintern had been right. The Party purged the liquidators and renegades from its ranks and, despite the

unbelievable difficulties of the underground work carried on in extraordinary conditions, it mobilized and prepared the masses, together with the revolutionary elements of the Agrarian Union, for the inevitable armed overthrow of the bourgeois-fascist government in Bulgaria.

At its last conference, the Bulgarian Communist Party⁴⁹ unanimously adopted a resolution on the June and September events, in which it is stated:

The Conference of the Bulgarian Communist Party, having considered the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on the Bulgarian question, in particular on the June coup d'état, the September Uprising, the differences within the Party the united front and the worker-peasant government, made the following decision: it shares completely and quite consciously the assessment of the Comintern on the events and the Party's tactics in the period reviewed by the above-mentioned resolution.

The Conference declares that today the Party as a whole, including all the members of the Central Committee at home and abroad, admits: 1) that up to June 9 the Party made serious errors in applying the united front tactics, and 2) that on June 9 it made a fatal historical error through the fault of its Central Committee by adopting wait-and-see attitude during the civil war, instead of decisively joining the revolting peasants under the slogan of a worker-peasant government, thereby helping the bourgeoisie to seize power. Even if it was clear that its participation in the armed labour front would merely lead to the restoration of Stamboliiski's government, the Party should not have stood aloof, but should have intervened. This would have secured far more advantageous positions for the proletariat and all the working people.

The Conference finds that the Party's orientation towards an armed uprising, adopted early in August, was altogether correct, but strongly condemns the June 9 tactics maintained by the majority in the Central Committee and the Party Council, in spite of the Comintern's contrary opinion on this question: by justifying its erroneous position, the Central Committee impeded greatly the Party's conscious orientation towards an armed uprising.

The Conference fully approves and is proud of the fact that at the time of the armed uprising, launched from below by the masses, in opposition to the crushing blow which the fascist government was preparing to deal to the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Party assumed the lead of the uprising and determined its goal – a worker-peasant government; that it attempted, despite the exceedingly difficult conditions, to organize the uprising, to rally its forces and to broaden it. The Party not only proved that it is able to switch from revolutionary propaganda and agitation over to revolutionary activity, but also that it is a real communist party which has fulfilled the tasks set before it with

honour: to prepare and lead the working people in a new armed uprising, so as to set up a worker-peasant government and a class dictatorship of the proletariat.

'The Conference notes that the Party has already proved by all its activity that it has drawn lessons from the past and firmly maintains the line it adopted in September.

'The Conference declares that the united front tactics adopted by the whole Communist International are perfectly correct. This has also been borne out by its adoption in our country. A united front primarily with masses, as well as with the peasant organizations, aimed at setting up a worker-peasant government, is in our petty-bourgeois conditions the only correct tactics which the Bulgarian Communist Party should always apply consistently and skilfully, so as to lead the working people on to the final victory.

'In retrospect, the Conference finds that it is absolutely necessary for the Party to be in close contact and complete agreement with the Communist International. It makes it therefore incumbent on the Central Committee strictly to see to it that the decisions of the Communist International and its Executive Committee are faithfully observed and to maintain constant and regular contact with them through the Foreign Agency, the Presidium of the Bulgarian Communist Party and its representative in the Comintern.'

It should be noted that the Bulgarian Communist Party is now following the only correct revolutionary road, not only in word, but *in deed*, without fearing the incredible difficulties and immense sacrifices which its struggle involves.

It may therefore be considered that with the valuable assistance of the Communist International, the *Bulgarian question* of the communist movement in Bulgaria *has been settled in practice*.

The Fifth Congress of the Comintern⁵⁰ has exhausted it by confirming the correctness of the decisions made by the Executive Committee of the Comintern on the Bulgarian question, by approving and supporting the present orientation of the Bulgarian Communist Party and advising all the fraternal parties affiliated to the Comintern to make extensive use of the *Bulgarian lesson*, which cost the Bulgarian workers and peasants so dearly.

Communist International

No. 7-8, 1924

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 1-11

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE BLOODY DRIVE AGAINST THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The trade union movement in Bulgaria came into existence in the middle of the '90s, but its organized activity began in 1904, when the professional organizations scattered in various parts of the country began to unite in national trade unions, forming the General Trade Union.

The conditions in which the Bulgarian trade union movement sprang up and had to develop are characterized by several important features, which had their repercussions on its organization, ideology and fighting methods.

The first feature consists in the fact that Bulgaria is a land of small peasants in the main. These constitute about 80 per cent of its five million inhabitants.

Bulgaria produces and exports primarily farm produce, in the first place cereals and tobacco. Its factory industry has always been weak and the industrial proletariat, including handicraft workers, constitute barely 15 per cent of the entire population. Furthermore, the factory workers who are connected with the villages in thousands of ways represent a backward and poorly educated element on the whole. Even before the war the process of proletarianization of the rural and handicraft masses greatly outstripped the development of urban industry, so that the labour market was always overcrowded with a surplus of manpower. The ceaseless influx of refugees from Thrace, Macedonia and the Dobroudja, whose number is already well over 500,000, further increases the number of the unemployed. The bourgeoisie makes wide use of this hungry army of jobless for its reactionary purposes and for the struggle against the labour movement.

The second feature consists in the fact that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which constitutes only 5 per cent of

the population, shows an unusual greed for profits and is extremely reactionary. Related by origin to the old money-lenders and merchants of the days of Ottoman rule, it was brought up in the traditions of the old barbarous regime of the Ottoman Empire and has always been notable for its ruthlessness and greed. Contrary to the bourgeois classes in other countries the Bulgarian bourgeoisie managed to take the upper hand in our country without any struggle. It had a negative attitude to the national-revolutionary movement against the Ottoman regime, headed by the intelligentsia and backed by the peasants and craftsmen. It obtained its power and privileges as a gift from the hands of tsarist Russia as a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877. Alien to the struggle and revolutionary traditions, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie always treated the masses with mistrust, contempt and hostility. It looked upon the people as a mere object of exploitation and spoliation and as small change in its deals with the imperialist nations after the formation of an independent Bulgarian state. Leading a purely parasitic life, with the entire state apparatus at its disposal, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie amassed riches by levying unbearable taxes on the masses, speculating in prime necessities and extensively misappropriating large state loans from abroad, obtained by handing over its country to the imperialist states. In its fight against foreign competition, it introduced no technical improvements in the nation's industry, but resorted to unlimited exploitation of the workers.

The third feature consists in the fact that the political organization of the Bulgarian proletariat preceded the professional one. Trade unions were set up on the initiative and under the influence and leadership of the old Social Democratic Party (which later became the Communist Party). Hence the ideological and organizational tie-up between the General Trade Union and the Party, and the well-defined revolutionary and class ideology of the trade union movement. Hence also in contrast, say, to the old British trade unions, the Bulgarian trade unions considered themselves not as organizations designed to regulate relations between labour and capital within the framework

of capitalism, but as organs of the class struggle for the destruction of the capitalist system and, as Marx thought, as a school of communism.

These three features gave rise to a fourth one, which consists in the fact that for fear of the revolutionary and class trade union movement, the bourgeoisie strove to establish close contact with the Right-Wing Socialists (the Bulgarian Mensheviks), to support them in various ways and thus to cause a split in the ranks of the organized workers. The Right-Wing Socialists formed their own free trade unions' in 1904 to counterbalance the General Trade Union, and waged a perfidious campaign against the revolutionary movement in the course of two decades. At the time of the big strikes of the miners, tobacco, textile and other workers, they systematically backed the government and the capitalists against the workers on strike. Pretending to be the friends of the latter, they sowed mistrust among them, encouraged strike-breaking and formed parallel trade unions in conjunction with the real agents of capital for the purpose of negotiating with the capitalists and thus putting an end to the strikes and disorganizing the class struggle. With the aid of the other petty-bourgeois parties (Radicals and Democrats), the Bulgarian Mensheviks managed to score certain temporary successes, but only among school-teachers, civil servants, higher employees, among the railway, postal and telegraph services and part of the printing workers – precisely in those circles which usually are not inclined to wage a decisive struggle but seek easy ways of collaborating with the bourgeois government, being content with minor concessions.

Under these exceptionally difficult conditions, every step forward cost the trade union movement in Bulgaria tremendous efforts and sacrifices.

But, owing to its class and revolutionary sturdiness, its unity with the political organization of the proletariat and its consistent and staunch defence of the workers' interests, especially in the postwar period, the revolutionary trade union movement actually extended its influence to the entire industrial, transport and handicraft proletariat and became its sole leader in the economic struggle. The whole

strike movement, and it was fairly sizeable in Bulgaria, was exclusively conducted by the revolutionary trade unions. The trade unions of the Right-Wing Socialists were looked down upon by the mass of workers as hideous scabs and bourgeois agents.

At the end of 1922, the General Trade Union already embraced some 40,000 organized workers in the following 19 trade unions:¹

Union of tobacco workers	7,000
Union of transport workers	6,000
Union of miners	3,600
Union of schoolteachers	3,000
Union of factory workers	2,500
Union of building workers	2,500
Union of medical workers	2,500
Union of tanners	2,000
Union of metal workers	2,000
Union of municipal employees	2,000
Union of textile workers	1,500
Union of carpenters	1,500
Union of tailors	1,500
Union of commercial and bank employees	1,500
Union of food industry workers	1,200
Union of farm workers	1,200
Union of printing workers	500
Union of barbers	300
Union of actors and musicians	300

The organized vanguard of the revolutionary trade unions in the mining, tobacco, textile, sugar, metallurgical, tanning and woodworking industries was backed by the entire mass of workers, and all men and women workers unanimously fought to the end in the strikes it organized. The number of scabs was quite insignificant, and quite frequently, as in the miners' and tobacco workers' strike, there were practically none.

The miners' union gained such a preponderant influence in the biggest state-owned mines, those of Pernik (7,000 workers), that the administration was compelled to negotiate with it and conclude collective contracts, despite the malicious provocations of the government and Right-Wing Socialist press.

¹In round figures

The tobacco workers' trade union also managed to obtain a nationwide collective contract. Collective contracts were also concluded in the textile and sugar industries and in many woodworking, metal-working and other factories.

In 1921 and 1922, the trade unions obtained a 25-30 per cent increase in real wages on the average. They won an eight-hour working day in most factories and practically eliminated the arbitrary dismissal of workers in enterprises. They waged an energetic struggle against the high cost of living and actively interfered in the fixing of the prices of prime necessities and in the regulation of housing conditions.

The growing influence and activity of the revolutionary trade unions enraged the bourgeoisie and the Right-Wing Socialists. The latter launched a campaign against the trade unions in press and parliament, fearing that the factories might soon pass into the hands of the workers. To avoid this danger, in 1919 the coalition bourgeois-Socialist government entrusted the Ministry of Police and the Ministry of Industry and Labour to two Social Democrats (K. Pastouhov and Dr. Djidrov respectively). Holding the police and the Ministry which supervises the Pernik state mines in their hands, the Right-Wing Socialists first tried to dissolve the miners' trade union. The union leaders were brought to court-martial for having instigated the workers to overthrow the state order by force, and 150 militant members of the union were transferred to another small stateowned mine in the Tryavna Mountains, where they were kept under military and police control for three months. In the meantime the agents of the Right-Wing Socialists announced that they were organizing a 'free' miners' union, which would settle matters in the Pernik mines through negotiations with the government. However, the bourgeoisie was soon bitterly disappointed in its expectations. The bulk of the workers remained true to their miners' union and by means of a new mass strike managed to obtain the release of their detained leaders, bring back the interned members and renew the collective contract.

Parallel with the ceaseless economic struggle, the

revolutionary trade unions participated actively in the general political fight, side by side with the Communist Party, and did a great deal of cultural and educational work through their press (almost all trade unions had their own newspapers) and by organizing meetings, lectures, evenings and so on.

Late in 1922 and early in 1923, the influence of the revolutionary trade unions considerably increased among the civil servants as well.

The initiative of the revolutionary trade union of civil servants, which proposed the formation of joint action committees to fight for higher wages and better working conditions met with a wide response among the masses. The success of this joint campaign made it clear that it was possible to achieve unity in the whole trade union movement and that a unified general Labour Federation of the trade unions of industrial, transport and handicraft workers and civil servants should be formed for the purpose. In spite of the desperate resistance of the Right-Wing Socialists and the bourgeoisie, the campaign launched by the General Trade Union to unify the entire trade union movement gained ever greater popularity among the broad masses of workers and employees and promised to end in complete success in the near future.

THE JUNE COUP D'ETAT

The Bulgarian bourgeoisie, whose greed knew no bounds, did not wish to confine itself to the exploitation of its own workers and peasants. For many years past it had cast avid looks at the rich neighbouring areas of Macedonia and Thrace, which up to 1912 were under Turkish rule, and was out to achieve hegemony in the Balkans.

Under the banner of this predatory policy, passed off as a policy of 'national unification of the Bulgarian people' and liberation of the 'enslaved Bulgarian brothers in Macedonia and Thrace', the Bulgarian bourgeoisie disseminated militarism throughout the country and made feverish preparations for war against Turkey under the leadership of Tsar Ferdinand.

As a matter of fact, in 1912 Bulgaria, in alliance with Serbia and Greece and under the protection of Tsarist Russia, declared the Balkan War on Turkey. The Turkish army was rapidly routed. Macedonia and Thrace were cleared of Turkish troops. The Bulgarian army reached Chataldja (at the very doorstep of Constantinople). Intoxicated by their victory, Tsar Ferdinand and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie believed that the time had come for the Bulgarians to establish their hegemony in the Balkans. The question of how to divide the spoils among the allies (Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece) was entrusted to the benevolence of the Russian Emperor Nikolai as an arbitrator. And since they did not expect any great results for Bulgaria, Ferdinand and his government attempted, by means of a sudden attack on the Serbian troops on June 16, 1913, to drive them out of Macedonia and to seize the latter with its capital, Salonica.* This adventure cost the Bulgarian people tens of thousands of additional casualties and ended in the complete defeat of the Bulgarian army and in a terrible disaster for the whole nation.

Two years later, in September 1915, Bulgaria was plunged into the European War on the side of the Central Powers.

While the Bulgarian peasants and workers shed their blood on the battlefields for three years on end, the predatory bourgeoisie indulged in unbridled profiteering and spoliation within the country.

The discontent in Bulgaria came to a head and rapidly spread to the army. On September 10, 1918, the Bulgarian troops revolted at Dobro Polé, abandoning the trenches and marching on Sofia arms in hand to square accounts with those responsible for the war. Thanks to the German artillery, stationed in Bulgaria, the insurgent Bulgarian troops were defeated on their way to Sofia. The bourgeoisie succeeded then in retaining power in its hands. However, it

* As it became known subsequently, a secret anti-Bulgarian treaty had previously been concluded between Serbia and Greece — the editors.

was compelled to sacrifice its king Ferdinand, who abdicated in favour of his son, Boris.

The reckless aggressive policy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie had suffered a second fiasco. According to the Neuilly Peace Treaty, its territory was reduced, its permanent army prohibited and the number of its armed forces limited. In addition, it was compelled to pay immense reparations.

The bourgeoisie, which considered the people and their mass parties – the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party – responsible for the bankruptcy of its reckless policy, was obsessed with spite and malice towards the Bulgarian workers and peasants. But at the moment when the Russian Revolution was celebrating its victory and a general revolutionary wave was spreading over Europe and the Balkans, when the Bulgarian people wanted retribution for all the misfortunes, the bourgeoisie had to conceal its malice and even agreed to certain concessions.

Grinding its teeth, it had to become reconciled with the Stamboliiski government's assumption of power late in 1919, hoping that, like the Social-Democrats in Germany and the other countries it would save it from the revolutionary peril and relying on coming back to power at an opportune moment and on squaring accounts with the peasants and workers for the insults it had suffered.

In the meantime, the working people rallied rapidly. The workers and part of the poor peasants joined the Agrarian Union. The bourgeois parties found themselves completely isolated.

Stamboliiski's Agrarian Government, in spite of its half-hearted and inconsistent policy, substantially infringed on the vital interests of the bourgeoisie. Though not without wavering, it transferred the serious consequences of the war, the economic disaster and the crisis above all on to the bourgeoisie itself. It levied a tax on war profits, on the profits of the joint-stock companies and on the revenue from capital. It introduced a monopoly on cereals and deprived the profiteers of their huge former gains. It restricted the profiteers' opportunities to misappropriate state loans; it passed an act on the expropriation of real es-

tate for public use, which threatened the house-owners; it introduced a land reform and planned to curtail the big land estates.

At the same time, the Agrarian government passed a law on trying the bourgeois governments from the time of the Balkan and European Wars as responsible for the national disasters. The members of these governments, who were also the leaders of all the bourgeois parties, were arrested and brought to court. A nationwide referendum was held on the basis of this law, on the question of bringing to trial the ministers of the two bourgeois governments, 700,000 voting in favour of a trial (from the Agrarian and Communist Parties) and only 200,000 against it (from all bourgeois parties together with the Social-Democrats).

In the parliamentary elections of March 28, 1920, all the bourgeois parties together with the Social-Democrats obtained 300,000 votes out of a total of 1,000,000, and on April 22, 1923—272,000 votes, while the Agrarian Union increased its votes from 347,000 to 557,000, and the Communist Party — from 182,000 to 220,000. While the number of votes cast for the bourgeois parties and the Social-Democrats fell from 38 per cent to 26 per cent, the votes cast for the Agrarians and Communists increased from 62 per cent to 74 per cent.

The animosity of the bourgeoisie reached its climax. Having lost all hope of capturing power by legal means, through elections, it concentrated all its attention and forces on paving the way for the overthrow of the Agrarian government and the organized movement of the workers and peasant masses by violent, non-parliamentary means.

For this purpose, with the help of the palace, it mobilized the old officers of the acting army and the non-coms' Russian who had been dismissed on account of the reduced composition of the army. It utilized the 10,000 Russian Wrangelists who were in Bulgaria, won over the armed Macedonian organization and secured the support of Great Britain and Italy which strongly resented Stamboliiski's policy of seeking a rapprochement with Yugoslavia, the agent of France in the Balkans. Great Bri-

tain, which needed the Balkans so as to reinforce its influence in Asia Minor and secure a solid base for its fight against the USSR, saw a serious obstacle in Stamboliiski's government and the strong Communist Party in Bulgaria and readily backed the conspiratorial schemes of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

Having thus strengthened its position both at home and abroad, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie had but to choose an opportune moment for decisive action. The weakening of the revolutionary tide in Europe also played into its hands in attaining this goal. The immediate danger of a proletarian revolution had gone. The plans of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie were also facilitated by the anti-proletarian policy of Stamboliiski's government which led to growing disunion between the working class and the peasantry. Stamboliiski, who believed that the elections in 1923 had completely weakened the bourgeois parties, began to act ever more energetically against the Communist Party, because he feared the movement which favoured the establishment of Soviet rule. In this way he unwittingly undermined the positions of peasant rule and facilitated the task of the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, having no confidence in the working class and the poor peasant masses, Stamboliiski's government left the army and the nation's armed forces in the hands of the old officers who were faithful to the bourgeoisie.

On June 9, 1923, a gang of greedy bankers and profiteers, of bankrupt generals and professors out to make an easy political career, supported by the conspiratorial military league, the Wrangelists in Bulgaria and the Macedonian organization, overthrew Stamboliiski's legally elected Agrarian government by means of a military coup. They seized the power in a single night like gangsters, murdering part of the Agrarian ministers, deputies and other outstanding politicians, filling the prisons with thousands of peasants and workers who had opposed the coup and subjecting the Bulgarian people to their military dictatorship. The Agrarian government was replaced by that of Tsankov, formed of all bourgeois parties, including the Social-Democrats, who were represented in parliament

by only 30 deputies out of a total of 245. The great majority of the Bulgarian people was firmly opposed to the coup d'état and met the government imposed on them with apparent hostility. The Communist Party indirectly facilitated the success of the bourgeois coup by remaining passive – a fatal error.

THE SEPTEMBER PROVOCATION

But if the bourgeoisie managed to recapture power so easily, in a gangster-like manner, it did not find it so easy to hold it in the conditions created in our country and with the existing balance of social forces. It was not possible to induce the masses by lawful means to get reconciled with the bourgeois dictatorship. Hence Tsankov's bourgeois-Socialist government had no other choice but to resort to white terror and military dictatorship in order to subordinate the masses.

In the meantime, the influence of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions became still stronger after the June coup. The peasant masses, bitterly disappointed by Stamboliiski's shortsighted policy which had paved the way for the coup of June 9, turned their eyes to the Communist Party, hoping that it would save them from the ruling capitalist gang and military clique. The workers, on their part, who were well aware of the fact that the bourgeoisie had established its military dictatorship thanks to the split between them was the only way to salvation, began to work energetically to strengthen this alliance.

Tsankov's government realized that it could not proceed with parliamentary elections which would sanction the coup d'état and that it could not remain in power at all, so long as the Communist Party, the trade unions and the other workers organizations continued their revolutionary work in our country. The capitalists also felt that their hands were tied, so long as the revolutionary trade unions, this 'state within our state', existed and had a free hand.

Hence the military council of capitalists, bankers and

profiteers organized the well-known September provocation to decapitate the workers' movement, i. e. to rout the Communist Party, which had 40,000 members and had obtained 220,000 votes in the parliamentary elections, the workers trade unions which rallied 40,000 members, the *Osvobozhdenié* (Liberation) co-operative union with its 70,000 members, the women's and the youth organizations, and to ban the popular workers' press, the circulation of which was twice as large as that of all bourgeois and Right-Wing Socialist newspapers put together.

Three months after the June coup, i. e. on September 12, 1923, Tsankov's government arrested over 2,000 militants of the workers' movement (deputies, district and county councillors, mayors, journalists, Party and trade union secretaries, editors and so on) under the false pretext that the workers and peasants were getting set for an armed uprising with the aim of establishing Soviet rule in Bulgaria. It also closed down the workers' clubs and converted them into police stations, confiscated the property, printing shops, funds and archives of the Party and trade unions, suppressed their newspapers and all their further activity and, parallel with this, launched a nationwide drive of mass persecutions of the working people.

The masses revolted in defence of their violated rights and liberties. But with the help of the Wrangelists, the Macedonian organization and its own armed forces, concentrated in the towns, Tsankov's government prevented the urban workers from rising in unison with the peasantry and joining hands with it. The instigated uprising was thus put down. But it was widely exploited by the ruling clique of bankers and generals. Practically all those who were arrested on September 12, before the uprising, and thousands of other militant workers and peasants who fell into the hands of the infuriated hangmen were put to death. The prisons were crammed to capacity. Over 15,000 detained workers and peasants were tortured and a large number of them were later brought to trial. Another 2,000 active workers and peasants saved their lives by escaping abroad.

But in spite of all this, the government did not manage to pacify the country. On the contrary, after the September massacre, the discontent and bitterness grew even stronger. The masses of workers and peasants learned from their bitter experience that lack of unity had brought about their defeat and continued to strengthen their unified front in order to fight against their hangmen.

The blood-stained parliamentary elections, held in November 1923, in which despite the terrible abuses and outrages the single tickets of the worker and peasant nominees showed to Tsankov's government that the revolutionary movement was far from having been destroyed, that it had gained new strength and was steadfastly striving to put an end to the fascist and military dictatorship hoisted on the masses.

Tsankov's government then issued the monstrous State Protection Law. Later it modified and increased the penalties stipulated by this act. All workers' organizations, including the Osvobozhdenié co-operative union, were officially dissolved on the basis of this act. The Workers' Trade Union was outlawed by a special decision of the Court of Cassation and all its members were incriminated. Although the decision did not pertain formally to the individual trade unions, the government interpreted it broadly and prohibited all trade unions, with the exception of the Right-Wing Socialist ones, which enjoyed its special benevolence.

Naturally, neither the Communist Party nor the revolutionary trade unions were willing to consider themselves as self-dissolved and ready to stop their activity so as to gratify the bankers and generals. The Communist Party passed underground and continued to lead the fight of the masses most actively. The revolutionary trade unions, on their part, continued to defend their legal existence in every possible way. Their meetings, however, were broken up by force. The initiators and participants were arrested and tortured. The secretaries and militants of the trade unions and the editors of their newspapers were thrown into prison or interned in remote parts of the country. The workers' deputies were systematically murdered

from an ambush. All strikes and all open protest were suppressed by armed force.

Additional measures were taken against the miners' trade union. Besides the arrests and internment of its leaders, over 2,000 men at the Pernik mines were dismissed. These skilled and competent miners were replaced by Wrangelists whose number was gradually increased to 4,000 out of a total of 7,000. Production, naturally, dropped by 40 to 50 per cent. But the ruling gang would rather destroy the miners' trade union than maintain, the former level of the mines' productivity. The Miners' House, which formerly served as a centre of cultural and educational work among the colliers, was turned into a police station a year and a half ago: Here the members and adherents of the miners' trade union who are still at work in the mines are subjected to cruel tortures.

Two thousand members of the union of transport workers were also dismissed from the railways, post and telegraph. The same fate befell 2,000 schoolteachers, members of the teachers' organization, and 1,000 members of the civil servants' union.

The Bulgarian Mensheviks always took a most active part in this cruel and repulsive campaign for the destruction of the revolutionary trade unions. They incited the government to resort to various outrages, did their utmost to facilitate the task of routing the workers' movement, slandered and provided lists of 'Bolsheviks' still undetected by the government, so as to have them kicked out of the enterprises. At the same time, they turned to the workers and employees, who according to them had been deceived by the Communists, with an appeal to Switch to the Right-Wing Socialist trade unions and avoid the cruel persecutions.

The fierce terror of Tsankov's government gave birth to a new category of citizens in our country, known as the 'undergrounds'. Thousands of workers, peasants and working intellectuals were forced to live like outlaws, to avoid the atrocities of the government. All methods were permitted against the 'undergrounds'. The government outlawed them as 'bandits' whom the police had the right

not only to arrest, but to kill wherever it found them. Those who gave asylum to 'undergrounds' had the same destiny. Tsankov's gangs went as far as burning the houses where the 'undergrounds' took refuge.

The detained were subjected to such inhuman torment that most of them committed suicide. Many of them resorted to poison the noose, or jumped from the upper floors of the former Popular House in Sofia, now turned into a police station.

The militant workers and peasants who were brought to court could not rely on any defence, because the lawyers were also threatened with death, should they venture to defend the 'Bolshevik agents' before the court. Bombs were thrown into the houses of several upright bourgeois lawyers who had the courage to defend the accused workers and peasants (in Bourgas, Varna, Pleven and other towns).

Thus the terror against the masses of workers and peasants assumed proportions unprecedented in modern history.

UNDER THE WHITE-GUARD REGIME

Depriving the working people of all their rights and liberties, smashing and beheading their movement by exterminating their vanguard, the bourgeoisie also annihilated all the postwar economic gains. First it nullified the agrarian reform and returned the land which had been expropriated from the big land-owners and distributed among the peasants. After this it cancelled the act on expropriating houses for public purposes. The housing act was modified in favour of the owners, the taxes affecting primarily the working people were increased.

Instead of the former monopoly on cereals, exercised with the aid of a co-operative consortium, complete freedom was granted to trade and speculation in goods of prime necessity. The government profiteers exported the best varieties of flour and made a good profit on it, then they imported bitter American flour to feed the population with and doubled profits. The cost of living went up as never before, the index rising from 3,000 to 5,000. The

trade balance, which had shown a profit of over 292 million leva in 1922, marked a deficit of 1,600 million leva in 1923. In June 1923 the dollar was worth 92 leva, but by the middle of 1925 it fetched as much as 140 leva. Banknotes in circulation increased from 3,800 million leva in June 1923 to 4,500 million leva late in 1924.

The state budget, which amounted to roughly 5,000 million leva in 1922–23, rose to 6,200 million leva in 1924 and 7,000 million leva in 1924–25. As much as 1,500 million leva were earmarked for the army, police, Black Hundred detachments and prisons.

Indirect taxes rose from 2,000 to 3,000 million leva. The tobacco tax was increased to 365 million leva; the small farmers' land tax was also raised to 340 million leva. At the same time, the joint-stock companies paid only 3 million leva in taxes instead of the previous 30 million.

The economic crisis and ruin assumed terrific proportions. The bloody anarchy and uncertainty which reigned in our country paralyzed trade and industry. A number of industrial enterprises reduced their production, because they had lost their best and most competent workers. Small industry was rapidly ruined. Agriculture, which was deprived of thousands of workers – killed, arrested, driven away, having emigrated or escaped from the government's persecutions in the woods – greatly declined. Whereas the land cultivated in 1922 amounted to 13 million hectares, in 1923 it amounted to 11 million, and 1924 to 9 million.

Foreign trade also suffered a major setback because of the country's unstable position. This is how the Bulgarian government's trade representative in Vienna described the condition of our foreign trade:

'Credit operations were discontinued, even with the most respectable and honest Bulgarian dealers; the shipment of goods to Bulgaria was stopped altogether. The deals with Bulgarian businessmen, a large part of which were concluded in Vienna, are now becoming impossible. This pertains not only to Bulgaria's trade with Austria, but with all other countries as well. Readers acquainted with the statistics of Bulgaria's foreign trade can readily understand that the nations' economy is suffering tremendous losses.'

But it was the status of the working class that the fascist regime affected most severely. Despite the high cost of life, wages fell by 30 per cent as compared with 1922. The eight-hour working day, established by law, was prolonged by two, three and four hours. Labour legislation was nowhere observed. Labour control at the factories was altogether abolished. Unemployment kept on rising. Thousands of workers and employees were thrown out into the streets and replaced by Wrangelists and Macedonians and by refugees from Thrace and the Dobroudja. The workers were deprived of the right to associations, meetings, press and strikes and had no possibility of reacting in an organized manner to the frantic offensive of capital.

Under this regime of fierce terror, the bankers, profiteers, big brass and top officials amassed huge fortunes, while the masses of workers lived in unheard-of poverty.

NEW WAVE OF REACTION

Early this year the discontent and disgust of the masses of workers and peasants, driven to despair, began to assume extreme forms.

The fight for the overthrow of Tsankov's regime again gained momentum. The discontent spread to the entire petty bourgeoisie, a large part of the intelligentsia and part of the officers, who before had been quite loyal to Tsankov. The Tsankov government realized that its days were numbered. But the bankers and generals firmly held on to power. They decided to provoke the workers anew, so as to reiterate the September massacre of 1923 and completely to behead the workers' and peasants' movement by killing all its leaders who had survived the former slaughter. A terrific campaign against the underground militants was launched. Political assassinations kept on increasing. The last two of the workers' deputies were shot in the streets of Sofia. The last worker-peasant newspapers were suppressed. The former Communist deputies, even those who

had left the ranks of the Party, were kicked out of parliament. New arrests of workers' and peasants' militants were launched on a mass scale. Lists were drawn up of the persons who were to be disposed of during the planned Bartholomew nights. A 10,000-strong army of cutthroats – Wrangelists, Macedonians, reserve officers and fascists – was set up for the purpose.

Parallel with this, the government trumpeted far and wide about the growing 'Bolshevik peril' and the propaganda work done, as it chimed, with Moscow's support. It published false documents, written on 'Comintern' forms fabricated by the Russian White-guardsman Druzhelovsky, who was later arrested. According to these documents, the Comintern had ordered the Bulgarian 'United Front (Communists and Agrarians) to proclaim an armed uprising for the establishment of Soviet rule in Bulgaria on April 15. Having thus paved the way for a new butchery of the workers' and peasants' masses and all the other dangerous oppositionists, Tsankov's government assiduously incited them to action, so as to choose the most opportune moment for the execution of its diabolic scheme.

It was precisely in these circumstances that the fatal outrage at the Sofia cathedral took place. This outrage was an act of despair and self-defence of the savagely persecuted undergrounds. Although everyone knew that neither the Communist Party nor the revolutionary trade unions and Agrarian Union, which are opposed to individual terror, were the culprits, Tsankov's government hastened to make use of the outrage for the butchery it had planned long in advance. Over 2,000 previously listed workers' and Agrarian militants, students, pupils, intellectuals and officers opposed to the government were arrested and put to death. Among them were even former Communists who after the outrage had publicly declared that they would no longer take part in the nation's political life. All the leaders, secretaries, editors and activists of the revolutionary trade unions were among the murdered. Nearly 20,000 organized workers, peasants and sympathizers or men suspected of being sympathizers of the popular movement were thrown into prison and subjected

to medieval inquisition. Field court-marshals worked without cease, passing death sentences. After the hanging of those 'guilty' of the attempt on the cathedral, gallows were rised in increasing numbers. Those who had given shelter to underground militants, including many women, were also sentenced to death. Quite a few prisoners are still put to death without trial and examination, usually 'while attempting to escape.'

But Tsankov's infuriated gang did not content itself with these horrors. It wanted to 'eradicate' the 'Bolshevik peril' and the revolutionary trade union movement. All state, district and municipal institutions and enterprises were ordered to dismiss all members of the revolutionary trade unions. The heads of departments and factory managers were held personally responsible for the fulfilment of this order and had to report every such worker or employee, otherwise they would answer before the field court-martial as 'concealers'. Over 10,000 employees, schoolteachers, workers and other civil servants have been kicked out into the streets and doomed to starvation.

Furthermore, the government ordered private factories and offices to do the same. Under the same order, the owners of industrial and other enterprises were expected to do the following: first, morally and materially to guarantee the 'trustworthiness' of their workers and employees; second, to every 20 workers to appoint a reserve officer, member of the officers' organization, who would control the 'trustworthiness' of the workers and receive a salary from the enterprise. This latter measure seemed unnecessary even to the capitalists themselves. Many factories declared that they could not work in these conditions.

The American press in New York received the following cable from Sofia:

The manager of the Bulgarian branch of Standard Oil Company (financed by Rockefeller) received an invitation from the Bulgarian police and an order to leave the country within 24 hours in case he refused to make a written statement that there were no Communists among the employees in his office.

The manager of Standard Oil Company, naturally, was far from sympathizing with the communists, but he declared that he could not assume responsibility for the behaviour and convictions of his personnel outside his office, still less for their secret thoughts. In response, the police asked him to leave the country within 24 hours.

These facts clearly illustrate the ruthless, wild terror which now reigns in Bulgaria.

THE RIGHT-WING SOCIALISTS AND THE YELLOW TRADE UNIONS

The Right-Wing Socialists, who were chased out of the ranks of the working class and its mass trade union movement even before the war, concentrated their activity among schoolteachers and civil servants. Their postwar attempts to form through their 'Free Trade Unions' (a purely party organization) their own trade unions at private enterprises so as to counterbalance the revolutionary trade unions had no success. Only a few dozens of printing workers of the State Printing House remained in their 'Free Trade Unions', as well as a small number of handicraft workers, who were bound to their masters, members of the Right-Wing Socialist Party.

Instead, the Right-Wing Socialists built their nest together with the Radicals and Democrats in the schoolteachers' trade union and the other neutral organizations of state employees. The 'neutrality' of these organizations consisted in the fact that they pursued no proletarian policy and, in return for minor benefits granted to their managers, made favours to this or that petty-bourgeois or bourgeois party. How firmly the 'neutral' trade unions of the civil servants stand on the positions of the bourgeoisie can be judged by the fact that they even criticized the Amsterdam International, because it preached class struggle (though only in words) ... They are genuine yellow organizations, government agents, whose aim it is to prevent employees from joining the proletariat and the revolutionary trade union movement, from

becoming imbued with the ideas of the class struggle and from pursuing an independent policy in defence of their interests and rights with respect to the government and the bourgeoisie.

Naturally, as the Right-Wing Socialists, Radicals and Democrats took part in the June coup and the Right-Wing Socialist Dimo Kazassov was the Minister of Post and Communications in the government formed as a result of it, the 'free' trade unions and the 'neutral' unions of civil servants were placed at the service of the government. Part of their leaders were elected members of parliament on the lists of the government coalition.

They ardently hailed the coup d'état and the persecutions of the revolutionary trade union movement by the Tsankov government, as this was the way to check the movement among civil servants, which had started before the coup to join hands with the rest of the proletariat and form a unified, general federation of labour in Bulgaria, based on the class struggle. The leaders of the Right-Wing Socialists and the yellow trade unions saw in the dissolution of the revolutionary trade unions a means of consolidating their shaken positions and hoped to obtain in this way complete monopoly in the sphere of the trade union movement in our country. For this reason they were the most assiduous and perfidious provocateurs against the revolutionary trade unions. They openly insisted that the latter be outlawed as organizations 'dangerous to the state.' Far from raising their voice against the cruel persecution and murders of militant workers, they cynically exulted. When thousands of militant workers and Agrarians as well as members of the revolutionary trade unions were tormented and murdered by the Sofia hangmen, when the prisons were crowded with workers, peasants and working intellectuals, when over 10,000 workers and employees were dismissed as members or sympathizers of the revolutionary trade unions, the Right-Wing Socialist press considered all this as perfectly natural and only reminded and meekly requested the government to be careful not to harm by any chance any member of the 'neutral' unions. The Right-Wing Socialist press abounded in disgusting and

mean insinuations and slanders against the heroically perishing militant workers. The murdered and arrested leaders and militants of the revolutionary trade unions were labeled 'bandits,' 'monsters' and 'gangsters' by the Right-Wing Socialists. Their press presented the false documents, which Tsankov's government fabricated to pave the way for the September provocation and the last bloody massacre, as quite authentic and used them as weapons against the revolutionary trade union movement.

The Right-Wing Socialists declared the disgustingly unfair and biased sentence pronounced in the case of the Sofia outrage as a 'just gratification of shocked public conscience' against the 'assailants' and 'Moscow agents'.

At the moment when the Bulgarian proletariat has been deprived of all political rights and liberties, when its trade union movement has been routed, its press suppressed, its leaders and activists savagely murdered, when the butchery of workers and peasants is still in progress, when workers are doomed to poverty and subjected to unrestricted exploitation, when they are deprived of their right to association, strikes and all legislative defence – precisely at this moment, the secretary of the Right-Wing Socialist 'Free Trade Unions' who, together with the Minister of Trade and Industry, took part in the ILO* Conference in Geneva as the representative of the 'Bulgarian workers', assured the whole world that in the field of social legislation Bulgaria had far surpassed France.

No wonder then, in the light of all this, that the Right-Wing Socialist and yellow trade unions, which enjoyed the broad support of the fascist government, not only failed to gain strength under Tsankov's regime but even lost the significance they had had before. These pitiful tools of the bankers' and generals' clique earned the boundless hatred of the Bulgarian proletariat.

Yanko Sakuzov, the oldest Right-Wing Socialist leader, himself characterized these unions in the following words:

* International Labour Office

'The most regrettable thing about it,' Sakuzov wrote in the Right-Wing Socialist organ *Narod*, 'is the fact that the working people are completely disorganized. The existing trade unions are too weak and insignificant that they can not even be taken into account.'

PROSPECTS OF THE BULGARIAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The trade unions and the whole revolutionary workers' movement have been routed, beheaded and bled white.

Their leading cadres have been destroyed. The activists still alive are perishing in prisons and hiding in mountain forests or abroad. The proletariat is squeezed by the raging White-guards in the most merciless clutches. The capitalist plunderers freely subject it to monstrous exploitation, spoliation and unprecedented outrages and humiliation.

The Bulgarian bourgeoisie is exultant. It believes that it has already got rid of its class enemy. The 'state within the state' no longer exists. There are no revolutionary trade unions, strikes, collective contracts, there is no workers' press, and no restriction on the exploitation of labour. The capitalists, exploiters and profiteers have been given a free hand. Now that the 'Bolshevik peril' has been eradicated, it is time to think of replacing Tsankov, the hangman, who has been stained with blood from head to toe and is becoming inconvenient in the eyes of the 'civilized' world, provided, however, that the military dictatorship will be preserved by all means. Tsankov will quit office, having completed his bloody job in a brilliant way...

But the Bulgarian bourgeoisie is exulting prematurely, for it is cutting the branch on which it is sitting and thus approaching its doom. The June 9 coup d'état, the September massacre in 1923, this years' April butchery, the indescribable horrors and cruelties and the medieval barbarity of the fascist regime and the rivers of workers' and peasant blood – all this has created an impenetrable gulf between the working people and the bourgeoisie. Henceforth no truce will ever be possible between them. But, as is known, the bourgeoisie cannot stay in power long without the support of the masses. In Germany, France,

Great Britain and other countries, the Social Democrats of the other petty-bourgeois parties still exert a certain influence on the working people, as a result of which they support the rule of the bourgeoisie. No such thing exists in Bulgaria, where the workers' and peasant masses loathe the Social Democrats and the Radicals as much as they loathe Tsankov.

The revolutionary trade unions have been dissolved. But the proletariat is still alive. It is to be found in production. The peasant masses are also still alive and hold agriculture in their hands. The alliance of workers and peasants is already a living fact, and it is sealed with their blood. It will exist and grow stronger. The proletariat will heal the wounds inflicted upon it. It will restore its trade union movement. New leaders and militants will emerge from the workers' ranks. They will be less qualified than the perished leaders, but will be all the more faithful and will continue the fight with still greater selflessness and dedication. Reaction will be defeated. And the support of the bourgeoisie from abroad will also be shaken. The revolutionary proletariat in Great Britain, France and Italy, fulfilling its liberation task, will lend a helping hand to its Bulgarian brothers. The Bulgarian revolutionary workers' movement will finally get back on its feet, exert all its strength and emerge triumphant.

Krasnii International Profsoyuzov

No 5-6, 1925

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8 pp. 95-125

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE BULGARIAN LESSON

Small Bulgaria, along with China⁵¹ and Morocco,⁵² is still in the centre of world attention. And this is, of course, no accident. The notorious big outrage in the Sofia Cathedral and the ensuing bloody events culminating in a nation-wide savage terror of unprecedented proportions have had a double repercussion abroad. While the reactionary European governments, headed by the British Tories, made the widest use of the outrage in the Sofia Cathedral to intensify their campaign against the USSR and the so-called 'Bolshevik peril', the revolutionary-minded workers and peasants in all countries resolutely protested against the tyrannical regime of the Sofia hangmen and came out in defence of the Bulgarian working people.

The interest in the situation in Bulgaria and in the real causes of the events which occurred there has grown incredibly. There are only a few, however, who have a precise idea of the character and meaning of developments in Bulgaria. These events are highly instructive for the working people and especially for the peasants of other countries. The Bulgarian lesson has an international significance. This lesson should by all means be utilized now, when the peasant masses everywhere are undergoing a comparatively rapid process of awakening, when they are increasingly trying to break away from ideological and political dependence on the bourgeoisie and to find a promising ally in the person of the working class, when they are beginning to emerge, still gropingly, on the right road of emancipation from the exploitation and oppression of the capitalists, landowners and profiteers.

I.CHARACTER OF THE WHITE TERROR IN BULGARIA

For two years now the Bulgarian peasants and workers have been exposed to the terrible blows of the terrorist regime, which for sheer ferocity and barbarity has no equal in any other country. Although the white terror in Bulgaria reflects the general offensive of bourgeois reaction throughout the capitalist world, it nevertheless differs pretty much from the terror in the other Balkan states, from Italian fascism, from Horthy's regime in Hungary, from the rampant reaction in Poland, etc. It can be said without any exaggeration that nowhere else – even after the crushing of the Soviet Republics in Hungary, Bavaria and Finland – has the bourgeoisie dealt with such reckless cruelty and in such a bloody manner with the masses and their emancipatory movement as in Tsankov's Bulgaria.

The most characteristic feature of Bulgarian terror consists, above all, in the planned and organized physical annihilation of the vanguard of the working class and the peasant masses, of their intelligentsia and their most conscious and active elements. It is no longer here a question of depriving the masses of their elementary political rights and liberties; it is not a question of impeding and obstructing the activity and struggle of the workers' and peasant organizations. Here we have no ordinary acts of violence and persecutions against the worker and peasant movement: all this would not have been so terrible. No, in Bulgaria the whole state apparatus – police, gendarmerie, the army, the court, the parliament and a special military militia consisting of select cut-throats – have been set in motion to behead and bleed white the working class and the peasant masses and thus to render them incapable – if not for ever, at least for a long time to come – of fighting for the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship and the establishment of a government of their own. The armed Bulgarian bourgeoisie is waging an organized and methodical war (making use of all state means) against the unarmed working people. The holocaust of counter-revolution is raging in the country at a time when there is still no real worker-peasant revolution. In this war of the bourgeoisie against the people, beginning

with the *coup d'état* of June 9, 1923 and until now, more than 20,000 workers, peasants and intellectuals – the *flower* of the Bulgarian nation – have been killed. The vast majority of these victims of bloody White-guard terror fell not in open battles of a civil war, but were wickedly and bestially murdered in prisons, in their own homes, in the street or during bogus 'attempts at escape' after they had been arrested by the 'legal' authorities.

The working intelligentsia in the country is systematically being exterminated according to a preliminarily drawn up and elaborated plan – *the best, the finest and the most selfless* men whom the people have managed to rear, educate and bring to the fore during their independent existence of forty years. More than 30,000 workers, peasants and militants of the workers' and peasants movement, as well as men, women and youths sympathizing with this movement, have passed through prisons and have been subjected to the most cruel inquisition, to monstrous physical and moral torments and to the vilest outrages. Up to this moment more than 5,000 prisoners of Tsankov's cruel hangmen are pining away in Bulgarian prisons.

Court martials are feverishly at work sentencing to death and many years of close confinement the workers and peasant militants who are still alive. More and more gallows are being raised in every town for the true and loyal sons of the Bulgarian people. Along with the active people's fighters, a great many sympathizers who were courageous enough to express their sympathy with the struggle against the tyrannical regime, are also being sentenced. Persons from among the bourgeois *intelligentsia* – officers, engineers, journalists, artists, doctors and many women – are being sentenced, too, merely for having given shelter in their homes to fighters persecuted by Tsankov's gangs. Even minors, boys and girls, schoolchildren and young university students are sentenced for membership of the communist or agrarian youth unions, for participation in study circles, or finally for circulating or simple safekeeping of underground literature, leaflets, etc.

All this unprecedented cruelty falls upon the heads of

sympathizing bourgeois intellectual elements and the school youth, as the bourgeois press cynically states, 'to make them and in particular the Bulgarian youth come to their senses and to cease, once and for all, to be carried away by the alluring ideas of those who undermine the state system.'

At the same time, all workers and employees who have 'anti-state ideas' are being dismissed from their jobs, and every aid given to those arrested and their starving families is most cruelly persecuted. Under the guise of this obscurantist and barbarous regime the ruling clique of capitalists, bankers and profiteers, is ruthlessly despoiling the peasants and workers. Many shady deals in the export of grain and tobacco, in prime necessities, in various state deliveries, etc., follow one after the other. Speculation knows no bounds. Good Bulgarian wheat is exported, and later low-quality and bitter flour is imported from America at fabulously high prices to feed the Bulgarian population. After the activity of the agricultural co-operatives was restricted and the *Osvobozhdenié* Workers' Co-operative was banned, the masses fell entirely into the hands of greedy and speculating capitalists. The prices of products are arbitrary dictated by the monopoly capitalists and bankers who, aided by the authorities, purchase prime necessities wholesale and maintain exclusive rights over the import of products from abroad. The cost of living is steadily rising, while wages and the incomes of the rural population and craftsmen are decreasing. Usury in the countryside is assuming monstrous proportions, because cheap state and public credit is at the complete disposal of private banks, capitalists and profiteers. The peasants have to pay 50 to 70 and as much as 100 per cent of interest to the usurers. Indirect taxes, which have been increased from one to three thousand million leva annually, are mainly borne by the masses, while big business has been relieved of the tax burden established under Stamboliiski's regime. Peasants are being deprived of the lands which were formerly given to them following the agrarian reform. The property of persons who escaped abroad because of the cruel persecution of the Government and of condemned peasants has been

confiscated. Farm produce is being purchased at a very low price. Workers are being subjected to unrestricted exploitation. The petty craftsmen and merchants are being ruined to the benefit of the capitalists and profiteers. There is absolutely no personal security, no guarantee for one's life, property and the labour of the masses. *Bulgaria has been turned into a big, sinister prison and a real graveyard for the working people* and is under the oppressive rule of the military conspirators and adventurers who do the bidding of Bulgarian big business and are supported by the European imperialist plunderers and reactionaries.

Yet only two years ago, prior to the *coup d'état* of June 9, 1923 there was peasant rule in Bulgaria. In the person of the Agrarian Union the Bulgarian peasants had an old, mass organization, founded as early as 1900, the nation's strongest political party both in numbers and in influence. The Communist Party, founded in 1892, numbered in its ranks 40,000 selfless workers and peasant farmers, and 220,000 electors (out of a total of 1,000,000). The revolutionary trade unions also numbered some 40,000 organized workers, men and women, and had indisputable guidance over the Bulgarian trade union movement. The agricultural co-operative and the *Osvobozhdenié* workers co-operative with branches throughout the country, numbering 70,000 members, were wholly predominant in the co-operative movement. The Communist and Agrarian youth unions included in their ranks all the active young workers, peasants and labour intellectuals. In the parliamentary elections of April 22, 1923 (a month and a half before the *coup d'état*) the two mass popular parties got 777,000 votes (the Agrarian Union - 557,000 and the Communist Party - 220,000), while all the bourgeois parties taken together (including the Social Democrats) obtained only 270,000 votes. Compared with the elections of March 1920, the percentage of votes obtained by the bourgeois parties and the Social Democrats dropped from 38 to 26, while the percentage of votes cast for the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party increased from 62 to 74.

How was it possible, with such a balance of forces and in the presence of two mass and strong popular parties for

the bankrupt Bulgarian bourgeoisie, compromised in the eyes of the working people, especially during the disastrous wars, to overthrow the Agrarian government of Stamboliiski, to establish its military dictatorship, to deprive the masses of all political rights and liberties and to subject the vanguard and the active forces of the worker-peasant movement to mass physical annihilation?

The key to a correct understanding of the meaning of developments in Bulgaria lies in the explanation of this important and at first sight strange historical fact; therein lies also the great Bulgarian lesson.

2. HOW WAS PEASANT RULE ESTABLISHED IN BULGARIA?

Unlike the bourgeoisie in most of the European countries and more particularly in Great Britain, France and Italy, where it reached its dominant position through continuous struggle and revolutions against feudalism and absolutism, relying during this period on the broad masses, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie became a ruling class without waging a similar protracted struggle. It had had a hostile and treacherous attitude towards the national-revolutionary movement against the Turkish regime, led by the people's intelligentsia and backed by the broad masses. It had preferred to play the role of a mediator and accomplice of the Turkish sultans and pashas in the exploitation and oppression of the peasant population, which at that time was called contemptuously *rayah*. The Bulgarian bourgeoisie obtained its power and its dominant position simply as a gift from the hands of Tsarist Russia after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. It has never waged a revolutionary struggle, has had no revolutionary traditions, has been detached from the masses, which it has always treated with distrust, contempt and hostility. It had looked upon the Bulgarian people only as an object of exploitation and plunder, as a tool for achieving its selfish aims and as a coin of exchange in its relations - formerly with the Turkish authorities, and later, after the establish-

ment of an independent Bulgarian state, with the imperialist states. Besides, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie achieved its material prosperity not through a more or less broad initiative in the field of industry and by contributing to the development of the nations' productive forces, as was the case to a certain extent with the West European and American bourgeoisie, but exclusively through the rapacious plunder of the masses, in particular of the peasants, always with the invariable aid of the state power and by making direct use of the state treasury. The chief sources of its enrichment were the heavy taxes imposed on the masses, trade and speculation in farm produce, state loans and the advantages derived from them in the form of commissions for services done during Bulgaria's subordination to the great powers in the realization of their imperialist aspirations in the Balkans.

Under the 25-year reign of Ferdinand, this crowned agent of Austro-German imperialism, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, thievish to the marrow of its bones and incapable of independent industrial activity, turned its eyes towards the wealthy Balkan regions, Macedonia and Thrace, and towards establishing its hegemony in the Balkans. At the time this corresponded fully both to the personal ambitions of power-hungry Tsar Ferdinand and to the aggressive designs of his patrons in Vienna and Berlin.

To achieve the aims of this aggressive policy, represented always to the Bulgarian people as a policy of 'national unification' and of 'liberating the enslaved Bulgarian brothers in Macedonia and Thrace', the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, led by Ferdinand, created militarism that overtaxed the nation's resources and was getting ready in every way for war against Turkey, in whose hands these regions were at that time.

And indeed, in 1912, in alliance with Serbia and Greece, under the patronage of Tsarist Russia, the well-known Balkan War against Turkey was declared. The Turkish Army, received hostilely by the local population, was rapidly crushed. Macedonia and Thrace were cleared of the Turkish armies. The Bulgarian armies reached Chataldja at the very gates of Constantinople. Intoxicated

with victory, Tsar Ferdinand and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie imagined that the moment had come to establish Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans. A brilliant Tsar's chariot was even prepared in Adrianople for Ferdinand's triumphant entry into Constantinople. However, the question of dividing the spoils among the allies (Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece) then came to the fore. Under the agreement signed between them, the settlement of controversial issues was entrusted to the Russian Tsar Nikolai, as an *arbitrator*. Realizing that Tsarist Russia would not agree to a big expansion of Ferdinand's (i. e. Austro-German) Bulgaria, Ferdinand and his government attempted (on June 16, 1913), through a sudden attack against the Serbian armies, to drive the latter out of Macedonia by force and to seize it together with its capital Salonica. This adventure, which cost the Bulgarian people more scores of thousands of casualties, resulted in a major disaster for Bulgaria. The united armed forces of Serbia and Greece, with the help of the Romanian army which was advancing toward Sofia, routed the Bulgarian army and compelled Bulgaria to sign an onerous peace.

Two years later, however, Bulgaria was again dragged (September 1915) into the European War, now on the side of the Central Powers. The rapid rout of Serbia and the occupation of Macedonia up to Salonica again went to the head of Ferdinand and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, so avid for booty. The dreams of conquering foreign lands, of 'great' Bulgaria and hegemony in the Balkans were resurrected. Serbia was to be carved up between Austro-Hungary and Bulgaria which, after seizing half of Serbia and the whole of Macedonia, planned to advance claims on Albania, too. The Bulgarian occupational authorities in Serbia and Macedonia indulged in major excesses against the Serbian intelligentsia and the more progressive strata of the Serbian population so as to facilitate thereby the elimination of Serbia as an independent state in the Balkans. Meanwhile, while the Bulgarian peasants and workers were shedding their blood at the front for three whole years, the rapacious bourgeoisie indulged in the most unbridled profiteering and piratical plunder of the

people, depriving the families of the 'brave Bulgarian soldiers' of their crust of bread, as well as in various outrages against the population. Concentration of capital proceeded apace. Many new joint-stock companies were set up. The war was a most profitable venture for the bourgeoisie.

Dissatisfaction with the protracted war reached a high point in Bulgaria, rapidly spreading to the army at the front and growing there even stronger, as a result of the beastly treatment of the soldiers and the frequent executions. On September 10, 1918, the Bulgarian soldiers rose in revolt at Dobro Polé, left the trenches and, arms in hand, set out for Sofia, to deal there with the war culprits. Thanks to the German artillery, which was at the time in Bulgaria, the insurgents were defeated not far from Sofia. Then the bourgeoisie succeeded in retaining power in its hands. It merely sacrificed its Tsar Ferdinand, who was compelled to abdicate in favour of his son Boris and to leave the country.

In this way the nationalistic and aggressive policy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie suffered a second fiasco. Instead of annexing Macedonia, Thrace and even Albania to Bulgaria and establishing hegemony in the Balkans, it had to sign the onerous Neuilly peace treaty. The districts of Tsaribrod and Bossilegrad and part of Thrace were cut off from its territory, its standing army was destroyed and the number of its armed forces was restricted, it was burdened with huge reparations, while being in a state of complete financial bankruptcy, expressed above all in the fact that the state debt amounted to almost half of the country's national wealth.

All this completely repulsed the workers' and peasant masses, which rapidly rallied around the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party. The masses felt complete distrust and unrestrained hatred for the bourgeois parties, guilty of the two disastrous wars and of the people's misfortunes. The Social Democratic Party, which even prior to the war had had only a slight influence among the worker and peasant masses because of its appeasement policy towards the predatory and parasitic Bulgarian bourgeoisie, was now also loathed by the masses, because it had supported the war.

In the meantime, after the victory of the Russian October Revolution, a revolutionary wave swept the whole of Europe and the Balkan Peninsula. The Bulgarian people were eager to avenge themselves for all the horrors, misfortunes and privations which they had suffered during the war. The bourgeoisie, whose power was seriously shaken, felt that its class domination was threatened. The spectre of a worker-peasant revolution aimed at the establishment of Soviet rule gave it no peace. In spite of its boundless hatred for the masses, it was compelled to agree to temporary concessions in order to preserve its rule in the onsetting storm.

In an analogous situation the bourgeoisie in Germany and Austria availed itself of the services of the Social Democrats so as to preserve its power. And the Social Democrats, with their great influence over the proletariat, brilliantly fulfilled this treacherous role. The Social Democratic Governments in Germany and Austria succeeded in deflecting the proletariat from the road of the proletarian revolution and in saving the rule of the bourgeoisie. Ebert⁵³ paved the way for Hindenburg⁵⁴ in Germany, and Dr. Renner⁵⁵ for Seipel⁵⁶ in Austria.

The Bulgarian bourgeoisie, on the contrary, could not rely on the weak Social Democratic Party loathed by the masses and compromised. The only petty bourgeois mass party, capable of holding on to power at that moment in Bulgaria, a predominantly peasant country, without trying to change its state system radically, was the Agrarian Union of Stamboliiski, which enjoyed wide popularity among the peasant masses. And the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, with spitefully clenched fists and gnashing teeth, agreed to divide its power with the Agrarian Union, reconciling itself at the end of 1919 with the forming of Stamboliiski's government, in which two bourgeois ministers took part as 'experienced statesmen and counsellors' of the Agrarian Government, hoping that after the storm was over, it would manage to regain all the power and to square accounts with the peasants' and workers' movement.

However, after taking the power in its hands, the Agrarian Union under the pressure of its peasant followers and

under the influence of the Communist Party, rapidly broke up the government coalition with the bourgeoisie and established its own peasant rule in the country, compelling the bourgeoisie to retreat without a fight.

3. ATTITUDE OF PEASANT GOVERNMENT TOWARDS BOURGEOISIE

The Agrarian Union sprang up and developed in the struggle with the bourgeoisie and its parties. In its ideology and policy it was a purely peasant and anti-capitalist organization. This naturally made the peasant government set up by it carry out an irreconcilable policy towards the bourgeoisie.

Assuming power on the basis of the bourgeois system and without affecting its foundations, Stamboliiski's Agrarian Government revealed an extremely half-way policy in all its measures in the field of home and economic policy. Its fight against the bourgeoisie consisted primarily in weakening the bourgeois parties and in desorganizing them to such an extent as to render them incapable of ever replacing it again by parliamentary means. Despite the high-flown and often extremely radical speeches of Stamboliiski, Daskalov and other leaders of the Agrarian Union, no measures were taken against the economic strongholds of the bourgeoisie: the banks, the joint-stock companies and the big capitalist enterprises. The Agrarian Government introduced a capital and income tax, which sheared something off the bourgeoisie, but it did not resort to the nationalization of banks and of joint-stock companies, nor even to a confiscation of war profits. It passed a law on the expropriation of buildings for public use at low prices, but it utilized this undertaking mainly as a means of political pressure on eminent adherents of the bourgeois parties, and not as a major social and economic reform. It did not resort to the nationalization of land and of big landed estates. It set up a co-operative consortium for the export and

trade in cereals abroad, thereby dealing a serious blow to the big grain exporters, yet left the export and trade in tobacco in private hands, failing to establish a monopoly on all foreign trade. It restricted profiteering capital, which was in the hands of the bourgeois finance groups, and the use of state credit, but it took no measures against profiteering, allowing some of its own adherents who had grown rich, with the unofficial collusion of the old bourgeois profiteers, to use this credit for speculative ends. It passed a law on land reform which affected some of the big landowners, but on the whole it did not touch the land belonging to the peasant bourgeoisie, granting mainly state and municipal lands to part of the peasants, and, of course, did not even dream of resorting to a general nationalization of the land.

Nor did the Agrarian Government reorganize the state, administrative and military apparatus; it did not oppose the monarchism under whose wing later the *coup d'état* was prepared and carried out. In this respect it continued to follow the beaten track of the bourgeois governments. As to the police, gendarmerie and army, all it did was to replace some top officials, while preserving their old bourgeois organization. It did not set up a real people's army with officers genuinely loyal to the people, which would defend the peasant rule against any attacks on the part of the bourgeoisie. It did not even purge the army of the old bourgeois officers and did not dare replace them with sergeants from among the peasants, loyal to the peasant rule. It did not arm the working people so as to use them against any attempts at a bourgeois *coup d'état*. The Orange Guard formed by Raiko Daskalov, consisting of militant members of the Agrarian organizations, was rather a parade guard left without arms, as became evident during the June 9 *coup d'état*, when it proved to be with bare hands against the armed forces of the bourgeoisie. The Stamboliiski government, especially during the last two years of its administration, saw the mainstay of its power in the parliamentary machine and in violence applied by the administrative apparatus, and not in the organization, arming and initiative of the masses. Following the general

desire of the working people expressed in the referendum carried out in 1922 for bringing to trial the bourgeois governments which had been in power during the Balkan and European Wars, when 700,000 votes were cast in favour and only 200,000 against, the Agrarian government passed a law on bringing to trial those responsible for the war and the disasters, but it did not dare set up a real people's court with shortened proceedings and, although it was in power for three whole years, this big political trial never did take place.

In the sphere of foreign policy the Stamboliiski Government remained fully dependent on the Entente and mainly on France. At the suggestion of France, it not only refused to restore relations between Bulgaria and Soviet Russia, but even took certain inimical action against the latter. It gave shelter in the country to part of the White-guard army of General Wrangel (10,000 men), which had its own military organization, military schools and courts on Bulgarian soil, which conspired against Soviet Russia and prepared to participate in the counter-revolutionary intervention, and which subsequently was widely utilized by the bourgeoisie in its *coup d'état* against Stamboliiski's government. Instead of pursuing a sound Balkan policy of understanding with all Balkan nations on the principle of their unification in a common Balkan federation, Stamboliiski tried to reach an agreement with the Serbian imperialists, sacrificing the main interests of the liberation movement of the Macedonian people and raising the old bourgeois nationalist slogan of a Bulgarian outlet on the Aegean Sea, which aggravated relations between Bulgaria and Greece. The foreign policy of the Agrarian government fully coincided with the interests and views of the pro-Entente Bulgarian bourgeoisie and hence enjoyed its support.

During the last period of its rule, the Agrarian government increasingly fell under the influence of the well-to-do peasants and their adherents who, together with the old bourgeois profiteers, made various financial, business and speculative deals. Points of contact and factual relations were established between the top clique of the Agrarian Union and some bourgeois spheres. Part of the Agrarian

leaders, headed by Tourlakov, Tomov and Manolov, who had no faith in the stability of sole agrarian rule, unambiguously favoured a reconciliation with the bourgeoisie and even a government coalition of the Agrarian Union with the bourgeois parties. Stamboliiski's government, continuing its negative attitude towards the bourgeois parties which it considered politically crushed and disorganized, systematically tried, however, to win over the finance and industrial groups of the bourgeoisie by means of economic concessions, through joint work in the banks, joint-stock companies and the capitalist enterprises connected with agriculture. It missed no occasion to prove that it did not propose to be merely a peasant government and that it was capable enough of defending also the interests of the 'productive strata' of the bourgeoisie itself. It thus detached itself more and more from the masses and from the bulk of the poor peasants organized in the Agrarian Union and unwittingly further undermined its own positions of peasant rule and promoted the realization of the bourgeois plans for a *coup d'état*.

4. PEASANT RULE AND THE PROLETARIAT

Combating the bourgeoisie tooth and nail, the proletariat, led by the Communist Party was no doubt instrumental in having the power pass into the hands of the Agrarian Union. After the establishment of the Agrarian government this struggle, coupled with the communist propaganda and criticism, weakening the bourgeoisie and increasingly isolating it from the masses, could have strengthened the positions of the peasant government against the attacks of the bourgeoisie.

This very fact showed clearly that, as regards the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasant masses had common interests, that they should have marched together and acted with united efforts and that the Agrarian Union could have found in the person of the proletariat and its political organization – the Communist Party – its only loyal ally. The leaders of the Agrarian Union, however,

proceeding solely from the simple fact that the peasants constituted the vast majority of the country's population, were convinced that the peasant government could and should be consolidated quite on its own. They considered it as much threatened by the proletariat as by the bourgeoisie. What is more, parallel with the weakening and disorganization of the bourgeois parties, the Communist Party grew steadily and rapidly extended its influence among the masses. The Stamboliiski government was therefore much more afraid of the proletariat, fighting for the reorganization of society through the establishment of a Soviet system in the country, than of the bourgeoisie, which was trying to regain power. Stamboliiski, Daskalov and other leaders of the Agrarian Union did not draw any lesson from the history of peasant movements in the past, had no wish to profit from the valuable lessons of the October Russian Revolution, which had shown that the bourgeoisie could be completely defeated and rendered harmless only through an alliance between workers and peasants and that the peasant masses could not retain power all by themselves, without the leadership of the proletariat — better organized, more conscientious and active, concentrated in industry mainly in the towns. The peasant government in Bulgaria from the very beginning to the end of its existence pursued a policy which was aimed not at the rapprochement between the proletariat and the peasantry against their common enemy — the bourgeoisie and capitalism, but, quite, on the contrary, tended to produce growing disunity, alienation and opposition.

The first big conflict between the Agrarian government and the proletariat broke out at the time of the general railwaymen's strike.⁵⁷ Stamboliiski's government still included three bourgeois Ministers and they consciously involved it in a fierce battle with the railwaymen, who enjoyed the staunch support of the whole proletariat and of all the working people from town and village who marched under the banner of the Communist Party. The Agrarian government refused to enter into negotiations with the railwaymen's organizations as regards their modest demands, whereby the strike itself could have been

avoided. And when the strike was proclaimed, the Government started a mass persecution of the fighting railwaymen. In order to preserve the 'state prestige', it mobilized the strikers and tried to bring them back to their jobs by force, like mobilized soldiers. When, in spite of all, the mobilized railwaymen unanimously refused to submit, the Government strove to maintain railway traffic by using scabs, recruited from among the adherents of the Agrarian Union. In the midst of winter the families of the strikers were thrown out of their lodgings into the street. The unbridled supporters of Stamboliiski behaved indecently with their women and children and there were even cases of rape. The leaders of the strike were arrested, subjected to torture and brought before the military court. The demonstration of the Sofia proletariat during the strike was provoked by the police and by plainclothesmen directed by the chief of the city police, who threw several bombs and later blamed the demonstrators for this act. The Government agents blew railway bridges into the air, so that they could afterwards put the blame on the strikers, accusing them of attempts upon the life of citizens and of destruction of property, and justify their coercive measures against the strikers. The mass political strike proclaimed in aid of the fighting railwaymen was suppressed by means of armed force. When after a 50-day heroic struggle the railwaymen's strike ended in the capitulation of the railwaymen, the Agrarian government considered it as one of its great contributions, while the bourgeoisie as a whole triumphed and gloated.

Once having taken this road, Stamboliiski's government continued to widen the gap between the peasant rule and the working class. It completely neglected the legislative defence of labour. Lest it irritate the industrialists, it did practically nothing to apply even the existing workers' laws and refused to appoint a date for the election of workers' inspectors provided by the law.

It also had a hostile attitude towards the trade unions, especially towards the unions of the civil servants and, most of all, towards the Miners' Union, in which the workers of the big Pernik state mine were organized. Its administra-

tion tried, with the aid of the Government, to establish separate trade union organizations in opposition to the existing trade unions.

To deal a blow to the workers' movement in Bulgaria's capital (Sofia), the agents of Stamboliiski's government, with the direct participation of the police, attacked, destroyed and burnt the old People's Home on May 24, 1921, which housed the trade unions, the *Osvobozhdenié* workers' co-operative, the Communist Party and their printing house, newsprint storerooms and shops.

The Agrarian Government put all kinds of obstacles in the way of the *Osvobozhdenié* workers' co-operative, which was steadily expanding its useful activity throughout the country and was a thorn in the eyes of the private merchants and profiteers. It did not allow this co-operative to benefit from the concessions and privileges which it had established for the agricultural co-operative organizations. Towards the end of its rule the Government even intended to dissolve it and to confiscate its fine building, the People's Home, erected on the spot where the old structure, burnt down in 1921, had stood.

The hostility of the peasant government towards the proletariat assumed its most senseless form in the struggle to capture the municipal councils. As early as 1919, the urban proletariat, led by the Communist Party, had been waging a persistent struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to capture the municipalities. In the municipal elections the big municipalities passed into the hands of the Communist Party one after the other. By the end of 1921, almost all the municipalities in Bulgaria, with the exception of Sofia, had been wrested from the hands of the bourgeoisie and placed at the service of the proletariat and the urban working people in general. The communist municipal councils carried out radical reforms in the economic, tax and social policy of the municipalities. They transferred the burden of municipal taxes onto the wealthy and propertied citizens. They opened municipal shops and set up municipal enterprises to counteract the speculation of private capital. They improved sanitary conditions: electricity, means of communication and water supplying the

workers' districts. They promoted education and opened free canteens and camps for the schoolchildren of the working people. They took measures for labour protection and opened municipal hospitals and drug stores, improved the status of the municipal clerks, etc.

The communist urban administrations became organizations in defence of the working people's interests and for the improvement of their cultural and living standards and, at the same time, were a mainstay in the fight against the bourgeoisie and capitalist exploitation and speculation. Of course, the bourgeoisie was strongly affected by all this. It was quite dissatisfied and its animosity against the proletariat and the Communist Party knew no bounds.

The Agrarian government, too, was dissatisfied with the existence and consolidation of the proletarian municipal councils, although it was quite obvious that the capture of these municipalities by the proletariat was an exceptionally important gain and a very favourable condition for strengthening the forces and power of the working people. The Stamboliiski government began a systematic campaign against the municipalities which were in the hands of the proletariat. The Ministry of Home Affairs, refused to approve the budgets of the communist municipal councils. It trimmed and paralyzed their economic plans and social enterprises. It also repealed the taxes imposed on the bourgeoisie. Its policy constantly bothered and persecuted the communist mayors and their assistants. Finally, the Government by means of the police dissolved and dispersed the communist municipalities one by one and handed their management over to government committees composed of followers of the Agrarian Union and representatives of the bourgeois parties. Very soon, as a result of this self-defeating policy of the Agrarian government, the bourgeoisie became once again complete master of the municipalities, by means of which it was able not only to safeguard its interests at the expense of those of the working people, but also to conspire against the peasant rule itself.

In its blindness and under the influence of the well-

to-do peasants as well as of the bourgeois and profiteering elements who had wormed their way into the ranks of the Agrarian Union. Stamboliiski's government, a few months before the *coup d'état* intensified its campaign against the proletariat and the Communist Party. In the electoral campaign in April 1923 it came out with a peculiar plan for the destruction of communism in Bulgaria. It published a special 'bill on the communes', which was to be approved by the newly-elected parliament and by dint of which the lands, implements and all the property of the members of the Communist Party were to be confiscated, while the communists were to be sent away from their place of residence to certain localities where, in the words of the bill, they 'were to organize communes' according to the teaching of communism. On the eve of the elections, by order of the Government, the police and the village mayors drew up lists of the members and sympathizers of the Communist Party, who were subject to the bill which the government agents passed off at that time to the peasant masses as a binding law.

Especially characteristic was the fact that all this happened at the very moment when the bourgeoisie, smashed ideologically and politically, and having lost every hope of recapturing power by parliamentary means, was busy plotting a military *coup d'état* for the overthrow of the Agrarian Government. All this was done by the Government at the very time when the Communist Party was sounding the alarm, publicly warning the Government and the masses of the plots hatched by the bourgeoisie, and on two occasions (in the autumn of 1922 and early in 1923), it unmasked the plotters and through its mass actions succeeded in averting a *coup d'état*. This happened precisely at the time when the Communist Party was stressing most insistently that a joint struggle was needed between workers and peasants and joint work between the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party and of the whole workers' movement against the plots of the military-bourgeois cliques. It was as if a fatal madness had obsessed Stamboliiski, the other leaders of the Agrarian Union and the Agrarian rulers. The more their downfall plotted by the

bourgeoisie approached, the more they were carried away by their hatred of the proletariat and the Communist Party.

By this behaviour of their they created among the masses an antagonism towards the peasant rule, which was a major contributing factor in the Communist Party's fatal and irretrievable historical error, when during the June 9, 1923 *coup d'état* (quite contrary to its behaviour in November 1922 and January 1923) it adopted a *position of neutrality*, instead of making use of its great force and its extensive influence among the masses to mobilize them for armed resistance to the bourgeois *coup d'état*.

5. THE AGRARIAN UNION AND THE MACEDONIAN MOVEMENT

One of the key questions in the Balkans, which has had a decisive influence on the entire home and foreign policy of the Balkan states, is the *national question*. In the course of decades, this was the *Macedonian question*, for Bulgaria in particular. From its very beginnings the Macedonian movement was directly linked with Bulgaria and the Bulgarian people, first because several hundred thousands of Macedonian emigrants, striving for the freedom and national independence of Macedonia, had settled in Bulgaria, and second, because of the links of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie with the leaders of the Macedonian movement and the use they made of it for their nationalist policy.

While for a long time the Communist Party itself made errors in its attitude towards the Macedonian movement, underestimating it (on account of which it did not take prompt and active participation in it, so as to help it get rid of the noxious influence of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie), the Agrarian Union not only underestimated the importance of the Macedonian movement, but even adopted a hostile attitude towards it. Because of Todor Alexandrov and other bourgeois inspirers of the Macedonian organization, the Macedonian emigrants and the whole Macedonian movement, depicting it as a source of the major disasters which had befallen the Bulgarian people in the past. The leaders

of the Agrarian Union were unable to see the forest behind the trees. They forgot that the masses and a popular government in Bulgaria could not remain alien to the fate of the Macedonian people, fighting against national oppression, could not remain alien to the Macedonian question, on the solution of which the freedom and independence of the Bulgarian people and of the other Balkan peoples depend to a large extent.

The Agrarian government, in the person of its Minister of Home Affairs, Alexander Dimitrov, declared war on the Macedonian organization. It undertook systematic persecutions of the Macedonian militants, restricted the activity of the Macedonian organization and openly threatened to destroy it.

In the meantime, the Stamboliiski government tried to improve relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia precisely at the cost of the interests of the Macedonian movement. It signed an agreement with the Belgrade Government, by virtue of which it undertook to prohibit every activity on the part of the Macedonian organization on Bulgarian soil and even in the Bulgarian part of Macedonia (Petrich district) and to persecute and destroy the Macedonian insurgent detachments crossing over from Serbian into Bulgarian Macedonia, while pursued by Yugoslav troops.

By its policy on the Macedonian question, the Agrarian government incurred the enmity of the great majority of the Macedonian emigrants in Bulgaria and helped Todor Alexandrov to incite the whole Macedonian organization against itself. The first victim of this became the Agrarian Minister of Home Affairs, who was murdered by decision of the leaders of the Macedonian organization, while Stamboliiski was still in power.

The bourgeoisie cleverly made use of this conflict between the Agrarian government and the Macedonian Organization. It succeeded in persuading the Macedonian fighters that the overthrow of Stamboliiski's government was an inevitable condition for the free development of the Macedonian movement and for the preparation of an armed uprising aimed at Macedonia's liberation. In this

way, the bourgeoisie attracted the entire Macedonian Organization, winning it over wholly for the cause of the *coup d'état* that was being prepared and making use of its well-armed forces to perpetrate the *coup d'état* as well as to terrorize the masses and to decapitate their movement after the *coup d'état*.

6. THE *COUP D'ETAT* OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND ITS MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

At the end of 1919 the Bulgarian bourgeoisie voluntarily agreed to share power with the Agrarian Union. Later, confronted by the immediate threat of the ruined masses and a worker-peasant revolution, it handed over all power to Stamboliiski without a fight. At the end of 1922 and in January 1923, however, when this threat was over, it could not and would not tolerate the peasant rule any longer. Now it was no longer content with the economic concessions made by Stamboliiski's government. It knew, on the other hand, that the disintegration of peasant rule now beginning and, as a result of its half-way policy, the growing discontent of the masses further increased the power and influence of the Communist Party, as well as the endeavour of the working people for the complete economic and political expropriation of the bourgeoisie and its elimination.

That is why the bourgeoisie, impotent politically and in parliament, focussed its entire attention and all its efforts on the preparation of conditions, under which it could forcefully overthrow the Agrarian government and destroy the organized movement of the workers and peasants in the country. To this end, under the protection of the palace, it mobilized the officers of the regular army, and many of those who had been dismissed because of the reduction of the army. It made use of the Wrangel's Russian Whiteguards (10,000 men), stationed in Bulgaria at that time. It completely won over to its side the armed Macedonian Organization. It also secured the support of Great Britain and Italy, which resented Stamboliiski's policy of rap-

prochement with Yugoslavia, an agent of France in the Balkans. Great Britain, which needed the Balkans to consolidate its influence in Asia Minor against re-emerging Turkey and to establish a solid base in its struggle against the USSR, saw an obstacle in Stamboliiski's government and in the mass Communist Party in Bulgaria and readily supported the conspiratorial schemes of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

Taking thus all preparatory measures at home and internationally, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was biding its time in order to take firm action. On its part, Stamboliiski's anti-proletarian and anti-Macedonian policy rapidly created a favourable psychological atmosphere for dealing blows to the Agrarian Government. The self-deception and smugness of the leaders of the Agrarian Union and of the Agrarian Ministers after their great victory over the bourgeois parties in the April 1923 elections, the conviction that their power was now secure, created the possibility of an unexpected military *coup d'état* against the Agrarian government. Another factor making for this was that Stamboliiski, waging a struggle against the proletariat and the Communist Party, without having armed the worker and peasant masses, committed the boundless stupidity to leave the nation's army and armed forces in the hands of the old officers who were loyal to the bourgeoisie. Thus, on June 9, 1923, a gang of greedy bankers and profiteers, war-discredited generals and professors ambitious for an easy political career, relying on the conspiratorial military league and with the support of Wrangels White-guards and of the Macedonian Organization in Bulgaria, overthrew the democratically elected Agrarian Government of Stamboliiski by means of a military *coup d'état* and seized the reins of power in one night like highwaymen, killing Stamboliiski and a number of Agrarian deputies and militants, filling the prisons with thousands of peasants and workers who resisted the *coup d'état* and subjecting the Bulgarian people to their military dictatorship. The place of the Agrarian government was taken by the government of Tsankov, formed at the time by all bourgeois parties, including the Social Democratic Party, which were

represented in parliament by only 30 deputies out of a total 245. The great majority of the Bulgarian people were squarely against the perpetrated *coup d'état*. but the unarmed, disorganized and leaderless masses which had risen were rapidly crushed.

Realizing all too well that the new Government could count on no support among the people, that its social basis actually consisted of the numerically very small financial, industrial and speculative bourgeoisie, which was completely discredited in the eyes of the masses and abhorred on account of the two disastrous wars (the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the World War of 1915-18), Tsankov's government proceeded to consolidate its power by *physically annihilating* all the people's organized forces, leaving the country at the mercy of its conspiratorial military organization and the so-called 'small convent' - its central organ for organizing and perpetrating murders of active opponents of the government.

Considering that by decapitating the Agrarian Union during the *coup d'état*, the mass organization of the Bulgarian peasants had already been destroyed, the gang of bankers, generals and professors proceeded to prepare the conditions necessary for the crushing of the workers' movement - the Communist Party, the trade union, the *Osvobozhdenié* workers' co-operative, the Youth Organization, as well as the widely popular workers' press which had *twice as large a circulation* as all the bourgeois and Social Democratic papers taken together.

Only three months after the June *coup d'état*, on September 12, 1923, Tsankov's government, on the false pretext that the Communist Party had planned for that day an armed uprising with the aim of establishing Soviet rule in Bulgaria, arrested over 2,000 militants of the workers' movement (deputies, district and municipal councillors, mayors, journalists, Party and trade union secretaries, etc) closed the workers' clubs and turned them into police headquarters, confiscated the property, the printing shop, the funds and archives of the Party and trade unions, banned their newspapers, as well as their further activity.

starting at the same time a nation-wide mass persecution of thousands of their members and followers.

Thus, Tsankov's government provoked the September 1923 Uprising of the Bulgarian workers and peasants, who rose in defence of their openly violated rights and liberties, in defence of their legal existence.

After crushing the people's uprising with the aid of Wrangel's White-guards and the armed forces of the Macedonian Organization, Tsankov's government massacred several thousand prominent workers, peasants and intellectuals who had been arrested and drove thousands of others abroad.

When later the Macedonian Organization, so extensively exploited by the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the Bulgarian working people during and after the *coup d'état*, began to become aware of its errors and to tend towards an independent national-revolutionary policy, barring in this manner Tsankov's endeavours to secure the support of Yugoslavia, Tsankov's government, feeling that it already had enough armed forces of its own, attacked it without choosing its means. In September 1924 it inspired the murder of Todor Alexandrov, then exploited this murder by ascribing it to the leftist Macedonian fighters in order to wipe out *en masse* the best forces of the Macedonian Organization, to deprive it of its basis in the Petrich district, to destroy it and thus deal a heavy blow to the whole Macedonian movement.

But even after all this the Government was not able to pacify the country and secure peaceful rule. On the contrary, the dissatisfaction and indignation of the people against the terrorist regime further increased. The masses of workers and peasants, which had learned a good lesson from bitter experience, understood that the reason for their defeat lay in their disunion, continued with joint forces the struggle against their butcher and for recapturing the rights and liberties they had been deprived of.

In the course of 20 months Tsankov's government responded with indescribable violence and cruelty to this lawful struggle for self-defence, with incessant political murders and most impudent provocations. The revenge of

the bourgeoisie on the working class and peasantry manifested itself in the form of a wave of terror in the wake of the explosion in the Sofia Cathedral and in a new nation-wide butchery of the workers and peasants, the horrors of which have not ceased to this very day.

That is how the Bulgarian bourgeoisie succeeded in destroying the peasant rule, in imposing its military dictatorship upon the people, and in crushing successively and one by one the peasant, the workers' and the national Macedonian movements, how it succeeded in prolonging its bloody rule for a certain time.

7. CONCLUSION

The lessons of the experience of peasant rule and the sanguinary events in Bulgaria become quite clear from all that has been stated so far. These lessons consist above all in the following:

1. *The peasants, no matter how well organized, are not in a position to hold the state power in their hands for a long time.* The peasant masses, scattered in thousands of villages, cut off from the urban centres, have no direct influence on industry and transport and their isolated peasant rule remains without the necessary solid support and actually finds itself as if in a foreign camp, unable to cope with the complex task of the government and organize its defence against the bourgeoisie. Only in alliance with the proletariat and under its conscious, energetic and firm leadership can the peasant masses get rid of the oppression of the bourgeoisie and become a truly dominant factor in the country, free and full masters of their destiny, as we can see from the example of the Soviet Union.

2. *The bourgeoisie cannot be removed from state power by halfway measures while preserving the foundation of the bourgeois system.* Preserving its economic might, it will find sufficient strength to recapture power, which it has been compelled to yield temporarily under adverse circumstances. *Only by its complete economic and political expropriation can the bourgeoisie be rendered completely harmless to the masses.*

3. *The bourgeoisie in a given country, even if ideologically and politically completely bankrupt, even if totally isolated from the masses, and quite weak politically and in parliament, can impose its dictatorship on the working people, if their forces are disunited, if there is mutual distrust and hostility among the peasantry, the proletariat and the oppressed nationalities.* Utterly discredited in the eyes of the working people, shattered ideologically and politically, removed from power for three entire years, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie skilfully exploited the isolation of the peasant rule, its hostility towards the proletariat and the Macedonian movement, the lack of a fraternal alliance between peasants and workers, and managed to recapture power, to defeat successfully the peasantry, the proletariat and the Macedonian movement and steep the nation in blood.

4. *The victory over the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a worker-peasant government are possible only through an unshakable alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry.*

The Bulgarian workers, peasants and the oppressed Macedonians paid a heavy price for this bloody historical lesson. But they learned a great deal and their united front against the bourgeoisie has been sealed forever by the blood profusely shed in common. The Bulgarian working people see their salvation from the ferocious fascist terror and their final liberation from the oppression of capitalism only in this indissoluble united front.

The trials and tribulations of the Bulgarian working people, the ill-fated attempt at peasant rule in Bulgaria, the fatal mistakes of the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and the Communist Party – *this entire Bulgarian lesson is for the peasants, the workers and the oppressed nationalities in the Balkans and in all other countries a valuable indication of the only right road which they should follow in their own liberation struggle.*

Krestyanski International

No. 6-9, 1925

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 126-160

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE TRIAL AGAINST THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The Government of Tsankov attached great importance to the trial against the former members of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. The trial was to show to the whole world that the September 1923 Uprising, provoked by Tsankov's government, was the work of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party which had supposedly been preparing it for a long time and had proclaimed it 'at the behest of Moscow'.

With this trial the Government wanted to prove also that it was fully justified in outlawing the Communist Party, the workers' and peasant youth organizations, the trade unions and the *Osvobozhdenié* workers' co-operative.

Finally, the Government tried to prove with this trial that the civil war and the bloody anarchy was the work not of the bourgeoisie which had staged a military *coup d'état* on June 9, 1923 and terrorized the masses, but of the Bulgarian Communist Party. For, as the indictment reads, 'from the moment it joined the Communist International and adopted its programme and tactics (1919), it (the BCP) decided to organize an armed uprising, started preparing it and set up secret organizations to commit outrages and assassinate the representatives of the bourgeoisie.'

Tsankov tried to represent the Communist Party as a 'group of conspirators,' which organized plots, attempts and murders, and thus to justify the acts of violence, cruelty and murders of workers and peasants on the pretext of 'legal self-defence of the state.'

For a year and a half Tsankov's investigating magistrates rummaged in the confiscated archives of the CC and the organization of the BCP to find the necessary materials and documents, which would confirm the ac-

cusation. As a result of prolonged work, a detailed indictment was drawn up against the Central Committee with many distorted quotations from the programme and decisions of the Party congresses, but without any factual data.

At last the date was set for the trial against the CC of the BCP. The hearing of the case took place at the Sofia civil court, because the acts ascribed to the CC referred to a time when there was no martial law in the country and when the 'State Protection Law' had not yet been issued.

Despite the wish and expectations of Tsankov and his agents, the hearing of the case completely refuted the trumped up accusation against the Bulgarian Communist Party. No trace was left of the 'irrefutable documents,' about which General Roussev had made so much ado at the time, which were to 'prove responsibility of the BCP for the September Uprising,' which supposedly proved the existence of 'an order from Moscow' and in general exposed the 'conspiratorial character of the Party'. There was only one witness who backed up the accusation before the court - this was Tsankov's investigating magistrate, who questioned the arrested members of the CC.

Meanwhile, even the bourgeois witnesses, as, for instance, the National-Liberal Boyan Smilov, a former Minister of Tsankov's government, and Kostourkov, the leader of the Radical Party, had to admit before the court that in September 1923 the masses had been provoked to an uprising by the Government's coercive measures and that the responsibility for the September events fell precisely upon its shoulders.

In his speech for the defence, which by the way was a brilliant defence of the Communist Party, the Comintern and communism, and a crushing accusation against Tsankov's terrorist regime and the blood-stained Bulgarian bourgeoisie Comrade Kabakchiev established with indisputable facts and arguments that Tsankov's government had come to power through a military *coup d'état* against the will of the great majority of the Bulgarian people, had deliberately resorted to the destruction of the mass Communist Party, for which purpose it had started the

September provocation. The September 1923 Uprising, which broke out as a result of this provocation, was by no means a plot (as was June 9 military *coup d'état*), but a *popular mass movement*. It cannot be ascribed either to individual communists or to the Communist Party as a whole, because a popular mass movement is never an arbitrary act of individuals and parties. The Bulgarian Communist Party fulfilled only its duty, siding with the insurgent masses against their tyrants. *It did not want to repeat the fatal error of June 9, when it did not actively oppose the military coup d'état of the people's enemies. The Bulgarian Communist Party acted absolutely correctly when it took part in the September Uprising, trying to lend it an organized character and assuming its leadership.*

The trial against the BCP actually turned into a trial against the regime of Tsankov. This fact so strongly leaped to the eyes that the organs of the so-called legal opposition (*Narod and Epoha, Radical, Znamé and Nezavissimost*), which have never ceased their heinous campaign against the BCP, found it inconvenient to publish any news on the trial and instead preferred to keep silent, while the Government press restricted itself only to brief, confused and indistinct notes. For the same reason, the Government refused to admit to the court the German, British, French, Swiss and Czechoslovak jurists, who expressed the desire to assume the defence of the accused members of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

All this, however, did not prevent the prosecutor from demanding with the typical impudence of the Sofia hangmen a death sentence for the members of the Politbureau (Comrades Kabakchiev, Kolarov, Loukanov and Dimitrov) and long prison terms for the other members of the Central Committee (Comrades Penev, Ivanov and Kirkova). Nor did all this prevent the court from taking it for granted that the 'order' for an uprising had been given by the Politbureau, and from sentencing its members to 12 years of close confinement, and 'magnanimously' discharging of responsibility the remaining three members of the CC, placing them at the mercy of Tsankov's bandits.

who destroy political opponents dangerous to Tsankov without any trial and sentence.

The Sofia court, of course, could not but officially recognize the Bulgarian Communist Party as responsible for the September Uprising. An acquittal in the trial against its Central Committee would have meant officially to recognize at the trial that Tsankov's government had been responsible for the numerous outrages it had committed against the Bulgarian working people. Tsankov could never have allowed this. The court found a way out of the awkward predicament in which it was placed by this grossly tendentious trial and pronounced a 'magnanimous' sentence, although the law entitled it to pass life sentences on the defendants 'for similar crimes.'

The trial against the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party in the first instance (the accused are entitled to appeal both before the Court of Appeals and the Court of Cassation) exposed once again even more strongly the Government of the Bulgarian oppressors, adventurers and falsifiers.

Pravda No. 153

July 8, 1925

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 165-169

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE SITUATION IN BULGARIA

The present political situation in Bulgaria is characterized by preparations for the break-up of the Tsankov government. This break-up is unavoidable both for domestic reasons and owing to foreign pressure. The frantic terror against the masses and the mass murders of workers' and peasant militants have by no means brought about the country's pacification. This course of bloody revenge has only increased the despair of the workers and peasant masses, as well as the anarchy and uncertainty in our country. In spite of the ruthless war which the army, the gendarmerie and the militia waged against the insurrection movement, in spite of the draconic laws against those who shelter and assist the persecuted revolutionaries, the groups of political insurgents, as the government newspapers report, continue to exist and are active in various parts of the country. New groups of insurgents appear in the place of the shattered ones.

The bourgeois circles are already exhausted and disillusioned. They admit that their bloody victory over the masses has been a sad Pyrrhic victory. The terror has not justified the hopes pinned on it. The bourgeois newspapers are compelled to admit that even the fiercest and most terrible violence was not able to disrupt the unified front of the workers' and peasant masses.

This is precisely why the Democratic Union – the government party – is increasingly disintegrating. It is increasingly breaking up into its component parts which have not succeeded in becoming welded in a single party. The contradictions and mutual enmities in the government camp have also manifested themselves in the parliament. This discord has even effected the officers – the sole real

force of the government. Part of the officers have joined the oppositionist National-Liberal Party, and others, though fewer in number, have gone over to the left bourgeois parties. The National-Liberal Party itself, which is backed by certain sections of the big bourgeoisie, is disintegrating at present. The old adherents of Stambolov and those of the assassinated Dr. Genadiev are leaving its ranks and forming a separate Liberal Party. Naturally, they count on becoming an important factor in the government combinations in the near future. The main strength of the new Liberal Party stems from the fact that it has in its ranks General Lazarov, head of the Sofia Garrison, one of the chief organizers of the coup of June 9 and leader of the officers who are dissatisfied with the Tsankov government and, in particular, with General Roussev (the present Minister of Internal Affairs).

The so-called left-wing parties (the Democrats led by Malinov, the Radicals and the Social-Democrats) are quite weak by themselves, as they have no masses back of them. The latter treat them in a hostile way, because of their participation in the coup of June 9 and the mass massacres in September 1923, and because of their support of Tsankov in his last bloody retaliatory campaign against the communist and peasant movement. Realizing their weakness, the left-wing parties have no courage to seek a solution of the present situation by means of new elections. They understand that such elections would not only lead to the Democratic Union's defeat, but to their own too, and would enable the workers' and peasant parties to test the strength of their united front on political and legal grounds. For the same reasons the left-wing parties cannot venture to form a joint block capable of assuming power.

On the other hand, British diplomacy, which heretofore supported Tsankov and his extremely terroristic regime and which knows the true state of affairs in our country, has also come to realize that the maintenance of this regime only increases the so-called Bolshevik peril in Bulgaria and the Balkans and may lead to dangerous surprises. In the opinion of British diplomacy, only a replacement of the Tsankov government by a more moderate one

could forestall the otherwise inevitable danger of an outburst of the people's wrath. Hence it energetically promotes such a change in government.

The outlines of the forthcoming government change are assuming an ever clearer shape. In the present state of affairs, this change can only be carried out by means of a regrouping of the military forces, in combination with the main parts of the now dominant Democratic Union. The bourgeoisie can under no circumstances venture to entrust its fate to the weak left-wing parties, which neither have enough influence on the masses to be able to rely on them, nor can they count on the nation's military forces. Hence they are turning their eyes towards Lyapchev (the leader of the parliamentary majority) and General Vulkov (the present Minister of War, who is the organizer and brain of the Military League).

The right-wing bourgeois parties will probably concentrate around Lyapchev and Vulkov, and will also attract the newly formed Liberal Party and the right wing of the Agrarian Union. This concentration, which will continue to rely on the military forces, will nevertheless mitigate the present terroristic regime, though only pro forma. This combination is the most probable new government shift in the prevailing conditions. It will permit a consistent continuation of the pro-British line in Bulgaria's foreign policy, followed by the Tsankov government heretofore, to bring to a successful conclusion the rapprochement with Yugoslavia which Great Britain initiated and to facilitate the anti-Bolshevik front of the Balkan states, so eagerly desired by British diplomacy.

Among the preparations for the forthcoming government change which should, first of all, put an end to the state of emergency and the murders of communist and peasant militants in the streets, the completion of the numerous trials of the so-called united front members (communists and agrarians) and the liquidation of the still living workers' and peasants' militants, considered as dangerous, play an important role. For example, six detained communists and agrarians were recently put to death in the Samokov prison. Nikola Gabrovski, the 60-

year-old communist deputy, who was one of the founders of the old Social-Democratic Party in Bulgaria, was also killed at his house. The same fate is in store for other political workers as well. In the meantime, the drum court-martials are working feverishly. Besides the death penalties and life-imprisonments known so far, others have also been passed in Sliven, Haskovo, Berkovitsa, Svishtov and other towns. A big trial of 500 accused communists and agrarians is now in progress in the town of Shoumen. The state prosecutor asked for the death penalty for 130 defendants, life-imprisonment for 100 and 10 to 15 years' penal servitude for all the rest. The so-called military organization of the Bulgarian Communist Party is standing trial in Sofia and the death penalty has been demanded for all the 22 defendants. In the meantime, a similar trial is being prepared against another 20 defendants. The government insists on examining the case of 500 adherents of the Agrarian Union, accused of having prevented the meeting of the bourgeois opposition in Turnovo way back in September 1922 when Stamboliiski was in power. At that time exalted followers of Stamboliiski shaved by force the beards of some opposition leaders to intimidate them. All these 500 agrarians are in line for the death penalty or close confinement for many years.

In this way Tsankov hastens to round off his bloody job, and clear the way for the 'moderate and more civilized course' desired by London.

But only the blind fail to see that, with the awful atrocities committed against the Bulgarian working people, such 'changes' cannot deceive and appease any workers or peasants. Real pacification and normalization will set in in our long-suffering country only when the terror against the masses has ceased completely, no matter in what form this may happen, when the political rights and liberties of the masses have been completely restored, when the convicts and the prosecuted have been granted amnesty, when the Communist Party and the Agrarian Union, the trade unions and the co-operatives have been legalized, when the

working masses have been given an opportunity to decide their own fate and when they have been fully indemnified for the numerous dear sacrifices, and indescribable sufferings they endured under Tsankov's sanguinary rule.

International Press Correspondence

No. 119, 1925

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 223-228

Published by the BCP, 1953

THE STRUGGLE FOR TRADE UNION UNITY IN BULGARIA

I

The fate of the Bulgarian trade union movement is indissolubly linked with that of the Social-Democratic Party. The stubborn struggle which had blazed up in its ranks between the two trends – the revolutionary-socialist (Left-Wing Socialists) and the opportunist (Right-Wing Socialists) – and which finally led to the formation of the two socialist parties, made the split in the trade union movement inevitable. It took place in 1904, one year after the split in the Party.

During the entire period of the split in the Bulgarian trade union movement, the class trade unions, headed by the Communist Party, despite the numerical preponderance they had achieved in recent years (35,000 members as against 1,000 to 1,500 members for the trade unions of the Right-Wing Socialists at the time of the coup d'état in 1923), have never ceased working to restore trade union unity. They considered that, however small the number of Right-Wing Socialist trade union members may be, their separate existence was harmful to the united struggle of the proletariat, and merely played into the hands of the enemies of the workers.

After the Communist Party was crushed by Tsankov's government, with the participation of the Right-Wing Socialist Minister Kazassov, and with the moral and political support of the Party of the Right-Wing Socialists, the latter began a campaign in which it urged the dissolution of the class trade unions. They hoped that the masses, deprived of their trade union organizations, would join the trade unions of the Right-Wing Socialists, under the pressure of the terror, and would take their places under the banner of the Party of Right-Wing Socialists. That is

why they took an active part in the crushing of the communist trade unions. But they reckoned without their host: the masses did not go to the Right-Wing Socialists; on the contrary, their hatred of the counter-revolutionary Party of the Right-Wing Socialists and of the Amsterdam International, which supported them in their treacherous and splitting policy, grew still greater.

The members of the dissolved trade unions availed themselves of the first opportunity which offered itself to found new class trade unions. That is how the independent trade unions sprang up, and several months later already, despite all obstacles and persecutions by the terrorist authorities, the number of their members was almost five times greater than that of the trade union organizations of the Right-Wing Socialists, as well as to the autonomous unions of civil servants for the realization of trade union unity with equal rights for the participating organizations and on the basis of the class struggle. This initiative in favour of trade union unity was welcomed by the masses, because of the extreme deterioration of the economic situation of the working class, and because of the fierce offensive of capital after the dissolution of the communist trade unions. Never before has the idea of trade union been so close to the hearts of the Bulgarian proletariat, never before has it enjoyed such popularity, never before has it been so living in their ranks. Its influence has also penetrated the ranks of the trade unions of the Right-Wing Socialists and the autonomous trade union organizations. However, the leaders of the right-wing trade unions rejected the unity proposed to them. Availing themselves of the favourable situation created for them by the terrorist regime, they declared: whoever wants to unite can join our 'free' trade unions which 'by means of the great Amsterdam International keep in close touch with the many millions of the international proletariat'. The Right-Wing Socialist trade union top crust did, however, feel that their position could not hold out against any serious criticism, or against the workers' masses, sincerely striving to achieve trade union unity, and appealed to the Amsterdam International for help against the growing movement for unity. The Amster-

dam Trade Union Centre responded to their request by calling a Balkan Trade Union Conference, which took place in Sofia in April this year. The aim of this Amsterdam Conference was to persuade the workers of Bulgaria (and of the other Balkan states) to join the right-wing socialist trade unions and to achieve trade union 'unity' within the framework and under the banner of the Amsterdam International. The request of the independent trade unions of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and of the united trade unions of Romania to be allowed to attend this *Balkan* Conference, as the majority of the workers organized in trade unions in these countries are within their ranks, as well as the proposal to place the question of unity on the agenda of the Conference, was rejected by the Amsterdam International, as it was in contradiction to the splitting intentions of the Amsterdam men and threatened to upset their plans.

Despite this, the extensive campaign of the independent Bulgarian trade unions in favour of trade union unity, which found a lively echo among the workers' masses, forced the Amsterdam Conference to concern itself with the question of unity. It was compelled to propose to the right-wing trade unions that negotiations should begin for unification with the independent trade unions, desisting from its former view on the independent trade union's joining the ranks. The splitting plans of the Right-Wing Socialists and the Amsterdam International thus suffered complete fiasco. The idea of trade union unity, so strongly upheld by the broad worker masses, has won an important victory. The joint celebration of May Day with the independent right-wing socialist trade unions, despite the efforts of the Party of Right-Wing Socialists to frustrate it at first and, after it became inevitable, to utilize it so as to rehabilitate themselves before the masses, clearly shows that under the pressure of the workers of both camps the concrete solution of the question of trade union unity became imperative and inevitable. The disintegration of the Social-Democratic Party, which has now set in, and its actual split have considerably weakened its influence among the workers in the right-wing socialist trade unions, and has still more con-

tributed to the realization of trade union unity. The negotiations which have already begun and were continued under the pressure and control of the worker masses have led to the drafting of a common unity platform, accompanied by an explanatory declaration, which were unanimously adopted, to the sounds of the International, by a workers' meeting thousands-strong of the adherents of the two trends in Sofia, on July 21, 1926. The unification of the divided trade unions, which had been fighting each other fiercely for 20 years, was proclaimed by this solemn act.

The principal point of the unity platform and the declaration are the following:

1. The united trade unions are organizationally independent of the political parties. However, they recognize that a political organization of the proletariat is necessary and take their stand on the ground of the class struggle.

2. The united trade unions proclaim as their main task the defence of the interests of the working class through the class struggle, and the abolition of the exploitation of the workers.

3. Until the unity congress, which must take place in the following six months, the leading organs of the united trade unions consist of an equal number of representatives of both parties, regardless of the difference in the numbers of members of their organizations.*

4. The united trade unions will fight for the international solidarity of the workers, and will support any initiative of the Anglo-Russian Committee in the first place, for the realization of the international unity of the trade unions. They will maintain informative relations, which do not bind them, with the Amsterdam International. The question of international affiliation (joining or not joining the Amsterdam International) will be decided by the future Congress.

* This tactical step (consent to parity composition of the temporary organizing committee) was based on the fact that the Bulgarian comrades considered that this consent would impede the wrecking activity of the reformist leaders as it would unmask them, and would facilitate the Party in influencing that part of the workers, organized in trade unions, which had until then still sided with the reformists.

By virtue of this agreement the most disputed questions of international affiliation between the right-wing socialist and the independent trade unions is given a *compromise* solution. The right-wing socialist trade unions bind themselves to leave the Amsterdam International of which they are members and to support the Anglo-Russian Committee. The independent trade unions which do not officially belong to any international organization agree to the united trade unions' maintaining informative relations with the Amsterdam International.

One cannot but admit that this compromise contains a certain moral recognition of the Amsterdam International, a certain appeasement of an organization which steadily pursued a splitting policy and *de facto* rejects the class struggle – the sole basis for genuine unity of the trade union movement. This idea is all the truer when we consider the temporary informative relationship with the Amsterdam International – as certain of the Amsterdam men and certain liquidatory elements of the independent trade union, do – precisely as a stage along the road to organizational affiliation of the united trade unions with Amsterdam, which stage is to come to an end at the general congress.

This compromise runs counter to the fundamental spirit inherent in the unity proclaimed. And the masses realize this, because they realize that the unification is taking place not on the conciliatory Amsterdam basis, but on the ground of the real class struggle against capitalism. Despite this error, which was, however, largely corrected by means of a campaign of unmasking, which is now being waged against the treacherous splitting policy of the Amsterdam International, the unity proclaimed is a great event, a significant step along the road to the realization of trade union unity in Bulgaria, a triumph for the idea of the unity of the working class against the splitting policy of the Party of the Right-Wing Socialists and the Amsterdam International.

II

The historical significance of the unity proclaimed naturally consists, not in the fact that about 1,000 or 1,500 members of the right-wing socialist trade unions have been added to the 5,000 members of the independent trade unions, but in the fact that fine prospects are thus opening up for the mass rallying of the Bulgarian proletariat in the united class trade unions, for the consolidation and intensification of the struggle of the masses against capital and reaction, for the powerful development of the workers' movement in Bulgaria after the major setbacks it suffered in recent years.

The extremely great importance of this step along the road to trade union unity is also confirmed by the conduct of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and the Right-Wing Socialist Party towards it. The government press reacted to the agreement between the independent and the right-wing socialist trade unions with hostility and unusual alarm. It interpreted the fact that adherence of the united trade unions to Amsterdam was *not immediately* decided as a victory for the former, as a victory of communism, as a victory of Moscow, and urged the government carefully to watch the activity of the trade unions, and to take precautionary measures so as to prevent the Bulgarian trade unions from passing over to revolutionary lines. The opposition bourgeois press expressed doubts that the Right-Wing Socialists would succeed in taming the communist proletariat with the help of this unity and was rather inclined the opposite, namely that the right-wing socialist workers would finally take their stand under the banner of Moscow. It is clear both to the government and to the bourgeois opposition that we have here the rallying of the scattered forces of the Bulgarian working class on proletarian ground, on the ground of a resolute struggle against capitalism and reaction, against the bourgeois system. In the unity proclaimed, they rightly see the revival of their cruelly persecuted, tortured and ruthlessly bled class enemy. They realize that unity is the road which leads

to the revival and development of the emancipatory movement of the Bulgarian working class.

Of course, the Party of the Right-Wing Socialists is particularly displeased. In its organ *Narod* (The People) it has launched a furious campaign against the unity platform. It openly accuses the leaders of the right-wing socialist trade unions of shameful capitulation before the communists by consenting to leave the Amsterdam International. Any trade union unity outside Amsterdam it considers as a crime. It does not believe that the unity congress will be able to decide to adhere to Amsterdam in the present mood of the right-wing socialist masses against Amsterdam. After this furious press campaign against the unity that was proclaimed, the Party of the Right-Wing Socialists began to undermine this unity by its actions. With the cooperation of the secretary of the right-wing socialist trade union centre, who was not in Bulgaria when the unity platform was adopted, the Party of the Right-Wing Socialists organized a special conference of the 'free' trade unions, in order to take a 'legal' decision on the question of unity. And the majority of delegates to this conference, clerks in the *Napred* (Forwards) Co-operative, run by the right-wing socialists, whose mandates as delegates were not due to any elections, declared the act of unity illegal and proposed revision of the platform, which had been unanimously adopted by the right-wing socialist trade unions, and along the following lines at that: a) immediate adherence of the united trade unions to the Amsterdam International; b) convening a congress of unification not in six but in two months, to which both contracting parties would send an *equal* number of delegates (although the number of members of the right-wing socialist and the independent trade unions is in a ratio of 1:5!); c) the Central Committee of the trade unions, to be elected by the congress, was to consist of representatives of both contracting parties and in equal numbers at that. The workers among the participants in the conference which consisted of regularly elected representatives of the right-wing socialist trade unions, almost in their entirety resolutely protested against this decision of the conference, and declared that such imper-

missible conditions purely and simply would render nil the already proclaimed unification between the independent and the 'free' trade unions. The worker delegates also declared that despite this decision of the 'majority', which actually had nothing in common with the trade union movement, they remained true to the adopted unity platform, and could not calmly accept the torpedoing of trade union unity, so necessary to the Bulgarian proletariat, so as to please the Right-Wing Socialist Party and Amsterdam. 'We can easily do without Amsterdam, but we cannot take one step forward without trade union unity', is their main argument.

The opponents of unity in the reformist camp make extensive use of Sassenbach's letter (secretary of the Amsterdam International) to the right-wing socialist trade union centre, in which, on behalf of Amsterdam, he expressed his 'doubts' and 'apprehensions' on the unity proclaimed, and indirectly advised its rejection as incompatible with the principles of the Amsterdam International. It is apparent, however, that the workers of the right-wing socialist trade unions can no longer be swayed by such arguments. They realize that the Right-Wing Socialist Party and the Amsterdam International are the foremost obstacle to trade union unity, while the roundly cursed communists seriously and sincerely work for its full realization. That is why the right-wing socialist trade union organizations in most towns are against the decision of the 'conference', for the realization of the unity platform, and for the calling of a unity congress. The union of printers, which also disagreed with the decision of the conference, convened a congress of its own, in order to proclaim its support of the unification.

The united front of the Right-Wing Socialist Party, of the terrorist government of the bourgeoisie and of the Amsterdam International against the class unity of the Bulgarian proletariat only helps to strengthen the movement of trade union unity among the Bulgarian proletariat and it cannot be doubted that this unity, though achieved at the cost of a hard and stubborn struggle, will be really achieved in the end.

The events in Bulgaria once more fully confirm the correctness of the attitude of the Comintern on the question of trade union unity and as regards the Amsterdam International, can serve as a warning to the defeatist trends, which have appeared in certain communist parties.

Communist International No. 2

September 1926

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 247-257

Published by the BCP, 1953

The October Revolution produced an exceptionally strong impact on the Balkans. Like a searchlight it broke through the mighty darkness of warfare on the Balkan fronts. Like a guiding star, it showed the Balkan peoples and the million-strong masses of workers and peasants the road to peace and freedom. The vicinity of Soviet Russia, the agricultural character of the Balkan countries and the fact that their economic and social structure is similar to the Russian one, made the Russian Revolution particularly dear to the Balkan peoples and heeded them to understand it fully. The victory of the Russian proletariat and the creation of the first Soviet worker-peasant state gave rise to boundless enthusiasm.

A powerful movement against war and for immediate peace without annexations and reparations developed both among the peoples of the Balkan countries and the masses of soldiers on the Balkan fronts. The slogans of the Russian Revolution gained every day new supporters from among the workers' and peasants' masses on war fronts, in towns and villages. Women's demonstrations followed one another, factory workers protested ever more boldly against a continuation of the war. Russian, German and Bulgarian soldiers began to fraternize frequently on the Dobroudja front in spite of the stern measures taken by the military authorities. On the Salonica front (the central Balkan front) the Bulgarian soldiers launched a powerful movement for an immediate end to war, developed a big propaganda campaign for peace, distributed revolutionary leaflets and set up secret soldiers' committees and cells. In spite of mass arrests, in spite of the shooting of thousands of soldiers, this movement gained ever more ground and at-

tained its climax in the soldiers' insurrection at *Dobro Polé* and *before the gates of Sofia* in September 1918. These soldiers' uprisings were one of the factors which helped speed up the end of the war on the Balkan front.

The October Revolution encouraged the workers' and peasant masses in the Balkans in their struggle against monarchism, the bourgeoisie and those responsible for that disastrous bloody war.

The workers' and peasant movement in the Balkans assumed unprecedented proportions. The oppressed nationalities (Macedonians, Dobroudjans, Thracians and Albanians) took, under the impact of the October Revolution, the road of the correct national-revolutionary struggle which has already brought full national liberation to the oppressed peoples in former tsarist Russia. The influence exerted by Bolshevism upon the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and the oppressed nationalities was enormous.

The organization of the workers in class trade unions, of the peasants in left-wing peasant parties proceeded at a rapid pace. The workers' and peasant co-operative movement developed on a scale which have been impossible before the war. The revolutionary Social-Democratic Parties in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece came out in favour of Bolshevism, turned into communist parties and developed as mass parties. The *Bulgarian Communist Party* won one quarter of all votes and captured the councils in nearly all towns and many villages. The *Yugoslav Communist Party* won 200,000 votes in elections. And all this was won thanks to the revolutionary Bolshevik slogans. The Communist Parties of Romania and Greece too made remarkable progress. A wave of mass strikes and demonstrations swept through the Balkans. The masses of workers and peasants launched a decisive offensive against the bourgeois-monarchist regime.

Owing to the deep economic, social and political changes brought about by the war, and under the impact of the October Revolution, the positions of the monarchy and the bourgeoisie were seriously shaken. In Bulgaria the old King Ferdinand was forced to abdicate. The Greek King Constantine was removed. The dynasties in Belgrade and

Bucharest were insecure and shaky, in spite of the 'victory' in the war. The mounting wave of world revolution greatly weakened the influence and pressure of imperialism in the Balkans. At that moment the Balkan bourgeoisie and monarchies could no longer count on the help of their former outside supporters (tsarist Russia and the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy had disappeared and the imperialist victor states were themselves threatened by revolution).

The impotent and frightened Balkan bourgeoisie made various concessions to the masses so as to safeguard its class rule. Almost everywhere the eight-hour working day was introduced. Labour legislation was solemnly promised. An agrarian reform was started in Romania and Yugoslavia. The upsurge of the peasant masses was so strong that it led in Bulgaria to a three-year peasant government.

That was a revolutionary situation. The Balkans were on the eve of a worker-peasant revolution. And the revolution would certainly have broken out and would have been successful were it not for the second betrayal of international Social-Democracy (the first one was on August 4, 1914⁵⁸); had it not prevented the revolution in Germany and Austria from developing into a true proletarian revolution,⁵⁹ had it not abandoned the Italian workers' uprising and the occupation of factories,⁶⁰ and had it not facilitated the fall of the Soviet republics in Bavaria⁶¹ and Hungary⁶². A victorious Balkan revolution would not only have produced a Soviet Balkan federation under the then prevailing conditions, but would also have facilitated a proletarian revolution in Central Europe, would have protected a part of Soviet Russia's rear to a considerable extent and encouraged revolutions in the Near East.

The Balkan Social-Democrats, just as their brothers in Western Europe, sided with the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, peasantry and oppressed nations, against a worker-peasant revolution in the Balkans.

Owing to this Social-Democratic treachery, the international bourgeoisie was able to gather its forces, to regain its self-confidence, to consolidate its positions to a certain

extent, to find the road towards a relative stabilization of capitalism and, finally, to launch systematic attacks on the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry.

Noske's bloodsheds in Germany, Horthy's victory in Hungary, and the triumph of fascism in Italy marked the beginning of the steady rise of international bourgeois reaction and its constant spread. The victory of counter-revolution in Europe made it possible for the imperialist powers once again firmly to lay their hands on the Balkans.

At the cost of the Balkans' economic and political independence, the Balkan bourgeoisie and monarchies obtained powerful support from British, French and Italian imperialism, and launched a ruthless bloody offensive against the revolutionary movement in the Balkans. The suppression in blood of the general strike in Romania in December 1920 was the beginning. The second big step in this direction was the passing of exceptional laws against the revolutionary movement in Yugoslavia in 1921⁶³ (the so-called 'obznana'). The military-fascist *coup d'état* in Bulgaria in June 1923 was the third historic act of Balkan reaction which since then has been raging and advancing in the Balkans, fully supported by foreign imperialism. The overthrow of *Fan Noli's popular government in Albania* in 1924 by Ahmed Zogu, helped directly by Italy and Yugoslavia and strongly supported by Great Britain, was a further important step of Balkan reaction.

The September 1923 Uprising in Bulgaria against the military-fascist dictatorship and for a worker-peasant government was the last heroic attempt by the proletariat during that period to overcome reaction, to maintain the already won proletarian positions and to pave the way for the triumph of a Balkan revolution. The September Uprising of the Bulgarian workers and peasants was inspired by a Bolshevik spirit and was led under the banner of the October Revolution. Despite its failure, the uprising remains, for the Bulgarian proletariat as well as for the entire Balkan proletariat, a bright spot on the road of the revolutionary struggle towards final victory.

For many years on end the most terrible white terror and fascism have been rampant in the Balkan countries.

There are countless victims. The bourgeoisie succeeded in destroying the organizations of the proletariat and the peasantry, in outlawing the Communist Parties in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania, and in persecuting them most severely. It succeeded in shooting or imprisoning the most active proletarian cadres, in depriving the masses of workers and peasants of all their political rights, in subjecting the workers and peasants to ruthless exploitation. The bourgeoisie repelled the revolutionary movement for a certain time and eliminated the proletariat as a major political factor.

But the Balkan bourgeoisie was unable to extinguish the ideas of the October Revolution, the spirit of Bolshevism, to uproot Communism from amid the masses, or to do away with the boundless affection of the Balkan peoples for Soviet Russia.

On the contrary, the process of bolshevization of the proletariat is *going ahead* at the price of enormous sacrifices and indescribable sufferings. The proletarian masses and a considerable part of the poor peasantry have remained true to Communism.

Despite everything, *the proletarian groups have not gone over* to Social-Democracy (the political agency of the bourgeoisie and counter-revolution).

The ruthlessly persecuted Communist Parties in the Balkans have recuperated as underground organizations (except for Greece, where the Communist Party is still legal) and slowly but surely are beginning to consolidate and grow strong.

The Communist Parties in the Balkans are learning through internal struggle and bolshevization to draw lessons from their own errors and from Social-Democratic deviations on the peasant and national questions, on the questions of the hegemony and leading role of the proletariat, as well as to correct their errors, to do away with ideological vagueness and to work out correct methods for the ideological and political enlistment of the proletarian and peasant masses and for their broad organization.

On the road to their bolshevization the Communist Par-

ties have eliminated from their ranks the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and the Social-Democratic remnants, inclined to liquidationism. (The *Sakarov-Manov* group in Bulgaria, the *Miloikovic* group in Yugoslavia, *Cristescu* in Romania, and *Pouliopolous* in Greece). A proof of the advanced bolshevization of the Communist Parties in the Balkans, the significance of which we should not underestimate, can be found in the fact that they all stand firmly on the side of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union against the Trotskyist opposition, against the Menshevik position and dissident activity of the Trotsky-Zinoviev group, which has *no* supporters within the Balkan parties. At present the Communist Parties in the Balkans are engaged mainly in their own consolidation and in strengthening their ties with the masses. The class trade union movement is gathering its forces so as to be able to appear again as the mass organization of the proletariat against the offensive launched by capital.

The retreat of the Balkan proletariat and peasantry which began in 1923 has already been stopped. The Balkan proletariat is forging its alliance with the peasantry, leading an active defensive fight and is approaching again the moment when it will take the offensive against bourgeois-fascist reaction in the Balkans.

A relative and temporary stabilization of capitalism has set in in the Balkans. This stabilization is, however, considerably more relative and more unstable here than elsewhere in Europe. It relies more on foreign imperialism and international reaction than on the proper inner forces of Balkan capitalism. The old contradictions in the Balkans have not been overcome. What is more, new ones have appeared.

At the same time, *the class contradictions* are being intensified, the peasant masses are turning to the left, the alliance between workers and peasants is growing steadily stronger, the national revolutionary movement is constantly gaining ground, and the entire revolutionary front of workers, peasants and oppressed nations in the Balkans is developing ever more ready for resistance.

Whilst the bourgeoisie in the Balkan countries, under

the guidance of the imperialist powers (Great Britain in the first place), is attempting to overcome its old and new contradictions and to create a counter-revolutionary Balkan bloc against the Soviet Union, the working class and peasant masses, under the leadership of the Communist Parties and the Balkan Communist Federation, are standing unreservedly on the side of the Soviet Union and consider the first workers' state as their real motherland. The ruling classes in the Balkans are subordinated to the imperialist League of Nations but the Balkan peoples declare themselves in favour of Soviet Russia, the centre of world liberation and the deadly enemy of imperialism. It can be safely said that a war against Soviet Russia would in the Balkans inevitably turn into a civil war, that a revolution would break out against the bourgeoisie and the monarchies, that soldiers' masses (mobilized workers and peasants) would desert to the Red Army, aiming their guns at the Balkan bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The Soviet Union, as a federation which embraces all nations included in former tsarist Russia, has become a *bright example* for the Balkan peoples. In the Balkans, as in Russia, only the setting up of a *federation of the Balkan peoples liberated* from capitalism can solve the highly entangled national question, iron out territorial disputes, overcome imperialist pressure and ensure real peace among the Balkan peoples. That is why the Balkan proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry and together with the oppressed nationalities, is fighting for the creation of a Balkan federation, for a union of the Balkan workers' and peasants' republics. In as much as the realization of such a Balkan federation is possible only by way of overthrowing the bourgeois-monarchist fascist regime in the Balkans, and through a resolute fight against imperialism, the only correct road to follow is the road of Bolshevism, the road of the October Revolution, the road of a worker-peasant revolution under the leadership of the proletariat.

International Press Correspondence No. 114

November 18, 1927

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 287-295

Published by the BCP, 1953

DIMITER BLAGOEV

Blagoev, Dimiter (1855–1924), founder and leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Born in Macedonia in the period of the revolutionary awakening of the Bulgarian people, Blagoev was imbued from his earliest years with a revolutionary spirit, which he preserved to the end of his life. Filled with a thirst for knowledge, Blagoev ran away from the shoemaker's shop in Constantinople and enrolled as a pupil of the well-known Bulgarian writer and teacher Slaveikov. But as he had no means of existence, Blagoev was forced to leave his teacher and to wander through various towns, until at last in 1878 he found himself in Odessa, where he succeeded in graduating from high school. In the autumn of 1880 Blagoev was a student at the University of Petersburg, and there he immediately joined the revolutionary movement. He set about studying the first volume of *Das Kapital*, the works of Lasalle, and later Plekhanov's pamphlet *Socialism and the Political Struggle*. By the autumn of 1883 Blagoev was a convinced Marxist and was engaged in active propaganda for the ideas of Marxism. In 1884 he founded the first Social-Democratic group in Russia, known by the name of the Blagoev group, which began to propagate Social-Democratic ideas among students and workers. The programme of the group, despite all its short-comings (elements of Populism and Lasallianism), was the first Social-Democratic programme to spring up on *Russian* soil. In 1885 the group began to publish its own paper, *Rabochii* (The Worker) – the first Russian Social-Democratic newspaper. Blagoev's group got in touch with the Labour Emancipation group and No. 2 of *Rabochii* published articles by G. Plekhanov and P. Axelrod. Blagoev was arrested on March 1, 1885 and, after spending

three months in prison, was expelled from Russia as a foreign subject.

On his return to Bulgaria, Blagoev set about spreading social democratic ideas, as he already had some experience in the field of revolutionary propaganda and organization. Throughout his life Blagoev remained true to the struggle of the enslaved Balkan peoples for freedom and independence, taking a particularly lively interest in the Macedonian question. Blagoev transmitted to the Bulgarian Socialists his hatred of Tsarist autocracy and his deep interest in and devotion to the Russian revolutionary movement. Undertaking the study of the economic life in the Balkans, Blagoev became the first Bulgarian economist. He foretold and proved the inevitable development of capitalism in Bulgaria and the emergence of the proletariat, called upon to realize the ideas of socialism.

In 1891 Blagoev published his first socialist pamphlet, *What Is Socialism and Can It Thrive in Bulgaria?* Its importance to Bulgaria was the same as Plekhanov's *Our Differences* to Russia. The young author found sufficient facts in the daily life of the unenlightened Bulgarian petty bourgeoisie to prove that capitalism was developing in Bulgaria, and that, as a corollary, the workers' movement would also inevitably come to life. Continuing his experience in Petersburg, Blagoev founded groups and study circles (of schoolboys and students at first) to study and propagate the socialist ideas. The most important of these groups, the one in Turnovo, headed by Blagoev, which had its own printing shop and published the newspaper *Rabotnik* (The Worker), became the centre of the Social-Democratic Party. From the very beginning of his work in Bulgaria, Blagoev successfully waged a merciless struggle against opportunist and petty bourgeois trends within the Party. He militated for the creation of a class-conscious Social-Democratic Party, for the independent political struggle of the Bulgarian proletariat. After the Social-Democratic Party split into 'broad' (Right-Wing) and 'narrow' (Left-Wing) Socialists, Blagoev assumed the leadership of the revolutionary Left Wing, which later became the Bulgarian Communist Party, and did much to consolidate this wing organizationally and ideologically.

During the imperialist war Blagoev was one of the few leaders who adopted a firm anti-war stand: he led his Party against Bulgarian imperialism and social appeasement. Blagoev attentively followed the international labour movement.

He was delighted to learn about the calling of the Zimmerwald Conference, correctly perceiving in it the possibility of re-establishing the war-disrupted international relations between the Socialist Parties and took an active part (at the head of the Left Wing) in the work of this conference. But when, after the February revolution, the failure of the Zimmerwald Conference became apparent at the Stockholm Conference (known as the Third Zimmerwald Conference), and when the possibility of creating a new revolutionary International appeared after the October Revolution, Blagoev greeted this initiative with youthful enthusiasm and became one of the founders of the Communist International.

Blagoev left a big literary heritage. On his return from Russia as early as 1885, together with Vela Zhivkova (his future companion in life), he founded the journal *Suvremenen Pokazatel* (Contemporary Indicator), only a few numbers of which appeared. Blagoev later took part in editing the magazines *Den* (Day) and *Delo* (Cause) and the newspapers *Rabotnik* (The Worker), *Socialist* and *Rabotnicheski Vestnik* (The Workers' Gazette); in the course of 22 years Blagoev edited *Novo Vremé* (New Times), the theoretical organ of the Party, which only ceased appearing after the suppression of the Party on September 12, 1923. Blagoev also wrote many books and pamphlets: *What Is Socialism and Can It Thrive in Bulgaria?*; *Socialism and the Tasks of the Workers' Party in Bulgaria*; *Bulgaria's Economic Development*; *Social and Literary Problems*; *Contribution to the History of Socialism in Bulgaria*; *From the History of the Russian Revolution*, and so on. Furthermore, he translated into Bulgarian the first volume of Marx's *Das Kapital*.

The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia

Vol. 6, 1927

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 336-339

Published by the BCP, 1953

MEASURES FOR COMBATING FASCISM AND THE YELLOW TRADE UNIONS

*Statement made at the Fourth Congress of the Trade Union
International*

It should be quite clear to us that fascism is not a *local*, a *temporary*, or a *transitory* phenomenon. It is a *system* of class rule of the capitalist bourgeoisie and its dictatorship in the period of imperialism and social revolution. After the imperialist war, after the victorious October Revolution, after the ten-year existence of the Soviet Union, and in the presence of the enormous revolutionizing impact of these factors upon the proletariat, peasantry, oppressed nationalities and colonial peoples, the bourgeoisie is no longer able to hold under its class hegemony the popular masses and to cope with the tasks of capitalist stabilization and rationalization by means of the old forms and methods of parliamentary democracy. A way out for the bourgeoisie in this respect is the *subjugation* of the masses through fascism. *Fascism is the final stage of the class rule of the bourgeoisie.* Sooner or later, all bourgeois states consecutively pass over to fascism, either by means of a *coup d'état* or in a 'peaceful' way, in a more brutal or a 'softer' form; the methods of transition are not essential and depend on the particular setup, on the social structure and on the balance of class and political forces in a given country.

Fascism is a *constant and growing menace* for the proletariat and the class trade union movement. The final elimination of this menace is possible only by overthrowing the very rule of the bourgeoisie, by replacing the bourgeois dictatorship by the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the working peasants. To regard fascism as a temporary and transitory phenomenon which, within the framework of capitalism, could be replaced by restoring the old bourgeois-democratic regime, and to deny the danger of the establishment of fascism in

the main capitalist countries, are vain illusions liable to weaken the proletariat's vigilance and resistance, to serve fascism and to help consolidate temporarily the fascist dictatorship. *These illusions should be most resolutely rejected, the adherents of the Trade Union International should fight against them by all means.*

All this applies even more to South-East Europe (the Balkan countries and Hungary), where a number of peculiar historical economic and political reasons inevitably push the bourgeoisie onto the road of fascism. The main reasons are:

The bourgeois-democratic revolution has not yet been completed in the Balkans and in Hungary. The bourgeoisie has not fulfilled any revolutionary task, which would have given it the leadership of the people against feudalism and absolutism in the past, linking it ideologically and politically with the masses. The peasants did not get land through a democratic revolution of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they were only an object of most ruthless exploitation and plunder for the primary accumulation of capital. Feudalism has not been abolished completely. The national question has not yet been solved. In most of these countries the proletariat is of direct peasant origin, is linked with the peasants and from its very birth has been imbued with their oppositional, anti-capitalist sentiments.

The Balkan countries and Hungary have the status of semi-colonies of imperialism. They are primarily agricultural countries with a relatively weak industry which is up against the strong competition of highly developed capitalism in the imperialist states. They are engaged in a latent internecine economic war, in constant national and territorial conflicts fanned and exploited by the imperialist powers. Their home market is quite limited, owing to the ridiculously low purchasing power of the broad masses, whilst the foreign markets are mostly closed to them. Their own possibilities to stabilize capitalism and rationalize production are quite limited. The havoc wrought by the imperialist war, the reparations with which some of them are saddled, and the heavy burden of war debts weighing upon all of them, aggravate still more

their economic situation and intensify their economic crisis.

The imperialist war and its consequences have greatly discredited the bourgeoisie in the eyes of the masses. The gap between the ruling bourgeoisie and the oppressed and exploited masses has grown wider. Defending itself against foreign competition, the bourgeoisie in these countries has always ruthlessly exploited the proletariat and despoiled the peasant masses. After the imperialist war all this is being practised on a vaster scale. The workers have to put up a hard and long fight to make even the slightest gains. Hence the intransigent attitude of the proletariat towards the bourgeoisie and the relatively high revolutionary spirit of the masses. Hence also the weakness of the labour aristocracy and reformism in contrast to the imperialist countries, where the bourgeoisie, utilizing its superprofits extracted from the colonies, succeeded in creating privileged strata of the proletariat, in corrupting them by giving them some alms, and in turning them into its direct or indirect servants. The bourgeoisie in South-East Europe, especially today, is not in a position to make any serious economic concession to the workers and the working people in order to bridge the gap between them.

Owing to the strong similarity between the social structure of old Russia and that of South-East Europe, the impact of the October Revolution has been and is strongest precisely here and the devotion of the masses to the Soviet Union is immense.

In such a situation it is quite clear that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie could not be maintained by methods of parliamentary democracy, all the more so now, when it becomes inevitable and *indispensable* for the bourgeoisie to take *exceptional measures* for the stabilization of capitalism at the expense of the working class and the peasant masses.

It is only by means of a fascist dictatorship that the bourgeoisie can hope to preserve its rule, to crush the opposition of the masses and to achieve the utmost capitalist stabilization and rationalization to their detriment.

The Balkan bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie throughout South-East Europe will inevitably follow this road also

because of the pressure of imperialism, particularly in connexion with the participation of the Balkans and the other South-Eastern countries in the preparation of an imperialist anti-Soviet war, the decisive condition for which is to suppress, disorganize and weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, peasantry and oppressed nationalities.

The particular conditions prevailing in the countries of South-East Europe lend fascism, however, a *peculiar* character. This peculiarity consists primarily of the fact that, in contrast say to Italy, fascism in these countries comes to power as a *state form of government not from below* through a mass movement, but on the contrary — *from above*. Relying on the control of state power, on the military forces of the bourgeoisie and the financial power of banking capital, fascism attempts to penetrate the masses and create there an ideological, political and organizational basis.

That happened in Bulgaria after the military-fascist *coup* of June 9, 1923. In Yugoslavia the inspirer and organizer of fascism was the *bloc* of monarchy, militarism and banking capital. In Romania and Greece, with minor deviations, the situation is much the same. Hungary under Horthy and Bethlen is no exception to this rule. In Austria, and more covertly in Czechoslovakia, fascism is organizing, arming and preparing for a decisive offensive under the protection and with the maximum support of the 'republican' governments themselves.

In this development from above (by means of the state apparatus) to below, to the masses, fascism finds particularly precious supporters in the face of the reformists who, by destroying all vestiges of the class struggle, by proclaiming and carrying out a policy of 'industrial peace' and compulsory arbitration, by fighting ruthlessly against the revolutionary workers' movement, openly adopt a *fascist stand*.

To get *control of the trade unions*, to destroy the class trade union movement is a *vital necessity* for advancing fascism. Just as the dictatorship of the proletariat is inconceivable without class trade unions, so is a lasting

fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie impossible without *subjugating* the proletariat and peasantry (in one form or another) and, above all, without crushing the *class trade union movement*.

Without desisting in the least from raising demagogic slogans and from using methods of demagoguery and corruption, the Balkan South-Eastern brand of fascism is compelled to resort mainly to violence and to the most ruthless terror against the class-conscious proletariat, engaging in the mass murder of hundreds and thousands of revolutionary workers, as is the case in Bulgaria and Hungary.

Fascism's main efforts are directed at *gaining control* of the movement of *transport workers, miners* and workers in other *key branches of industry*, as well as of the movement of civil servants. Raising various obstacles to the existence and consolidation of the class organizations of railwaymen, P.T.T. and state employees, miners, etc., fascism lays hands on the reformist and yellow organizations in these fields with the direct aid of their leaders. In all the Balkan countries fascism has already obtained a decisive influence inside the leadership of the present organizations of railwaymen, P.T.T. and state employees, whilst it paralyzes any attempt by the miners to form their legal organizations. Fascism is making big efforts to increase its influence among the farm labourers, taking advantage of their great cultural backwardness, as well as among the hungry masses of unemployed. Fascism plays no less attention to the peasant youth which it seeks to entangle in its nets through various sports and other 'cultural' organizations, counting on the susceptibility of a section of that youth which did not experience *directly* the horrors of the imperialist war.

In an ideological respect fascism uses mainly the ideas of *nationalism* and *chauvinism*, trying to oppose the local workers to those who have come from other countries, to deceive especially the unemployed and to divert the attention of the masses *from home problems to foreign problems*, inciting the masses against other nations, fanning national-chauvinist passions and painting rosy pictures about the

improvement of the condition of the working class through the conquest of neighbouring lands and territories.

Fascism puts forward the theory of collaboration between capitalists and workers in the field of the stabilization of capitalism and rationalization of production; the theory of harmony among classes, of the community of their interests, of the abolition of all class struggle and the replacement of strikes by compulsory arbitration, of the transformation of trade unions into organs of bourgeois state power.

Here again the reformist trade union leadership finds itself in full ideological and political agreement with fascism. In their press these leaders advocate the same ideas, the same policy. The reformist leaders of the railwaymen and P.T.T. workers in Bulgaria, for instance, are even direct members of *Koubrat*, a fascist organization, and write in *Zveno*, a fascist review, the task of which is to exert ideological influence upon the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie, more particularly upon the trade union movement. They are also in a united front with fascism in the persecution of class trade unions; their adherents in offices and enterprises are informers against the revolutionary-minded elements, etc. That is the case in all Balkan countries and Hungary.

At the same time, relying on the upper crust of certain professions, the fascists make extraordinary efforts to form *their own* trade union groups which, in case of a forcible crushing of the class trade unions, would serve them as an *organizational nucleus* in getting control of the entire trade union movement.

In every bigger enterprise retired fascist officers and various vagabond elements are appointed as supervisors, guards, etc., constituting armed groups which terrorize the workers and employees and seek to disorganize and demoralize them, while purging the enterprises of the best revolutionary proletarian elements and trying in this way to deprive the masses of their leaders.

Without allowing in general any legal class trade union organization of miners, railwaymen, dock workers and

workers from other key branches of industry, as well as civil servants, fascism seeks to limit the scope and organizational basis of the class trade union movement within *the small artisan's trade and other branches of industry which are of no decisive significance for the class struggle.*

At the same time, fascism strives to obstruct in every way the *centralization* of the class trade unions into *national unions*, trying to break them up into local trade unions so as to render them incapable of successful struggle.

The vocational schools are used by fascism for the training of *new technically skilled cadres under fascist influence*, capable of replacing the revolutionary skilled proletarian cadres in transport and other key branches of industry.

The policy of fascism towards the trade union movement can be expressed by the slogan 'Divide and rule'. Fascism seeks to divide and oppose to one another different categories of the proletariat, the unemployed to the employed, the local to the foreign workers; to split trade unions in order to set up fascist organizations upon the organizational remnants of the class trade union movement. Fascism is a firm opponent of the re-establishment of unity within the trade union movement, and in those countries where the trade unions, as in Greece and Hungary for instance, have not yet been split, fascism tries to do so, together with the reformists. *The domination of fascism in the trade union movement means the split of the trade union movement, the suppression of class trade unions, an end to the independent trade union movement of the proletariat.*

Fascism is a sworn enemy of the proletariat and the class trade unions. An uncompromising and relentless struggle to the end should be waged against fascism. There can be no appeasement between the class trade union movement and fascism. Never and nowhere should the members of the Trade Union International go into *joint or parallel* action with fascism. And where fascists have not yet reached final agreement and mutual understanding with the reformist leadership of trade unions (the Teachers' Union in Bulgaria, for example) and still compete with one another, the members of the Trade Union International should have nothing to do with fascists in the fight against

the reformists. Mistakes committed in this respect by the members of the Trade Union International in Bulgaria in the railwaymen's and teachers' organizations should in future be carefully avoided. *The fight against reformism should always mean fight against fascism and vice versa.*

A systematic, persistent and relentless fight should be waged continuously *on all fronts and everywhere* against fascism in the trade union movement and particularly against fascist trade unions. Fascism should be hit wherever it appears – in factories, offices, organizations, among the jobless, etc., in a concrete and efficient way from the point of view of the emancipatory class struggle of the proletariat and in close connexion with the immediate interests of workers and employees and the special tasks of the trade unions themselves.

The fight against fascism should be waged simultaneously in the ideological, political and organizational fields of the trade union movement in the following direction:

1. To oppose resolutely the class revolutionary ideology of the proletariat to the fascist ideology. To expose and stigmatize nationalism and chauvinism as well as the ideas of 'industrial peace' and 'harmony of classes'; to abolish class collaboration and all kinds of reformism. To unmask fascism as the destroyer and grave-digger of the trade union movement. To expose fascism as the ideology of banking capital and imperialism. To denounce fascism as the cause of the war danger, especially of war against the great Union of the Soviet Republics. To popularize most widely and tirelessly among the masses the programme and tactics of the Trade Union International – the International of the class trade union movement.

2. To strengthen the organization of the class trade unions and enlist the masses of unorganized workers in their ranks. Where the existence of legal class trade unions (miners and other workers) has become impossible, it is necessary to form *illegal* trade union groups which are to maintain relations with the broad masses and head their struggle. To strengthen the class-conscious elements within the reformist, nationalist, autonomous and other trade un-

ions and their ties with the class trade unions in view of joint action and struggle. To extend and strengthen the network of workers' committees in enterprises and offices as on-the-spot organs of the masses and to link their work with the class trade union movement. To organize the movement of the unemployed and coordinate it with the campaigns conducted by the class trade unions. To embrace the masses of working youth and working women in the ranks of the class trade unions. To organize and protect the foreign workers in every possible way.

3. Of special significance are mass campaigns and strikes for higher pay, for shorter working hours, for labour protection and for the freedom to organize and go on strike. To oppose in this way (in the process of the fight for the workers' immediate interests and demands) the *masses* to fascism (and its auxiliary – reformism) and to bare their treacherous bourgeois nature. To isolate in this way fascism and fascist trade unions from the proletarian masses.

4. To secure the *active* moral and material support of other urban and rural working people in the workers' struggles (strikes, etc.): to form a united front of workers and working peasants, to ensure close collaboration between the workers in industrial enterprises (tobacco, sugar industry, etc.) and the small producers of raw materials (tobacco growers, beetroot producers, etc.) in their common struggle against the respective industrial capital in order to isolate in this way fascism from the working masses in the process of the struggle.

5. To organize self-defence against the fascist oppressors in enterprises (guards of organizations, meetings, strikes, trade union militants, etc.). To conduct a campaign for the expulsion of fascist agents, supervisors, spies, *provocateurs* from enterprises.

6. To intensify the campaign *from below* against the dissident policy of fascism (and reformism) among the masses in the process of the struggle for the *class unity* of the trade union movement, without making any concessions to the Amsterdam International and fascist trade unions, and to wage an uncompromising fight against them.

The fight against fascism in the trade union movement

and against fascist trade unions should be conducted on an *international scale* with the joint efforts of the class-conscious proletariat of all countries. It is particularly necessary to organize international campaigns in defence of the class trade unions in the countries where a fascist dictatorship has already been established (Italy, Bulgaria, etc.). The weakening of the positions of fascism in the countries where it is in power will undoubtedly facilitate the fight against the fascist offensive in the trade union movement of those countries where a fascist dictatorship has not yet been established.

It is not necessary to emphasize that the success of the entire fight against fascism within the trade union movement will depend, first of all, on the activity displayed by the members of the Trade Union International, on the correctness of their policy, on their winning the confidence of the masses and on their actual leadership of the fight waged by the masses against the offensive by capital and against the danger of war.

Otherwise it is impossible to preserve the class trade union movement.

*Fourth Congress of the Trade Union International
Moscow, 1928*

*G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 340-352
Published by the BCP, 1953*

THE MAIN TASKS OF THE BALKAN COMMUNIST PARTIES

*Eighth Session of the Sixth World Congress
of the Communist International. Continuation of debates
on the report of its Executive Committee*

Owing to their geographic position, the Balkans are an extremely important strategic base for the military attack against the Soviet Union which is now being feverishly prepared. The Balkans are also one of the foremost raw material sources for the big industrial countries and a market for the sale of their industrial products.

It is quite understandable then that the struggle of the imperialist powers for control over the Balkans is at present in full swing. Together with the competing Great Britain, France and Italy, rising German imperialism is again rearing its head in the Balkans today. The powerful United States too begins to intervene ever more actively in Balkan affairs and Balkan politics. This constant interference on the part of the imperialist powers in the Balkans and their rivalry, which naturally does not prevent them in the least from following a common counter-revolutionary policy towards the Soviet Union and the revolutionary movement in the Balkan states, deepens and intensifies ever more the old and new contradictions and conflicts between the Balkan states, which at any moment threaten to produce military complications and international consequences.

The Balkan states do not pursue an independent national policy. With the help of their bourgeois classes and dynasties, which in their fight against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, peasantry and oppressed nationalities, seek support from imperialism, the Balkan states have been turned into semi-colonies of the imperialist powers. The deep internal economic and political crisis is being ever more aggravated, extended and sharpened through imperialist pressure, imperialist intrigues and the entire policy of the imperialist powers,

which maintain chaos and try to hinder the development of the productive forces in the Balkans. The formation of the Venizelos Government in Greece and the signs of new internal military conflicts which accompany it, the assassinations in the Yugoslav National Assembly, the stepping up of the national struggle in Yugoslavia and the extreme aggravation of the Serbo-Croatian contradictions, the powerful peasant movement against the regime of B. Titianu in Romania, now only temporarily at a lull, the process of disintegration within the so-called Democratic Union, the assassination of General Protogerov, the new bloody internecine struggle of the nationalist Macedonian organization (IMRO) and the obvious chances of new military coup d'état in Bulgaria, the planned proclamation of Ahmed Zogu as king of Albania and the new deterioration of relations with Yugoslavia, the growing white terror and fascist offensive in the Balkans – all these important recent developments and events are symptoms of a profound and intensifying crisis in the Balkans, which the bourgeoisie can neither check for long, nor resolve definitely. On the other hand, the terrible ruin and tremendous sufferings of the toiling masses, the unscrupulous exploitation of the workers, the feudal conditions prevailing in agriculture and the plundering of the peasants, the national oppression and the forcible policy of denationalization and colonization are leading to a new upsurge of the workers', peasant and national revolutionary movements in the Balkans.

At the same time, the prospects for the advancing peasant and national revolutions in the Balkans – in Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania and Greece, are becoming ever more clearly defined. But under the existing conditions in the Balkans, and in the present international situation, a peasant as well as a national revolution can succeed only if linked with the proletarian revolution, through the revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, poor peasants and the oppressed Balkan nationalities under the leadership of the proletariat and its Communist vanguard.

It can safely be said that the stabilization of capitalism is nowhere so shaky, and that the contradictions arising

from the stabilization are nowhere so considerable and sharp as in the Balkans. The Balkans are a constant powder keg. They are undoubtedly one of the weakest and most vulnerable spots of the world rule of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Just now, when imperialism is making great efforts to strengthen that sector of its front, when it is trying to turn the Balkans into a safe base of international counter-revolution, to set up an anti-Soviet bloc of the Balkan states, it is our supreme task to build here strong positions of the international proletarian revolution. To this end, the Communist International must pay particular attention to the situation and struggle in the Balkans, redoubling its efforts to build up Bolshevik mass parties there.

Comrades, as a result of the blows of fascism and the white terror, and in consequence of certain major errors committed by its leadership, the Communist movement in the Balkans has suffered a number of severe reverses and internal crises in the past few years. But thanks to the aid of the Communist International, the Balkan Communist Parties, profiting from the rich experience of their errors and setbacks, are now emerging from the internal crisis, rectifying their political and theoretic line, recovering from the defeats they suffered and with greater boldness are embarking systematically on the road of their bolshevization and transformation into real mass parties of the revolutionary proletariat, in spite of the enormous difficulties existing in this respect. Characteristic of this process of development and transformation of the former revolutionary Socialist parties in the Balkans into true Bolshevik parties are the following three moments:

1. The Communist Parties have finally got rid of the Social-Democratic and semi-Social-Democratic elements alien to them, such as the Zhivot-Miloikovic group and others in Yugoslavia, Kodatos-Dimitraros and Maximos-Pouliopolous in Greece, Cristescu and others in Romania, Sakarov-Manov and Loukanov-Popov in Bulgaria. The small groups and individual dissidents alien to the Communist movement were unable to drag along any

proletarian elements. The revolutionary proletariat has succeeded in completely isolating repelling them.

2. A considerable number of the former Communist leaders has proved unfit to lead the Communist Party in the new conditions, so that it has become necessary to replace them by new party functionaries from among the proletariat, imbued with a Bolshevik spirit and endowed with Bolshevik qualities. In the Yugoslav Party this inevitable change was considerably hampered and rendered more difficult by a factional-struggle, encouraged and egged on by the former leaders; it was, however, liquidated owing to the active intervention of the Party masses, and thanks to the energetic support of the Communist International. The problem of elevating and educating energetic Bolshevik leaders and party cadres in the Balkan Communist Parties remains one of the foremost problems of the Communist movement in the Balkans.

3. The further bolshevization of the Balkan Communist Parties is proceeding through a resolute and persistent struggle against the right-wing and defeatist trends which, amid the white terror, rely on the privileged strata of the proletariat. These trends constitute at present the main danger for the Balkan Communist movement. On the other hand, bolshevization is achieved also by combating the extreme leftist and sectarian trends which exist here and there.

Comrades, the Balkan Communist Parties have a strong influence on the proletariat which organizationally, however, has not as yet been properly taken advantage of.

Social-Democracy has no influence upon the masses of the Balkan proletariat, as it has in the big capitalist countries, and is in constant decline. This is due mainly to the fact that the privileged strata of the proletariat, on which Social-Democracy usually relies, are insignificant in the Balkans, owing to the particular historic, economic, social and political conditions. On the other hand, this can also be explained by the constant sharp class struggle in the Balkan countries as a result of the above-mentioned reasons.

But the fact that Social-Democracy has no influence on

the masses in the Balkans does not mean at all that it is not dangerous for the revolutionary movement. On the contrary, as an agent of the bourgeoisie and purveyor of social-fascism among the civil servants and petty bourgeoisie, it does considerable harm and should be fought relentlessly.

Trotskyism has not found followers in the Balkan Communist Parties and among the proletariat. Its supporters were the social-fascists and the most unscrupulous renegades of the Communist movement.

Comrades, in the opinion of the Bulgarian delegation, the following are the main tasks of the Communist parties in the Balkan states:

The organizational strengthening of the proletariat and an internal Bolshevik consolidation.

The establishment and broadening of contacts with the masses as their real vanguard and leader.

The education of adequate Bolshevik cadres.

The establishment of an alliance between the proletariat and poor peasantry, as well as a revolutionary bloc of the proletariat, peasantry and the oppressed nationalities for fighting against the offensive of capital and fascism, against the exceptional regime of white terror, against national oppression and feudalist survivals, against imperialist pressure, against the danger of a new imperialist war and the danger of a military attack against the Soviet Union. This fight should be linked with the immediate interests of the workers' and peasant masses and conducted under the slogans: 'For a Worker-Peasant Government!' and 'For a Balkan Federation of Workers' and Peasant Republics!'

A considerable part of the tasks facing the Balkan Communist Parties concern all the Balkan states and can be fulfilled only through constant collaboration and joint efforts of all the Balkan Parties. The fight against the danger of an imperialist war and in defence of the Soviet Union, against fascism in the Balkans, and against imperialism, for a Balkan federation of workers' and peasant republics should be organized and conducted both on a national and Balkan scale. The fight against national oppression and for the national liberation of the oppressed Balkan peoples is

also a task concerning all the Balkan states. The creation of a revolutionary Balkan bloc of the proletariat, peasantry and oppressed nationalities, the establishment of contact between the peasant and national revolution and the proletarian revolution under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat is a task concerning all the revolutionary parties in the Balkans. The fight against the offensive in the Balkans can be conducted successfully only in close union with the proletariat and its trade union organizations in all the Balkan countries. Finally, to develop a campaign abroad against the white terror and fascism is a common task of all the Communist Parties in the Balkans.

The Balkan states are so closely interrelated that the success of the proletarian revolution in any one of them directly depends on the situation in the neighbouring countries and on the situation and strength of their revolutionary movement.

Bearing in mind all these reasons and in view of the aggravating Balkan crisis and the approaching danger of war, it is necessary more than ever to strengthen and develop the Balkan Communist Federation (the former Balkan Socialist Federation) founded as early as 1910.

The Balkan Communist Federation, which is not an intermediate organ between the Communist International and the individual Communist Parties in the Balkans maintaining direct contact with the Executive Committee of the Communist International, has as its task only to help them fulfil jointly and successfully their revolutionary tasks affecting the Balkans as a whole. It is a vitally important political necessity for the Communist movement in the Balkans, and the Balkan Communist Parties should do their best to strengthen it and intensify its activity; they should also request the Communist International to give all-round support to the Federation. Any hesitation in this matter, any delay may cause great harm.

The only Balkan state without a Communist Party is little Albania. But the elements indispensable for the creation of an Albanian Communist Party are already ripening.

The Bulgarian delegation is firmly convinced that the

proletariat in the Balkans and its vanguard, under the leadership of the Communist International and with its constant aid, marching steadfastly on the road of bolshevization, will be able to accomplish its task in the face of the forthcoming events and severe struggle in the Balkans against imperialism, for the Soviet Union and for the cause of the proletarian revolution and Communism.

International Press Correspondence

No. 79, August 4, 1928

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 362-369

Published by the BCP, 1953

A BASE LIE ABOUT THE ROMANIAN COMMUNISTS IN THE VIENNA ARBEITER ZEITUNG

The Militant Programme of the Romanian Worker-Peasant Bloc

Under the sensational heading 'Communists, Vote for the Bourgeoisie! A Moscow Order by Radio to the Romanian Communists,' the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* of December 2, 1928, published a 'telegram from Bucharest', according to which the Romanian Social-Democratic newspapers wrote that

'about midnight it was possible in Romania to tune in to a Moscow broadcast, addressed to the press, in which the Romanian Communists were urged to vote for the Liberals in the approaching elections, wherever they had no list of their own, but in no case were they to vote for the joint ticket of the National Peasant Party and the Social Democrats.'

The secretariat of the Balkan Communist Federation is able categorically to declare that this sensational announcement is a base Social-Democratic concoction. As everyone knows, the Communist Party in Romania as the leader of the Romanian proletariat, has always waged a steadfast and consistent class struggle against the Romanian bourgeoisie and the Liberal government, and has made countless sacrifices in this struggle, while the Romanian Social-Democrats have played the part of the most pitiable servants of the bourgeoisie against the Communist movement.

In the present electoral fight, in full agreement with the Communist International, the Romanian Communist Party is marching independently at the head of the Romanian proletariat and is pursuing a completely independent proletarian line, the line of mobilizing the toiling masses of town and country around the worker-peasant bloc, against the financial and wealthy bourgeoisie (the Liberal Party)

and against the National-Tsaranist Government, which is a bourgeois-koulak government and a tool in the hands of the imperialists for the preparation of a war against the Soviet Union.

Actually, the Romanian proletariat and poor peasantry are uniting under the banner of the worker-peasant bloc which at a recent conference adopted a programme of action with the following chief slogans:

Annulment of the Liberal legislation, as well as of all laws hostile to the workers, the peasants and the minorities.

Restoration, guarantee and extension of the rights and liberties of the toiling masses and the minorities.

Abolition of martial law and censorship throughout Romania.

A general political, military and agrarian amnesty.

Expropriation of all the land, without compensation, as well as of all the machinery, agricultural implements and draught cattle, and their distribution to the poor peasantry free of charge.

An eight-hour working day and extensive social legislation in the interests and under the control of the workers.

Abolition of all taxes which weigh upon the working class, the poor and middling peasantry and the tradesmen.

Right to national self-determination up to secession.

Annulment of all obligations assumed during the war and for the war.

A policy of peace with all neighbouring states.

Cessation of expenditure on armaments and closure of all factories producing war materials.

Replacement of the permanent bourgeois army by a militia of the working people.

Recognition of the Soviet Union, resumption of diplomatic and economic relations with it.

For a worker-peasant government.

For a Balkan Federation of worker-peasant republics.

In the struggle for this class programme, under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Romanian proletariat quite naturally has the entire bourgeoisie, the big landowners and koulaks against it, together with their

servants, the Social-Democrats. Any direct or indirect support of the Liberals on the part of the proletariat and their vanguard, the Communist Party, is completely excluded.

The Communist International and the Romanian Communist Party, which are resolutely in favour of completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Romania and of its further development up to the triumph of the proletarian revolution are, at the same time, the staunchest opponents of the Liberals of the Romanian big financiers and bourgeoisie, as well as of the pseudo-progressive bourgeoisie, now represented by the National-Tsaranist Government. They are also fighting against Social-Democracy as a prop of the bourgeois dictatorship, and because it is clearing the way for fascism. Finally, they are relentlessly combating all right deviations within the workers' movement and within the communist ranks, deviations which hamper and weaken the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and their allies, the poor peasants.

The Social-Democratic lie of the Romanian Social-Democratic press, which was taken up with such glee and commented on so basely by the *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Vienna, can only have a charlatan's manoeuvre in view, to cover up the treacherous role of the Romanian Social-Democrats. The silly legend of 'the radio order of the Russian press broadcast' is one more proof that the Social-Democrats are blind and zealous agents of the imperialists and their war-loving and provocational policy towards the Soviet Union, the only state of the workers and peasants.

International Press Correspondence

No. 137, December 7, 1928

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 393-396

Published by the BCP, 1953

FASCISM IN THE BALKANS

The Balkan states are falling under the fascist dictatorship one after the other. Besides Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania, where this dictatorship has already been established in different forms, Greece and Romania are also gradually passing over to fascist dictatorship.

Besides the general reasons, which prompt the ruling classes in all these countries increasingly to abandon the soil of bourgeois democracy and to begin applying the methods and system of fascism, there are particular historical, political and economic reasons in the Balkans which impel these countries in that direction.

As is known, it proved impossible to implement the bourgeois democratic revolution in the Balkans which might have politically and ideologically rallied the broad masses to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie of these countries allied itself closely with international capital from the very beginning of its rule, becoming its agent and thereby a counter-revolutionary class. The peasants, who form the vast majority of the population in the Balkans did not obtain land as a result of a democratic revolution headed by the bourgeoisie against the feudal landowners, as this occurred in France and in the other Western countries. On the contrary, the bourgeoisie saw in the peasants merely an object of ruthless exploitation, of unrestrained greed to accumulate capital in the Balkan states. Feudalism has not yet entirely disappeared; even today the vast majority of the toiling masses endures its domination. This creates a deep abyss between the ruling classes and the peasant masses.

Nor has national question found a final solution in the Balkans. Many millions groan under national oppression.

The bourgeoisie is trying to overcome the great difficulties which have arisen chiefly owing to the system of colonization imposed in the conquered regions and the denationalization of the population, which has been carried out to the extreme, and these are unsolved problems. This system renders the national question more acute. Owing to this, the oppressed nations are impelled towards an irreconcilable struggle against bourgeois rule.

The Balkan states, which are primarily agricultural and industrially weak, actually represent semi-colonies of international capital. Their dependence on the latter is growing from day to day. These countries are engaged in endless internecine economic struggles and, thanks to the great imperialist powers which pursue their own interest in laying hold on the Balkans, are continuously faced with insoluble conflicts. Because of the growing poverty among the masses, the home markets are in a very poor condition, and in most cases the foreign markets are inaccessible to them. Moreover, the possibilities of stabilization and capitalist rationalization are very limited. The ravages caused by the imperialistic world war, the war debts and reparations which they have to pay, render the economic and financial crisis in these countries still more acute. Foreign loans, to which the bourgeoisie resorts and which it considers the most important way out of this situation, burden the masses with still heavier taxes and increase their dissatisfaction with the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie in the Balkan states is up against the competition of the highly industrialized Western countries. It is therefore obliged to seek an issue in the over-exploitation of the worker and peasant masses. It cannot afford to make minor concessions, as does the bourgeoisie in the big imperialist countries, so as to enlist part of the toiling strata on its side. The most insignificant economic gain of the masses is won at the cost of a long and persistent struggle against the bourgeoisie. This still further deepens the abyss which exists between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This partly explains the revolutionary spirit of the toiling masses and their resolute will to struggle against the bourgeoisie. This also explains the

weakness of the labour aristocracy and of Social-Democracy in the Balkan states, in contrast to the big imperialist powers. The victorious October Revolution, which liberated the exploited proletariat, the peasants and the oppressed peoples in the great Russian Empire, made a deep impression on the toiling masses in the Balkans, as the Balkan states have many features in common with tsarist Russia in their economic structure. This development has been steadily intensified and extended during the USSR's 11 years of existence, because of its revolutionary policy and socialist construction, and because of its resolute struggle against imperialism and for international peace.

That is why the bourgeoisie in the Balkans is in no position to maintain its rule by the methods of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism. Western imperialism is also unable to lay hands on the Balkans by means of these methods. These methods have an all the more hampering effect, as it is now a case of involving the Balkans and the Balkan peoples in the war now in preparation against the Soviet Union, but the masses are resolutely against this. Therefore the Balkan bourgeoisie and international imperialism have no alternative but to resort to the methods of the fascist dictatorship and to establish the latter.

The above-mentioned historical, economic and political features of the Balkan states lend fascism a very particular character. This particularity of Balkan fascism consists, first and foremost, in the fact that, in contrast to all that we see in Italy and Poland, it does not spring up from below as a mass movement to seize power, but on the contrary, it comes from above: from the state apparatus, supported by the military power of the bourgeoisie and united under the command of finance capital, as well as by all the counter-revolutionary forces of the bourgeoisie, the big landowners, the wealthy peasants, the top crust of the petty bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, against the proletariat, the worker and peasant masses, and the national minorities, which are fighting for their freedom.

Bourgeois nationalism is undoubtedly a particularly efficacious weapon of Balkan fascism: nationalist and chauvinist passions are fanned by Pan-Bulgarian, Pan-

Serbian (Yugoslavia), and Pan-Hellenic and Pan-Romanian dreams. Banking on this nationalist ideology, fascism in the Balkan states endeavours, although only to minor extent, to form an alliance with the less conscious strata of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and the workers, so as to broaden the social base of its dictatorship and to make its counter-revolutionary bourgeois policy (of colonization and denationalization) more bearable. The revolutionary movement of the Balkan national organizations of Macedonians, inhabitants of the Dobroudja, Albanians and so on is a most serious obstacle for the fascist dictatorship. That is why fascism in the Balkans pursues a policy of unprecedented terror against these organizations as well as against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the peasants. It avails itself on an extremely extensive scale of the services of the fascist national organizations to establish and maintain its dictatorship and to crush the revolutionary forces of the proletariat, the peasantry and national-revolutionary movement. Its efforts in this field with the Macedonian organizations of Alexandrov Protoguerov, and with the fascist Dobroudjan organizations have already become classical. The Yugoslav military-fascist dictatorship is following the same road, using the Serbian colonists and their gangs in Macedonia, and trying to do the same with the Albanian, Montenegrin and other movements, too.

In its very essence fascism is very closely linked with the rule of the capitalist bourgeoisie and international capitalism. It is not a momentary episodic fact. Its final liquidation is possible only by overthrowing the bourgeoisie itself. Hence the struggle against it will be stubborn and revolutionary in character. Not a single group of the bourgeoisie, the big landowners and the affluent peasants has any interest in this struggle against fascism: on the contrary, they all have a direct stake in the further existence of this dictatorship. They need the fascist dictatorship as a bastion against the revolutionary liberation movement of the toiling masses and the oppressed nationalities. This struggle is and can only be the struggle of the working people in town and country, led by the

proletariat, as the best organized class which is schooled in a revolutionary spirit, in alliance with the nationally oppressed masses. Only the revolutionary bloc of the broad masses in the Balkans will be able to fight against fascism and its dictatorship until final victory.

The national-revolutionary organizations in the Balkans, whose mortal enemy fascism is, rightly consider the struggle against fascism and the fascist dictatorship their own struggle, an indivisible component of the great struggle against national oppression and for liberation.

La fédération balkanique
No. 112, March 15, 1929
Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 397-402
Published by the BCP, 1953

IMPERIALISM IN THE BALKANS

Owing to their geographical, military, strategical and economic situation, the Balkans are an extremely important objective for international imperialism. For the imperialist powers and for Great Britain, France and Italy in the first place, the Balkans are a necessary base for the preservation and consolidation of their positions in the Mediterranean basin, and for mastery of the routes which link Europe with Asia, Africa and India through the Balkans and the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, the Balkans – owing to their economic backwardness and population of 42 million – are an important market for selling the industrial products of the highly developed capitalist great powers, and as a primarily agricultural region the Balkan Peninsula is a most valuable source of prime and raw materials for the industry of these powers. And finally, the importance of the Balkans is inherent in their quality of a military-strategic base, and as the suppliers of millions of primitive soldier-masses for imperialist war in the Mediterranean basin and the coastal areas of Asia and Africa, in which war the Balkans themselves would be inevitably drawn, particularly with the present world situation of a threatened war against the great Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in view.

All this fully explains the fact that the entire new political history of the Balkans today, too, as well as the history of inter-Balkan relations in the 19th century, is determined by the advance and penetration of imperialism in the Balkans and its persistent endeavour to place these states in full dependence and to turn them into colonies.

The imperialist war and the Russian October Revolution caused a number of changes in the balance of power in

the Balkans, particularly owing to the fall of the former imperialism of the Russian Tsars and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. However, the dependence of the Balkans on international imperialism is still in existence – what is more, it is increasing. The place of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy has been largely taken by fascist Italy, while the fall of the former Russian imperialism has opened the road to a more active capture of the Balkans by British and French imperialism, which are acting here as an Anglo-French bloc.

It is known that the concrete interests and immediate aims of the imperialist powers in the Balkans do not fully coincide. On the contrary, they contain contradictions and contrasts. Those between France and Italy are particularly strong and serious. This is reflected in the mutual relations among the Balkan states themselves and is expressed in frequent conflicts. On the other hand, this explains the fact that while Yugoslavia has given herself entirely up to the influence of French imperialism, and Albania to that of Italian imperialism, Greece and Romania are swimming in the waters of the Anglo-French imperialist bloc, while Italian imperialism is waging a desperate struggle for Bulgaria, utilizing to this end its relations-created in the past, although that country leans more towards the Anglo-French imperialist bloc. It would, however, be erroneous to overestimate the importance of these 'domestic' contradictions in the imperialist camp, which are still further complicated by their running up against certain special endeavours and plans of American and revived German imperialism. It would be a dangerous mistake if, in view of these factual contradictions, we fail to see and correctly to estimate the *general line* of international imperialism in the Balkans in its entirety as it predominates over the said contradictions. This general line consists of the subjection of the Balkans to the great interests and aims of imperialism, the hampering of their independent economic and political development, the hindrance of the union of the Balkan nations in an economic and political community, the preservation of the semi-colonial or colonial status of the Balkans by means of military and financial control, by

enthraling loans and concessions, and by taking crucial economic and strategic key centres in the Balkans into their hands.

Acting in complete understanding on principle, the imperialist powers maintain the present unnatural and intolerable territorial division of the Balkans. They firmly oppose the national liberation of the oppressed Balkan peoples. They are deadly enemies of the union of the Balkan nations in a Balkan federation, as they are well aware that in the present international and Balkan set-up this federation is possible only as an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-monarchist federation of the masses in the Balkans. Great Britain and France are working for a certain ironing out of the contradictions among the Balkan states, in order to facilitate thereby the creation of an anti-Soviet bloc for the preparation of war against the Soviet Union, however, only as a means of better utilizing the Balkans in this war as a springboard and for their military strength.

That is precisely why international imperialism wholeheartedly supports fascism and the regime of violence in the Balkans, and is an implacable enemy of the general revolutionary movement of the Balkan workers and peasants, as well and more particularly of the national revolutionary liberation movement of the Macedonians, the Croats, the Albanians, the Montenegrins, the Dobroudjans, the Bessarabians, the Thracians and so on. The full subjection of the Balkans to the interests and aims of international imperialism, harnessing the Balkan nations to imperialism's war chariot against the Soviet Union is impossible without the preliminary crushing of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, of the peasants, and the nationally oppressed masses in the Balkans.

However, international imperialism would be unable to achieve its military plans and bandit aims as regards the Balkans and their peoples without the active help of the Balkan bourgeoisie, without so-called Balkan imperialism. The latter is playing the part of a tool of international imperialism. The framework of its independent manifestation

is extremely narrow and is determined solely by the major interests of international imperialism. However, simply to be able to retain the conquered regions (Macedonia, Thrace, the Dobroudja, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Croatia and so on) and to utilize them as colonies, the imperialism of the Romanian, Serbian and Greek big bourgeoisie seeks the support of international imperialism, giving up to it their own countries for exploitation in common and thus opening the road to it for the complete subjection of the Balkans. The Bulgarian bourgeoisie too has its imperialism. However, it cannot be openly manifested owing to the present particularly unfavourable situation in the Balkans, and it is, so to speak, in a latent condition.

For the Balkan peoples the imperialism of the Balkans is a *double bondage* – enslavement by Balkan imperialism and by international imperialism. It is at the same time, economic, social and national bondage. Finally, it implies the growing danger of the Balkan peoples being thrust into a new imperialist war, first of all in the imperialist war now being feverishly prepared against the Soviet Union.

The struggle against their 'own' and international imperialism in the Balkans is a question of life and death for the masses in the Balkans. The active forces of this revolutionary struggle are: a) the proletariat; b) the toiling peasantry; c) the urban petty bourgeoisie (craftsmen, tradesmen and so on) and d) the nationally oppressed masses of people. In this struggle the capitalist bourgeoisie in general stands on the other side of the barricade. Only certain groups of the so-called middle classes of the nationally oppressed people can be drawn into this struggle, while other groups might be neutralized.

The struggle of the proletariat against the campaign of capital and capitalist rationalization, the struggle of the toiling peasantry for land and against being despoiled by banking and usurers' capital, the struggle of the enslaved nationalities against national oppression, against denationalization and colonization, their common struggle against fascism and the danger of imperialistic war – all these struggles are in close organic relation to the struggle against imperialism, to the struggle for social and national

liberation, to the struggle for a Balkan federation of the worker and peasant republics. The endeavours of the proletariat for a proletarian revolution, of the toiling peasants for an agrarian revolution and of the oppressed nationalities (Macedonians, Croatians, Albanians, Montenegrins, Slovenes, Dobroudjans, Bessarabians, Thracians and so on) for a national revolution must be united under a powerful slogan against imperialism, against capitalist exploitation and spoliation, against fascist dictatorship and tyranny and against national enslavement. The struggle against imperialism in the Balkans is inseparably linked with the daily struggle for bread, land and freedom. It must lead to the fall of the domination of imperialism and of the Balkan bourgeoisie, to the downfall of the artificially built walls and frontier stakes between the Balkan peoples, and to their revolutionary union in a Balkan federation.

So that this great historical struggle may end successfully, it is necessary to create a double front of the proletariat, the peasants and the national oppressed masses of people under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, as the most consistent, most purposeful and most stubborn vanguard in the struggle against imperialism.

The International – Anti-imperialist League,⁶⁴ which at this moment is holding its second congress, was created as an organization for the struggle against imperialism chiefly in the big colonies and semi-colonies. With the participation of the national-revolutionary organizations in the Balkans and of the Balkan Communist Federation, at the congress of the Anti-imperialist League, now in session, it includes the Balkans as well – that important objective of international imperialism – and will give a new impetus to the struggle of the Balkan peoples against imperialism, extending the common front from the Balkan Peninsula to China and India, Latin America, Syria, Morocco, Egypt, Afghanistan and Iran in a *world anti-imperialist front*.

La fédération balkanique

No. 120, July 15, 1929

Signed: G. Dimitrov

Georgi Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 8, pp. 408–414

Published by the BCP, 1953

STATEMENT TO THE POLICE INQUIRING
MAGISTRATES⁶⁵

In connexion with my arrest, I have to state the following:

1. I, Georgi Dimitrov, former Bulgarian national representative, former secretary of the General Workers' Trade Union in Bulgaria, and a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party ever since 1910, have been a political emigrant since the month of October 1923, sentenced in Bulgaria by default in connexion with the events of June – September, 1923. Persecuted by my political opponents with attempts at my life abroad, I was unable to live in Europe under my real name and was compelled to use other names, such as the name of Dr. Rudolf Hediger, under which I was arrested.

2. When in the spring of 1932, the question of granting an amnesty to the remaining persons convicted in connexion with the events of 1923 was again brought up in Bulgaria, and a great political struggle flared up on this question, I decided to leave the Soviet Union, where I was at that time, and to return to Central Europe, to take an immediate part from abroad in the campaign for a general political amnesty. At the end of June 1932, I arrived in Berlin, and from here I made trips to Vienna, Prague, Amsterdam, Paris and Brussels where I endeavoured to get prominent personalities interested in the matter, such as Zweig and others in Austria, Prof. Neyedly and others in Czechoslovakia, Barbusse, Romain Rolland and others in France, the editorial offices of various newspapers and magazines as well as different organizations – cultural, scientific, etc. – and to secure their moral and political support in favour of the demanded amnesty. For the purpose, I compiled information on the question of the amnesty.

published letters addressed to prominent personalities, editorial offices and organizations, and wrote a series of articles on Bulgaria's economic and political situation, on its foreign and home policy, etc., for the foreign press, as well as for the *International Press Correspondence* magazine, published in French in Paris, in English in London and in German in Berlin. For this purpose I followed the Bulgarian press and literature, all that appeared about Bulgaria in the foreign press, collected statistical and other data in the Prussian Library and other institutions, as can be seen from the Bulgarian and other papers, magazines and books, newspaper clippings and other publications found at my lodgings.

3. I defrayed my personal maintenance as well as the expenses for my trips with the fees I got for my articles and for translations from the Russian and the German. The sum of 350 Marks and 10 dollars, found on me at my arrest, is all I possess as an emigrant over a period of 10 years.

4. During my stay in Germany I have not interfered in German home affairs. I have not taken any part, direct or indirect, in this country's political struggles. I was completely dedicated to my own task, which for me, as a Bulgarian political worker, was a vital question – to help promote, to the best of my abilities, an early and general political amnesty in Bulgaria, so as to be able, after a period of 10 years of emigration, to return freely to my country and there to serve my people according to my own convictions and ideal. The documents found on me: the united front appeal of the Communist International, and the appeal for convening an international anti-fascist congress, were used by me only as information. They were published by the whole world Communist press and are not illegal documents. In general, I have neither composed nor distributed in Germany any document on the German situation or problems.

5. I learned about the Reichstag fire from the papers in the morning on February 28, in the train from Munich to Berlin, like all other passengers in this train. I saw the name and the photograph of the 'incendiary' for the first time in the German papers after they were published. I

have never seen or met him personally in my life. As a Communist, as a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Communist International, I am in principle against all individual terror, against all senseless fires, because these actions are incompatible with the Communist principles and methods of mass work and with the economic and mass political struggle, and because they can only be harmful to the liberation movement of the proletariat, to the Communist cause. The programmes and constitutions of all Communist Parties and of the Communist International forbid individual terror under the threat of expulsion from the Party of any member who may resort to methods of individual terror. All terrorist actions perpetrated in Bulgaria, including the blowing up of the Sofia Cathedral in April 1925, were publicly and categorically condemned both personally by myself and by the Party to which I belong, as well as by the Communist International. We are Communists and not anarchists. According to my deepest conviction, the Reichstag fire can be the work only of madmen or of the worst enemies of Communism, who through this act intended to create an atmosphere conducive to the crushing of the workers' movement and the Communist Party in Germany. I am, however, neither mad, nor an enemy of Communism.

6. Moreover, at the time when the fire took place, I was not even in Berlin, but in Munich, where I arrived on February 26 in the morning and from where I returned to Berlin on February 27 in the evening by the through train, sleeping car, 3rd class.

7. I reject with the deepest indignation all suspicion of having taken a direct or indirect part in this anti-Communist act, in this crime reprehensible from every point of view, and resolutely protest against the unprecedented injustice committed against me by my arrest on the pretext of and in connexion with this crime.

My sole offense against the laws of Germany is that, as a political emigrant threatened with murder, I have lived underground in Germany.

8. I also protest against being kept in the position of a war prisoner, to whom not a single cent out of his own

money was left to meet my most immediate needs, and that I am deprived even of the most elementary legal defence.

Berlin, March 20, 1933

G. Dimitrov

P.S. As regards the papers found at my lodgings, I acknowledge as indisputably my own only those among them which were proved to be such at the perquisition. My lodgings were searched in my absence.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 1-8, 1960

TO THE EXAMINING MAGISTRATE

May 4, 1933

Your Honour:

Of course, I need not thank you for your communication that you have rejected my request to return my confiscated money.

Still, you have thereby saved me from an illusion. For a moment I had supposed that, as a political worker who is not guilty of burning down the Reichstag and is suffering only for having fulfilled his Communist duty, I would be treated, at least in this respect, not worse than a robber or murderer and that I would be able to count on a few Marks from my own money for newspapers, postage and a German language manual.

I now realize that this was a mere illusion. I am deprived of the right to make use of my own money. I have no right to visits and moreover must stay manacled by day and night.

As far as I know, even those accused of murder are not subjected to such a treatment.

And this I owe to you!

Yes, this is right and logical, I find myself in the hands of the class enemy, who is trying to make use even of justice as a weapon to eradicate Communism, i. e. in practice to destroy its convinced, consistent and adamant adherents.

Respectfully yours,
G. Dimitrov

TO DR. PAUL TEICHERT
Lawyer, Leipzig

August 1, 1933

Dear Doctor:

I have received today your letter of July 27 and took notice of the information that the Supreme Court has appointed you to be my defence counsel.

I inform you that on July 20 I entrusted my defence to the Bulgarian lawyer Stefan Dechev (now living in Paris, at the Palace Hotel), that besides this, through my sister and on my request, the French lawyers Messrs. Moro Giafferi, Campinchi and Torres have been invited to become my defence counsels. In all probability they will contact you.

As to my case, I am quite amazed that the Supreme Court should have accused me in connexion with the Reichstag fire. Judging by all the data, the preliminary investigation should without fail have led to the conclusion that I have had nothing to do with this crazy and provocative crime. But, they seem to have decided to put us, the three arrested Bulgarian emigrants, in the place of the undetected real culprits. It is precisely political trials that most vividly demonstrate how justice is made use of as a political instrument.

In my *written statements* of March 20 and May 30, which I gave to the examining magistrate at the Supreme Court, counsellor Vogt, I have already said everything that is essential in connexion with my case. I should ask you to get more closely acquainted with these documents.

I am very curious to learn how the state prosecutor's office will try to substantiate the indictment of high treason in connexion with the burning of the Reichstag building against a political worker who in fact has had nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with it.

It will be possible for me to formulate proposals in con-

nexion with the proofs, only after I have the text of the indictment in my hands, which, if actually an indictment of having set fire to the Reichstag is to be brought in it against me, will have truly to be a Kunstwerk (work of art) of German justice.

Respectfully yours,
G. Dimitrov

TO DR. BÜNGER, *President of the 4th Penal Department of
the Supreme Court*

August 28, 1933

Dear Mr. President,

Since April 4 my hands have been manacled day and night. My repeated requests for the repeal of this measure have been of no avail.

On July 26 I once again asked the investigating magistrate at the Supreme Court, if it was impossible to have my manacles completely removed, to keep me manacled only at night, as is usually the practice with prisoners sentenced to death. To this I received the reply: 'As to the manacles, there can be no change for the time being.'

On August 18, I turned to my counsel who was appointed by the court, Dr. Teichert, and asked him to take the necessary steps for the removal of the manacles.

As I have received no reply so far and the manacling which is both noxious to my health and terribly painful still continues, I decided to address myself to you to obtain a legal solution to that question.

In the Code of Criminal Procedure (§ 116) I read the following:

'A prisoner can be manacled while in prison only in cases when, owing to particular danger from his person, this proves to be *necessary for the safety* of others, or if he has made or *prepared an attempt at suicide or escape*. During the trial the manacles must be removed.'

Hence, it follows that the use of manacles with regard to myself has no legal ground or justification.

Respectfully, *G. Dimitrov*

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 87-89

Published by the BCP, 1960

TO DR. PAUL TEICHERT

Lawyer, Leipzig

September 6, 1933

Dear Doctor:

I have gratefully received your letter of September 2 and am very glad to learn that you too are a fighter by nature.

But the question is not *who* of us can better judge *how* to conduct the defence and, still less, in a state of exceedingly overstrained nerves; the question is that I attach great importance to the possibility for a compatriot of mine to take part, directly or indirectly, in my defence, a man who knows me personally as well as my political activity and who is, therefore, 100 per cent convinced in my innocence. This is something that goes without saying. As you have always stated that you have the intention of conducting my defence absolutely seriously and do not feel bound by anything in this respect, you should not object to that either; on the contrary, you should only welcome such a joint participation in my defence.

The Supreme Court has conceded to Mr. Dechev a certain *indirect* participation in my defence (through your intermediary). But it is clear that unless he is given a chance to acquaint himself with the *concrete* reasoning of the accusations brought against me in the indictment, he will not be able to contribute anything positive to my defence. But it is precisely information on the *concrete reasoning* in the indictment (and not the names of witnesses and other 'secrets' of the indictment) that he, as he writes to me, has not been able to obtain from you.

I find this fact, you will excuse me, worthy of regret and even contrary to the sense of the decision of the Supreme Court.

As I cannot dispense with the participation of a Bulgarian lawyer in my defence, I again addressed myself to the Court with the request to allow the Bulgarian lawyer, Mr. *Peter Grigorov*, who is at this moment in Switzerland and *who speaks German*, to take part in my defence along with you.

I ask you as my German defence counsel to give your consent required by the law.

Respectfully yours,
G. Dimitrov

P.S. Although I am not a jurist, I think that the appointed defence counsel is not obliged to abide by the instructions of the defendant. And, of course, I have never had such an intention. But, on the other hand, the official defence counsel is not a boss of the defendant and cannot act according to the so-called *Führerprinzip* in the given case. Mutual understanding between defence counsel and defendant is absolutely necessary in this instance. Otherwise, the defendant can safely refuse the benefit of such a defence and prefer to defend himself alone, though quite inadequately.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 95-96, 1960

DIMITROV'S NOTES FOR HIS FIRST
SPEECH IN COURT⁶⁶

Born on June 18, 1882, at Radomir, near Sofia.

Left school in the 6th grade, worked as a compositor up to 1904.

Son of the Bulgarian working class.

Born and brought up in the ranks of the revolutionary workers' movement (I have been active in this movement from the age of 15).

For thirty years member of the Bulgarian Communist Party – (formerly the Party of the so-called Narrow or Left-Wing Socialists.)

For twenty-three years member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bulgaria.

From 1904 to 1923 Secretary of the Trade Union Federation.

From 1913 to 1923 Party national representative for Sofia in the Bulgarian Parliament – also representative of the Party in the Municipal Council of Sofia and in the Regional Council of Sofia.

At the same time I was active as a *Party speaker* and *writer*.

June 9, 1923 – Military coup d'état – overthrow of Stamboliiski's Government – by officers and Macedonian terrorists under the patronage of the Tsar himself, aided by Social-Democrats and from abroad.

Thousands upon thousands of peasants, workers, intellectuals murdered. Stamboliiski murdered.

Largest parties – Agrarian Union and Communist Party – dissolved.

All rights and liberties of the mass of the people abolished.

Introduction of a military-fascist regime.

Boundless indignation – mass uprising inevitable.

September 23 – Workers' and peasants' uprising under the leadership of the Communist Party against the oppressors of the people and the usurpers of power, for a worker-peasant government.

In this uprising I was delegated by my Party to take an active and leading part.

After a week of armed struggle the uprising was defeated. Fighting every step of the way, with about a thousand of my comrades-in-arms I crossed over into Yugoslav territory.

There we were treated at first as a political prisoners and later as political refugees.

From that time onwards – exactly ten years – I have been living abroad as a political refugee and a political writer – unregistered and under a false name, because while abroad I was again threatened with death by my enemies.

Several months after the September uprising I was sentenced to death by default – as the press announced at the time. I never had the opportunity of hearing the sentence pronounced against me.

I am proud of the heroic uprising.

I only regret that I and my Party were not yet *real Bolsheviks* at that time. That is why we were unable successfully to organize and lead this historic people's uprising, headed by the proletariat.

Our insufficiently Bolshevik organization, policy and tactics, the lack of revolutionary experience, and especially our opportunist and so-called neutral attitude towards the military-fascist coup on June 9, did much to help the murders and executioners of the Bulgarian people, the usurpers of state power, to suppress the uprising of the masses.

But the Party has learned and appreciated the bloody lessons of this experience, and the struggle for the emancipation of the Bulgarian workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Communist Party, enlightened by the great experience of the September Uprising, is going unflinching forward to the final victory.

In order to root out Communism, immediately after the uprising and in the two following years the government's fascist gangs murdered more than 20,000 workers, peasants and intellectuals. My brother, too, was murdered in the police prison. But, notwithstanding this, Communism has incomparably deeper and stronger roots in Bulgaria now than in 1923 – undoubtedly a useful warning for all the eager extirpators of Communism in other countries – for all the many varieties of modern Don Quixotes.

October 1, 1923, I left for Vienna.

Support for my *suffering fellow-fighters in Yugoslavia*. Campaign for the defence of persecuted and bestially slaughtered class comrades in Bulgaria.

Here, for three months, I edited and published the Party organ, *Rabotnicheski Vestnik*.

Published two pamphlets against the bloody White Terror in Bulgaria, in Bulgarian, German and English.

In the spring of 1924 went to Moscow as a political refugee and political writer and stayed until the end of 1926.

In 1927 I was again in *Vienna*, in connexion with the projected amnesty, up to the autumn of 1929. I was not amnestied.

Publication of the Party paper, *Komunistichesko Znamé*, contacts with certain Party papers.

From the autumn of 1929 I was settled in Berlin – far fewer Bulgarian refugees were there, and therefore safer incognito.

Two fairly long interruptions – from November 1929 to May 1930, and from December 1931 to June 1932, in the Soviet Union.

I returned specially to *Berlin* in the summer of 1932 in connexion with the last *draft Amnesty Law*, in order personally to organize the amnesty campaign.

Journeys to Vienna, Amsterdam, Paris.

I have never taken part in *German politics* – have no contacts with the Communist Party of Germany. This was not necessary for my work.

But I openly state that if I had needed these contacts for

my work I certainly should have been associated with the Communist Party of Germany.

I was in touch with *International Press Correspondence* only because of my articles.

It is true that I am Bolshevik, a proletarian revolutionary. I must emphasize *proletarian* revolutionary because this is a period of confusion in which even the German Crown Prince is accustomed to proclaim himself a revolutionary, and in which there are also such crazy revolutionaries as, for instance, van der Lubbe.

It is also true that as a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, I am a responsible and a leading Communist.

And I am ready to accept full responsibility for all the decisions, documents and actions of my Bulgarian Party and of the Communist International. But precisely for this reason I am not a terrorist adventurer, a conspirator or an incendiary.

Further, it is perfectly true that I am in favour of the *proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat*. I am firmly convinced that this is the *only way out of, the only salvation from the economic crisis and the catastrophe of war* under capitalism.

And the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the victory of Communism is, without any doubt, the whole substance of my life. I should like to live at least another twenty years for Communism and then quietly die. But precisely for this reason I am a convinced opponent of the methods of individual terror and conspiracies.

And this is not from any sentimental or humanitarian considerations. In agreement with our Leninist theory, and with the decisions and discipline of the Communist International, which for me and for every true Communist are the supreme law, I am opposed to individual terror and to putschist activities from the standpoint of revolutionary expediency, in the interests of the proletarian revolution and of Communism itself.

I am, in fact, an enthusiastic follower and admirer of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, because this Party rules the largest country in the world — a sixth part of the earth —

and is building up socialism with such heroism and with such success.

But I have never been an emissary in Germany of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as the indictment tries to indicate.

The only breach of the law which I have committed in Germany consists in the fact that I have lived there unregistered and under a false name.

But unfortunately it was impossible for me to live in any other way.

With the burning of the Reichstag I had absolutely nothing to do, whether directly or indirectly. The Reichstag incendiary, van der Lubbe, I now see for the first time in this hall. When, early in the morning of February 28, in the train from Munich to Berlin I read in the papers about the burning of the Reichstag, I immediately took the view that the instigators of this action were either *despicable provocateurs or mentally and politically demented people*, and in any case enemies of the German working class and of *Communism*.

I am now more inclined to assume that the burning of the Reichstag – this anti-Communist undertaking – must have taken place as a result of a double alliance between *political provocation and political madness*.

It would hardly be possible to make a graver attack upon my revolutionary, political and personal honour than to cast upon me the suspicion and the accusation that I had a share in this crime against the people and against Communism.

My consolation was, and is to this day, that my Bulgarian comrades-in-arms, the class comrades abroad, the revolutionary proletarians in Germany, and all who are acquainted with me in some degree, cannot doubt *for a single instant that I am innocent*. I wish most forcefully to stress that I have had just as much to do with the burning of the Reichstag as, for instance, any foreign correspondent in this hall or *the judges themselves could have had*.

At the same time I wish to state most emphatically that I have had *absolutely no connexion*, not even a *chance connexion* or the *most remote connexion*, with this crime.

During the preliminary examination I submitted two

written statements – on March 20 and May 30 – where practically everything essential in my defence has already been said.

On the other hand, I did not sign the depositions at the preliminary examinations because they were incomplete and tendentious.

My whole preliminary examination was based on the express intention of turning me into an incendiary of the Reichstag for the benefit of the Supreme Court – *at any price*, and in spite of the facts which disproved this; and even after the preliminary investigation, which had lasted for months, had still failed – as I now see clearly – to discover the real criminals.

September 25, 1933

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 111–117

Published by the BCP, 1960

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION⁶⁷ ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1933

Interrogation of the accused van der Lubbe

Dimitrov: I wish to protest against the falsified version of my words in the fascist press.

President: Shut up! I have not given you permission to speak. I am the one who decides when statements can be made.

Dimitrov: I should like to state on Saturday...

President: I do not permit you to make any statements now.

Dimitrov: I note that I am deprived of the possibility...

President: Keep quite! You can note nothing here! Turn to your defence counsel!

Dimitrov: I am defending myself!

President (to van der Lubbe, after reminding him of the minutes of the inquest where the presumed course of the three minor fires is mentioned, but obtains either no reply or exceedingly short replies): Why did you perform these three acts of arson?

Van der Lubbe (after a long silence, through the interpreter): I was prompted by reasons of my own.

President: What did you want to prove thereby?

Van der Lubbe: At that time I did not know it myself.*

President: Was it not meant to be a public protest against capitalism (van der Lubbe keeps silent)?

Dimitrov: it is quite inexplicable that earlier van der Lubbe made such detailed depositions before the examining magistrate, while here, at the public hearing, he

* The inquest minutes, however, read: 'Van der Lubbe said that he wanted to incite thereby the workers to carry out a revolution while it was not too late, that he was glad he would be able to make an ardent speech before the court' etc.

keeps quiet and makes no reply whatever. If he is normal indeed, as the professorial experts claim, there remains only one hypothesis.

Chief Prosecutor and President (interrupting): You cannot put forward any hypotheses here, but can ask questions only in connexion with the fires which are being examined at this moment.

Dimitrov: I shall do that at once. At any rate, I must state my viewpoint at least for once. Van der Lubbe was a simple, quite good boy. He was a mason, wandered, travelled, and then committed this crime. There can be only one hypothesis here. Either van der Lubbe is mentally unbalanced, or else he is normal. If he is normal and keeps quiet, he is keeping quiet on account of his monstrous crime against the proletariat. I wish to put to van der Lubbe the following question: *Has he ever in his life heard my name?*

President: Question overruled. It is inexpedient here.

Dimitrov (addressing van der Lubbe in a loud voice): He must tell the truth!

President: You have no right to ask questions. It is I who ask them (van der Lubbe keeps quiet).

Dimitrov: I put one more question to van der Lubbe.

President: What is it?

Dimitrov: Why does he behave here in this way? Why does he say once 'yes', the second time 'no', the third time 'yes' and 'no' and the fourth time does not answer at all? Does he understand this or not? It is indeed wonderful! Ridiculous!

President: Listen, you have no right to interfere in the deliberations. You speak as though you were taking a direct part in the deliberations. Your question is overruled.

Dimitrov: The third question: Has van der Lubbe talked with anyone about these fires?

President: Why this question?

Dimitrov: Has he had an agreement with anyone on this matter?

President: Question overruled.

Dimitrov: A final question: Why did he commit this

monstrous crime against the German working class and with *whom* did he commit it?

President: Well, your questions are overruled. We have already heard everything. He has acted alone, and has told us part of his reasons without telling us the other part. Enough with those questions (The court hastily withdraws for deliberation).

President: The accused Dimitrov is not allowed to ask further questions, because he has abused his right of asking questions and asks them only for the purpose of making Communist propaganda (In spite of this Dimitrov insists on speaking. The policemen force him to sit down).

President: That is enough now, Dimitrov!

Dimitrov: I protest against this!

A few days later, on October 4, during the interrogation of Torgler, Dimitrov again put several questions to van der Lubbe.

Dimitrov: Why were you unable to set fire to the small charity institution, yet managed to set fire to the large stone building of the Reichstag, and in just a quarter of an hour at that?

Dr. Sack: See, see! Dimitrov now wants to interrogate the accused van der Lubbe as an expert?

President: It is quite clear that such a question should be asked! How can you answer this, van der Lubbe? (Van der Lubbe keeps quiet).

Dimitrov: The Communist International demands full clarity on the question of the Reichstag fire. Millions are waiting for an answer!

President: Who is president here? Shut up immediately!

Dimitrov: Millions are waiting for a clear answer!

President: I can no longer brook this! You must keep quiet when I order you to do so, otherwise I shall order you to be taken out of the courtroom.

TO DR. BÜNGER, *President of the 4th Penal Department of
the Supreme Court*

Leipzig, September 28, 1933

Dear Mr. President:

I am sorry that my Court speeches have on several occasions led to undesirable incidents and altercations. But I feel bound categorically to reject the interpretation of having intentionally abused of my right to ask questions for propaganda purposes. Insofar as the prosecution demands my death, I, who have been accused quite unjustly, consider it as my natural and lawful right to defend myself with all means which I have at my disposal.

I admit that some of the questions may not always have been asked by me in proper juridical form. This, however, is to be explained solely by the fact that I am not versed in German law. Besides, it is for the first time in my life that I participate in such a trial. If I had had a *defence counsel of my own choice*, I should undoubtedly have been able to avoid such incidents which are not conducive to my own defence.

I remind you that all the candidates proposed by me (lawyers Dechev, Giafferi, Campinchi, Torrès, Grigorov, Leo Gallagher of America, and Dr. Lehmen of Saarbrücken) were, one after the other, on one pretext or another, rejected by the Supreme Court, and Mr. Dechev, as is evident, has even been refused an admission card.

I personally do not feel any lack of confidence in Dr. Paul Teichert as a person and lawyer. But as matters now stand in Germany, I cannot have the necessary confidence in Dr. Teichert as my official defence counsel. That is why I am trying to defend myself alone and in doing this often take steps which are undoubtedly incorrect from a juridical point of view.

In the interest of my defence before the Court, and I believe in the interest of the normal course of the trial too, I once again – and for the last time – address myself to the Supreme Court with the request to allow the lawyer *Marcel Willard*, who has now been given a power of attorney from my sister, to take part in my defence.

If my present proposal should unfortunately again be rejected, I will have no other alternative but to defend myself alone to the best of my abilities and understanding.

Respectfully yours,

G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 123–124

Published by the BCP, 1960

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON OCTOBER 11, 1933

President: Tomorrow, at 8 p. m., an on-the-spot inspection of the Reichstag has been scheduled, but it must not take up too much time.

Dimitrov: In connexion with the time of the on-the-spot inspection I should like to ask one question.

President: No, Dimitrov, this will be of no use to you at all. I have told you so many times: asking questions and giving explanations are things not provided for in the Code of Procedure and you can hardly expect me to allow precisely you who – to put it softly – have already repeatedly tried to overdo it with your asking questions and giving explanations, making statements, etc., that to which the Code of Procedure does not entitle you. So better give up this idea.

Dimitrov: Mr. President...

President: No, I do not want to hear anything! Do not say anything: It will be of no avail to you. Sit down.

Dimitrov: I should ask you to allow me to point out ...

President: I deprive you of the right to speak...

Dimitrov: I am not only the accused Dimitrov (*President:* Shut up!), but also Dimitrov who defends himself (*President* rises and the Court withdraws to deliberate).

President: I have the following decision to announce: For repeated insubordination to the orders of the President, particularly of the order depriving him of the right to speak, the accused Dimitrov shall be removed from the courtroom until further notice. He shall be taken to the prison.

Dimitrov: This is depriving me arbitrarily of my right of defence, Mr. President (Dimitrov gives a note to his official defence counsel, telling him): 'I wanted to put these questions, you ask them!' (Dimitrov is taken out of the room).

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 131-132

Published by the BCP, 1960

TO DR. BÜNGER,⁶⁸ *President of the 4th Penal Department
of the Supreme Court*

Berlin, October 12, 1933

Dear Mr. President:

After the Supreme Court rejected all eight defence counsels proposed by me of my own choice, I have no other alternative but to defend myself to the best of my abilities and understanding. I am thus compelled to appear before the Supreme Court in a double role: first, as *Dimitrov – the accused*, and second, as defence counsel of the *accused Dimitrov*.

I quite agree that both as accused and as a person who defends himself, I am inconvenient and disagreeable to my prosecutors and those who give them orders. But I am not to blame for this.

After the judicial authorities were careless enough to put me, an absolutely innocent man, in the dock of the accused before the Supreme Court as a substitute incendiary of the Reichstag, they shall have to bear the consequences of their carelessness. They have cooked the broth which they will now have to eat. Whether they find it to their taste or not – that is none of my business; it does not interest me in the least.

I think that before the Supreme Court I am supposed to behave like a person who is accused of having committed a political crime, and not like a soldier in the barracks or a prisoner of war in a concentration camp.

I am firmly convinced that in this trial van der Lubbe is only, so to say, the *Faustus in the Reichstag fire*, behind whose back undoubtedly stood the *Mephistopheles of the Reichstag fire*. Poor *Faustus* is now standing before the Supreme Court, while *Mephistopheles* has disappeared.

As a casual and innocent accused, and still more as a Communist and member of the Communist International,

I am most deeply interested in the all-round and complete elucidation of the case of the Reichstag fire, and at the same time in the detection of the vanished Mephistopheles of the fire.

I put all questions to the Court *only with this* and with no other aim in view. I do not need at all to make any propaganda in the Court, all the more so as the best propaganda for Communism has already been made, and not by myself, but by the very fact that innocent Communists have been brought to trial as incendiaries of the Reichstag, as well as by the 'classic' indictment of Dr. Parrisius.

It is my natural right to defend myself and to take an active part in the Court trial, both as an accused and as a person who defends himself alone. It is clear that no expulsions from the sittings of the Court and the Court sessions are in a position to frighten me in this respect. These expulsions precisely from the most important sittings and sessions are in fact nothing but a flagrant deprivation of my rights to defend myself, and will only prove to the whole world that my prosecutors themselves are not too sure of their case. They will open the eyes of many credulous people, and in this way may supply new food to Communist propaganda.

If, nevertheless, this unbearable attitude towards me continues, then – let me state it quite frankly – I shall be compelled to decide, without taking into consideration the possible consequences, whether there is any sense at all in my further appearing before the Court.

Respectfully yours,
G. Dimitrov

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON OCTOBER 23, 1933

From the interrogation of expert Josse

Prof. Josse (heat technician at the Higher Technical School in Berlin): The hall for plenary sessions, the volume of which is over 10,000 cu m, cannot possibly be set on fire merely by means of a torch. Liquid fuel must have been used for this purpose*. It is out of the question that van der Lubbe should have caused the fire all by himself. The preparation for setting the fire must have required quite some time and has been made by several persons. The main purpose of the smaller centres of the fire in the restaurant hall and in the corridors around the hall for plenary sessions (which must be attributed to van der Lubbe) was to attract the attention of those people who might enter to extinguish the fire, and to detain them from entering the plenary hall. Van der Lubbe may have set fire to the plenary hall alone, but he definitely has not made the preparations all by himself. This must have been done by at least one other incendiary. At least 20 kg of liquid fuel (probably gasoline or benzol), and maybe even 40 kg, are necessary for the purpose. Rags, film rolls or combustible wicks have probably been used to connect the separate centres of the fire.

President: Van der Lubbe told us about a piece of burning window curtain with which he ran through the hall. Was this of no significance?

Prof. Josse: None whatever.

Chief Prosecutor Werner: An attempt to attract attention by setting the restaurant on fire would hardly be expedient.

Prof. Josse: For me, too, the intentions of the incendiary

* *Josse here recalls the depositions of Senior Fire Director Gempp on the traces of liquid fuel in the Bismarck Hall.*

are a mystery, for if I really wanted to cause a fire, I would not show myself with a burning torch in hand on the terrace, nor would I run with a burning torch past the window, and in general, I would not behave so suspiciously.

Teichert: How much time was needed to prepare the setting on fire of the hall for plenary sessions?

Prof. Josse: This depends upon the number of participants. Ten to fifteen minutes would do, if the combustible materials were all ready.

Chief Prosecutor Werner: Torgler went out at 8:45 p. m. (Torgler protests: I left the Reichstag as early as 8:20). At about 8:20 I saw in the hall the lighting electrician Scholz. Could the preparations have been made in this time interval?

Prof. Josse: Yes.

Dimitrov: I am glad that the experts too are of the opinion that van der Lubbe could not have acted all by himself. This is the only point in the indictment with which I am in complete accord. But I go farther. According to me, at this trial van der Lubbe is, as it were, the Faustus of the Reichstag fire. This miserable Faustus has been brought before the Court, but the Mephistopheles of the fire is not here...

President: Now is not the time for pleading ...

Dimitrov: Was it at all possible for van der Lubbe to cover the distance from the place of the fire and set fire to the hall?

Prof. Josse: At his arrest van der Lubbe was panting for breath and was all in sweat. Taking into consideration his agility, which was known to those who had known him before, in the course of this time he could all by himself have kindled the fire *prepared beforehand*.

Dimitrov: If I have correctly understood his words, the expert presumes the presence of at least two incendiaries?

Prof. Josse: Yes. (Van der Lubbe comes forward, and the interpreter translates for him in brief the depositions of Prof. Josse).

President: Raise your head, van der Lubbe! Do you understand what has been said? The expert who is a learned professor says that you could not have set fire to the

Reichstag all by yourself. Who prepared the fire? Answer! (Van der Lubbe persists in his silence).

Dimitrov (Addressing van der Lubbe as the latter is being led past him to take his seat): This miserable Faustus must tell us the name of his Mephistopheles! Mr. President...

President: Dimitrov, you cannot go on talking all the time. I can allow you to put just one question.

Dimitrov: I wish once more and for the last time to ask van der Lubbe. As was already said, he was not alone. His conduct, his silence makes it possible for innocent people to be accused along with him. I would not ask van der Lubbe about his accomplices, had his act been revolutionary, but it is counter-revolutionary.

President: That is enough. Ask just one question.

Dimitrov: Is it true that while setting the fire van der Lubbe passed along the course as indicated or not?

President: He has said that a hundred times already.

Dimitrov: Has van der Lubbe set fire to the hall all by himself?

President: He has already answered this question. This is the last question which I authorize.

Dimitrov: He said here that he ran through the hall with a piece of burning material in his hand – was that so? (The President asks the interpreter to translate the question to van der Lubbe).

Van der Lubbe: I cannot say this exactly.

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON OCTOBER 31, 1933

Interrogation of witness Lebermann

Dimitrov: I wish to put a question.

President: You may now put questions.

Dimitrov: I should like to know who called this witness, as this is of interest to the trial? Is he not a witness of the prosecution?

President: I have already said: once, on October 13, this witness sent a note to the Director of the Prison, after which he was examined by the prosecutor. But I have already said this.

Dimitrov: I heard that.

President: Afterwards it was proposed to call him as witness.

Dimitrov: By whom?

President: By the Chief Prosecutor. But I wish to tell you right away that you indulge in criticism which are quite useless. You cannot prevent the Chief Prosecutor, or the Court for that matter, from calling a witness when he has something to say.

Dimitrov: This is not my intention.

President: It would therefore be quite useless for you to draw any inferences along those lines.

Dimitrov: I do not intend to do that. But, Mr. President and your honours, I just wish to point out that today, with this witness, the circle of witnesses (the chief witnesses) of the representative of the Prosecution against us, the accused Communists, comes to a close. It started with deputies of the National Socialist Party to the Reichstag, with national socialist journalists, and ends with a thief.

Chief Prosecutor Dr. Werner: Is that a question?

President: All this has been noted down.

Dimitrov: The circle...

President (interrupting): Dimitrov! I have repeatedly told you that after the examination of the witnesses you can ask questions, but not indulge in partial pleading. There is still time for that. At present all that you are entitled to are questions. What questions do you want to put? But to the witnesses, and not to the Chief Prosecutor.

Dimitrov: One question to Dr. Parrisius' witness.*

President: No! What question do you want to put to the witness?

Dimitrov: I ask to following, Mr. President!

President: In other words, you have no questions?

Dimitrov: I have the following question.

President: Put your question at last.

Dimitrov: It has been established that on October 13 he wrote an application, after reading in the newspapers about the Reichstag fire trial. He said so himself. He is in prison, he is not at liberty. He has passed into the third category. He now has the hope of being freed on the basis of these lies here. I ask: who influenced him to make these base, shameful...

President (interrupting): Silence! Do not insult the witnesses... (To Lebermann): Has any one influence you?

Lebermann: No one has influenced me.

President: The question has been answered.

Dimitrov: I congratulate you, Mr. Prosecutor, on having called this witness!

G. Dimitrov, *Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 153-155

Published by the BCP, 1960

* Witness Lebermann had been summoned on Parrisius' proposal

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON NOVEMBER 4, 1933

Interrogation of witness Goering

Dimitrov: Count Helldorf⁶⁹ here testified to the effect that on February 27 at about 11 p. m. on his own initiative he gave orders for the arrest of the Communist and Social-Democratic leaders and functionaries. I now ask the Prime Minister: did Count Helldorf discuss then this measure with Mr. Goering, or not?

Goering: As a matter of fact an answer to this question has already been given. When Count Helldorf heard about the fire, he realized, as well as every one of us, that it must have been the work of the Communist Party. He had already given orders to his closest assistants. But I wish to stress once more: I, of course, called him to my room and told him that now I had to ask him to put his SA⁷⁰ troops at our disposal, to which he replied that he had already given partial instruction to that effect. I thus assumed the responsibility for the orders which he had given, but which had not yet come into effect, and once again backed him with the authority of the state.

Dimitrov: I would like to know only whether between 11 and 12 o'clock a personal conference was held between Count Helldorf and Prime Minister Goering.

Goering: You have just heard it: he was with me.*

Dimitrov: The deputies of the National Socialist Party to the Reichstag, Mr. Karwahne and Mr. Frey, testified here that at about 11 o'clock they were in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, and informed it that both of them and the Austrian National Socialist Kroyer had seen Torgler with van der Lubbe on the day of the fire. Did these

* In his depositions made under oath before the Court, Helldorf denied this meeting with Goering.

Reichstag deputies speak at that time to the Prime Minister, Mr. Goering?

Goering: No.

Dimitrov: Did the Prime Minister know that Mr. Karwahne and Mr. Frey had made this report?

Goering: On the day after the fire I learned about their report.

Dimitrov: Was it in the morning or still during the night?

Goering: In the morning, or maybe in the afternoon.

Dimitrov: So it was either in the morning or in the afternoon.

Goering: When that report was made to me can be established by interrogating Ministerial Counsellor Diehls*!

Dimitrov: I should like to have it established exactly, because Karwahne categorically answered my question that he made the report after midnight, immediately after the fire.

Goering: The three of them gave their information at the Ministry before officials and not before me. I may not know that. It may have been during the night or in the morning: I cannot recall when I was told about it.

Dimitrov: On February 28 Prime Minister Goering gave an interview on the Reichstag fire, in which it was said: at the arrest of the 'Dutch Communist' van der Lubbe, besides his passport, his Party membership card was seized. How did the Prime Minister Goering know then that van der Lubbe had a Party membership card on him?

Goering: I must say that so far I have not been so much interested in the present trial, i. e. I did not read all the reports. I only heard from time to time that you (to Dimitrov) were a particularly clever man. That is why I supposed that the question which you asked has long been clear to you, namely that I never occupied myself with the investigation of this matter. I do not run about or search the pockets of people. If this (to Dimitrov) should still be

* Chief of the Gestapo at that time

unknown to you, let me tell you: the police examines all great criminals and informs me of its findings.

Dimitrov: The three officials of the criminal police who arrested and first interrogated van der Lubbe unanimously declared that no membership card was found on Lubbe. From where has the information about the card come then, I should like to know?

Goering: I can tell you that with absolute exactitude. This report was officially made to me. If on that first night they reported things which perhaps could not be checked so quickly, if before an official, perhaps on the basis of the depositions, it was mentioned that Lubbe had a membership card on him and if that could not be checked, they probably assumed it to be a fact and, of course, let me know it. I gave this information on the following day before noon when they had not yet definitely concluded the examination. This is of no significance in itself, because here; at the trial, it seems to have been established that van der Lubbe had no membership card.

Dimitrov: The witness is Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and President of the Reichstag, so does the Minister bear responsibility for his police?

Goering: Yes!

Dimitrov: I ask: What the Minister of the Interior do on February 28 and 29 or during the following days in order to establish through a police investigation van der Lubbe's moves from Berlin to Henningsdorf, his stay at the Henningsdorf asylum, his getting acquainted there with two other persons, so as to discover in this way his real accomplices? What did your police do?

Goering: As Minister I, of course, did not go after the traces like a detective, for I have my police for this job.

Dimitrov: After you, as Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, had declared that the incendiaries were Communists, that the German Communist Party had committed the crime with the aid of van der Lubbe as a foreign Communist, did this declaration on your part not serve to direct the police inquiry and afterwards – the Court investigations in a certain direction, excluding the possibility

of looking for other ways and means of finding the true incendiaries of the Reichstag?

Goering: First of all, the law prescribes to the criminal police to make its investigations in all criminal cases along all lines, regardless of where they may lead to, and wherever there are traces. However, I personally am not an official of the criminal police but a responsible Minister, and that is why it was not so important for me to find the particular petty criminal, but the Party, the outlook on life which was responsible for it all. The criminal police will investigate all traces, be sure of it. I had only to establish: was this a crime beyond the political sphere or was it political in character. For me it was a political crime and I was also convinced that the criminals had to be looked for in your (to Dimitrov) Party (Shakes his fists at Dimitrov and shouts). Your Party is a Party of criminals, which must be destroyed! And if the hearing of the Court has been influenced in this sense, it has set out on the right track.

Dimitrov: Is it known to the Prime Minister that the Party, which 'has to be destroyed', rules over one sixth of the globe, namely in the Soviet Union, and that this Soviet Union maintains diplomatic, political and economic relations with Germany and that hundreds of thousands of German workers benefit from its economic orders?

President (to Dimitrov): I forbid you to make Communist propaganda here.

Dimitrov: Mr. Goering is making National Socialist propaganda here! (After that he turns to Goering). This Communist outlook on life prevails in the Soviet Union, the largest and best country in the world, and here, in Germany, it has millions of followers among the best sons of the German people. Is this known ...

Goering (y e l l i n g l o u d l y): I shall tell you what is known to the German people. The German people know that here you are behaving insolently, that you have come here to set fire to the Reichstag. But I am not here to allow you to question me like a judge and to reprimand me! In my eyes you are a scoundrel who should be hanged.

President: Dimitrov, I have already told you not to make here Communist propaganda. That is why you should not

be surprised if the witness is so agitated! I most strictly forbid this propaganda! You can only ask questions referring to the trial.

Dimitrov: I am highly pleased with the reply of the Prime Minister.

President: Whether you are pleased or not is quite immaterial. Now I deprive you of the right to speak.

Dimitrov: I wish to put one more question pertaining to the trial.

President (still more abruptly): Now I deprive you of the right to speak.

Goering (yelling): Go out, scoundrel!

President (to the policemen): Take him out!

Dimitrov (whom the policemen have already seized): You are probably afraid of my questions, Mr. Prime Minister?

Goering (shouting after *Dimitrov*): Be careful, look out, I shall teach you how to behave, only come out of the courtroom! Scoundrel!

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 161-166

Published by the BCP, 1960

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON NOVEMBER 8, 1933

Questions to Goebbels

Dimitrov: Mr. President!

President: And so, Dimitrov, you must address all your questions to me! Do you understand?

Dimitrov: Answering the question of the Chief Prosecutor, the witness said that the setting on fire of the Reichstag, according to the opinion of the whole Cabinet, was to serve as a signal for an armed insurrection on the part of the German Communist Party. I would like to know whether on the 26th of February, on the 27th of February or on any other day following the Reichstag fire the Cabinet had taken a decision to make use of all armed forces in Prussia and Germany against the expected armed uprising of the German proletariat and of the German Communist Party. *Is there any such decision, any authentic document, or isn't there?*

President: Dimitrov! Ask your questions calmly and only to the point if you want to be allowed to put questions. Nothing else!

Dimitrov: Isn't this to the point?

President: Mr. Reichsminister, could you give any information on this question?

Goebbels: I must explain that it is not at all a task of the Cabinet to deal with the Communist peril. That was up to the Police Minister. It is not the fashion in a National Socialist Cabinet for a Minister of a given jurisdiction to hide behind the Cabinet majority. The Police Minister has the task to safely avert any serious danger and disturbance of public tranquillity. If there is any need to act, the Police Minister puts into action his police force. The details are of no interest to the Cabinet, but the Police Minister is obliged to inform the Cabinet of the measures he has taken.

President: You have heard the answer.

Dimitrov: Does the witness, Mr. Minister Goebbels, know that at that time in the Police Ministry in Berlin, in the Direction of the Police and in the War Ministry orders had been given that the armed forces should be ready to act against the expected armed insurrection?

Goebbels: It seems that Mr. Dimitrov gets me mixed up with the War Minister and the Minister of Police. I am the Propaganda Minister, however, and have nothing to do with all this. I presume that the Police Minister had taken the respective measures to crush the peril at any given moment, but by no means the War Minister because, first, there is no War Minister, but only a Minister of Defence and, second, it is not among the duties of the Minister of Defence to ward off the Communist peril. It seems that Mr. Dimitrov considers the Communist peril much greater and more dangerous than it is, if he assumes that military force should be used against it. It was quite enough to use the SA and the SS and the police in order to have it destroyed in a flash.

President: You have heard this answer too. We must agree with the witness that he is not at all obliged to give information on questions of other jurisdictions.

Dimitrov: In this connexion, Mr. President, I shall later on submit a proposal regarding the evidence. Does the witness, both as head of the National Socialist Party propaganda and as Propaganda Reichsminister, know whether it is true that the setting on fire of the Reichstag was immediately used by the Government and the Propaganda Ministry as a pretext to stifle the electoral campaign of the Communist Party, the Socialist and other opposition parties?

Goebbels: I did not understand this question well, Mr. President.

Dimitrov: Whether the setting on fire of the Reichstag was immediately used for propaganda purposes against the Communist Party, against Social Democracy and against the other opposition parties!

Goebbels: I must explain the following : the necessary measures were taken by the police. We did not need to use

any propaganda, because the Reichstag fire was actually only a confirmation of our struggle against the Communist Party and we could merely add the burning of the Reichstag to the collection of adequate proofs against the Communist Party as a new evidence, there being no need to launch a special propaganda campaign.

Dimitrov: Did not he himself deliver a speech broadcast over the radio, branding the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party as authors of the Reichstag fire? Not only against the Communist Party but also against the Social Democratic Party?

President: Have you delivered a speech in this sense, Mr. Minister?

Goebbels: At that time I did not deliver any speeches over the radio but only prepared introductory reports for the meetings of the Führer. But it is quite possible that I have said this because it was my firm conviction – and my firm conviction now is – that the Communist Party is the author of the Reichstag fire.

Dimitrov: Was it not said in these speeches and circular letters of the Propaganda Ministry, as well as in the statements of Goering and the other Ministers, that not only the Communist Party, but also the Social Democratic Party had something to do with the Reichstag fire?

President: But tell me at last what connexion does that have with the question, who set the Reichstag on fire?

Dimitrov: There is a connexion, Mr. President, a close connexion.

Goebbels: Mr. President, I shall be only too glad to answer this question. A preliminary note. I have the impression that the defendant Dimitrov wants to make propaganda before the Court in favour of the Communist Party, respectively of the Social Democratic Party. I can give him an answer to that: I know what propaganda is and he need not try to overtax my patience with such questions; this is quite impossible.

When we accused the Communist Party of being the instigator of the Reichstag fire, the continuous line from the Communist Party to the Social Democratic Party was immediately apparent; because we do not share the bourgeois

viewpoint that there is a fundamental difference between the Social Democratic and the Communist Party – something which is confirmed by the German politics of fourteen year. For us there was a difference between these two organizations only in tactics, only in the pace, but not in the principles, nor in the basic positions. When, therefore, we accused Marxism in general and its most acute form – Communism, of intellectual instigation, and maybe even of practical implementation of the Reichstag fire, then this attitude by itself meant that our national task was to destroy, to wipe off the face of the earth the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party.

Dimitrov: In the autumn of 1932, during the chancellorship of von Papen and later of Schleicher⁷¹ a series of assaults and bomb attempts took place in Germany. There were trials and capital sentences against some National Socialists. I ask, were not these acts of terrorism in 1932 the work of the National Socialists?

The Chief Prosecutor Dr. Werner: This, however, has nothing to do with this case.

Goebbels: I am ready to answer this question.

President: You are ready?

Goebbels: Of course! My answer to this question is: it is possible that *agent provocateurs* alien to the NSDAP circles⁷² had been sent to it in order to carry out such assaults.

President: Have you any more questions to ask?

Dimitrov: Mr. President, I have not yet finished my questions. In my last question I did not speak about provocative elements, but about such National Socialists, who killed one of their enemies and were on this account sentenced to death. For political purposes, they were solemnly and demonstratively congratulated by the president Reichskanzler, Adolf Hitler.

President: Speak only facts! What else have you to ask?

Dimitrov: I ask, is this true?

President: The defendant Dimitrov asks whether formerly sentenced National Socialists were solemnly congratulated by the Führer for political purposes.

Goebbels: The Führer thought that those men, who were subjectively convinced that they were acting justly and

faced the scaffold, should not be left without support, and that is why he sent them a congratulatory telegram.

Dimitrov: Is it true that the National Socialist Government has granted a pardon to all terrorist acts carried out to further the aims of the National Socialist movement?

Goebbels: The National Socialist Government could not leave in prisons people who, risking their lives and health, had fought against the Communist peril.

President: Did you hear, Dimitrov?

Dimitrov: I did hear very well! So far as I know, Mr. President, four or five political murders are well known in Germany. The Communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered...

President: That's enough! (*Dimitrov*: After that...) The question goes very far. We have to clarify who set the Reichstag on fire. We cannot go back here to the distant past.

Goebbels: It might perhaps be more expedient if we started from Adam and Eve. At the time of these murders the National socialist movement did not yet exist.

Dimitrov: Does the witness know that the murderers of the German statesmen Erzberger⁷³ and Rathenau⁷⁴ belong to the right wing and are not from amongst the Communists?

President (interrupting): I want to leave off this question at once, unless Mr. Minister wants to answer it.

Goebbels: I do not want to dodge this question. The murder of Erzberger and Rathenau was not perpetrated by National Socialist circles. This movement was still a very small group then...

President: Dimitrov, this is the second question which I should have rejected. You will probably remember the former cases.* I draw your attention to them.

Dimitrov: Are not the circles that committed such political murders in Germany now allies of the National socialists?

* The President has in mind Dimitrov's expulsion from the courtroom when he asked questions exposing the fascist incendiaries of the Reichstag.

Goebbels: I did not get the sense of the question.

President: He asks whether those, in whose circles the murders had then been committed, are now allies of the National Socialist Party.

Goebbels: I do not know in detail who the murderers were. Some fled abroad, others were shot by the Prussian police, while some committed suicide. The greater part of these people exists no more, and I am not interested in them.

Chief Prosecutor Dr. Werner: It is a good thing that Mr. Minister answered all these questions. (*President*: Yes, precisely). But I think that it would have been even more correct not to have answered those questions at all, because they are asked only for the sake of making propaganda here with a definite purpose. I think that if you answer all questions, the defendant Dimitrov will always have an occasion to ask new questions which will serve his propaganda.

Goebbels: I answer the questions in order not to give any possibility to Dimitrov, to those who stand behind him, and to the world press to maintain that I avoid or decline to answer his questions. I have managed to cope with a great many other people, so I need not be afraid of the questions of this small-time Communist propagandist.

Dimitrov: May I remark, Mr. President, that my questions are in connexion with the indictment? All these questions are connected with a political charge against me as a defendant. That is precisely why I ask these questions. I am accused by the Prosecutor, among other things, of having intended to bring about a forceful change in the German Constitution by organizing the Reichstag fire. I ask, which constitution was, as a matter of fact, in force on January 30 and on February 27 in Germany?

Goebbels: The constitution which was approved by the Weimar Parliament was in force. Whether this constitution was good or bad – this is of no importance. But it was legal and we recognized it. We did not want to give the Communist Party the opportunity of changing it, but retained that right for ourselves. I think that the constitutional amendments made so far are insufficient.

Dimitrov: This proves that you do not respect the German Constitution.

President: Leave aside (turning to Dimitrov) those legal conclusions.

Dimitrov: Mr. President, I further ask the witness as head of the state propaganda: does he know that the periodical *International Press Correspondence* appears in Germany in German, in France – in French, in Spain – in Spanish, in England – in English and in Czechoslovakia – in Czech?

Goebbels: I can answer to this long question with just one word: No!

Dimitrov: Does the witness know that the periodical was legal up to the end of February?

President: The witness just said: 'No!' He does not know of this periodical. This answers the question. Have you any further question?

Dimitrov: Yes, Mr. President!

President: Hurry up then.

Dimitrov: Does the witness know that his partisans in Austria and Czechoslovakia, the local National Socialists, nowadays must also work illegally, carry on an illegal propaganda and sometimes use false passports and that sometimes they have to resort to false addresses and cipher correspondence in their political struggle?

Goebbels: It seems that you are out to insult the National Socialist movement. I answer to you in Schopenhauer's⁷⁵ words: Every man deserves to be looked at but not to be talked to.

President: This is the third question which I find inadmissible.

Dimitrov: Inadmissible? I make a demand that evidence be admitted in connexion with this. I make this demand in connexion with the indictment that the Reichstag fire should be considered as a signal for an armed Communist insurrection, as well as in connexion with the statement, made by the Prussian Minister of the Interior and Prime Minister Goering and by the Reichsminister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels.

President: Enough! Submit your demand for evidence in writing!

Dimitrov: Mr. President...

President: Shut up! Submit your demand in writing!

Dimitrov: Mr. President, according to the Penal Code of Procedure, I must make it orally!

President: No!

Dimitrov: Yes! Yes! This is necessary according to the Penal Procedure Code. This demand for evidence is in connexion with the statement that the Reichstag fire was to be the signal for an armed Communist insurrection.

President: You have already said that!

Dimitrov: I would like...

President: Enough! I forbid you to speak about the contents of the demand for admittance of evidence. The Court will take a decision on your written proposal.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 169-178

Published by the BCP, 1960

FROM THE VERBATIM REPORT OF THE COURT
SESSION ON NOVEMBER 13, 1933

*Interrogation of witness Grawe**

Dimitrov: Did van der Lubbe leave for Berlin on the following morning alone or with somebody else?

Van der Lubbe: Alone!

Dimitrov: Thank God, now he speaks a little more! May be we can ask some other questions?

President: Yes, about what?

Dimitrov: I want first of all to put a question to the witness and then also to van der Lubbe: If I have understood correctly, after the Reichstag fire it became known in this notorious Hennigsdorf that van der Lubbe had been there on February 26. Is that so? Have I understood correctly?

President: You ought to ask me, I have told you that also before: Yes, the witness said that.

Dimitrov: Have I understood correctly that in this connexion in Hennigsdorf also, as well as in the whole of Germany, it was known that the Communists were responsible for setting the Reichstag on fire?

President: Yes, that was known.

Grawe: It was generally said: who else could it be!

Dimitrov: It was known that van der Lubbe had been in your house. This was known, you said it, didn't you? (*Van der Lubbe:* Yes.) When did this witness for the first time mention there, in Hennigsdorf, the fact that van der Lubbe had been in front of his shop or his house?

President: I have already asked earlier. Did you not tell about this?

* During the examination of Grawe (a fascist barber of Hennigsdorf, where van der Lubbe spent the night before the Reichstag fire) Dimitrov put a series of questions to van der Lubbe.

Grawe: I did not tell the police at once.

President: No, later.

Dimitrov: When later?

Grawe: The police knew this.

President: That is precisely why you did not tell anything.

Dimitrov: From van der Lubbe's answer one may infer that van der Lubbe had actually been in this house. If that is so, the question must then be asked, has the Hennigsdorf police gone to this witness and has it asked him, was van der Lubbe here or not? If he was here, what did he do, with whom did he speak, and in general what did he do? Did the Hennigsdorf police call on this witness on the 28th or on the following day and did it question him?

President: Did the police know at all that van der Lubbe had been in your house?

Grawe: I suppose so, because I told the wife of the police sergeant about it, and she told her husband.

Dimitrov: The police knew about it, but did not come... Does the witness know whether in the course of eight or nine months after the burning of the Reichstag anyone from the committee on the fire, from the political police or from some other institution came to Hennigsdorf and whether an inquiry was made on this matter? Was any house searched in connexion with the overnight sojourn of van der Lubbe in Hennigsdorf?... Was the witness Grawe then also a National Socialist?

Grawe: I have always been a rightist.

Dimitrov: I am asking van der Lubbe a question and would request the President to have this question also translated into Dutch. In my opinion the bridge between van der Lubbe and the fire in the plenary sessions chamber of the Reichstag...

President: You should not have said this, because that might influence the testimony, the objective testimony of the defendant. And so, put the question you want to put at once!

Dimitrov: The bridge passes through Hennigsdorf...

President: You must put a question!

Dimitrov: That is why I am asking van der Lubbe: is it

not true and it is no accident, is it, that he spent the night of February 26 in Hennigsdorf?

President. You should not ask prompting questions. And this question is of that kind. Defendant van der Lubbe, what was the reason for your spending the night in Hennigsdorf, why did you go and spend the night there?

Van der Lubbe: Because I could sleep well there.
(Laughter).

Dimitrov: He was there, because he could sleep well there, that is how he answered. Is it true, however, that he went from there to Berlin and in the evening of February 27 was here, in the Reichstag, at the fire and that he personally took part in setting the fire?

President: Why, he himself kindled the fire.

Dimitrov: Took part! I am asking whether it is true that he left Hennigsdorf for Berlin, spent the whole day in Berlin, on the evening of February 27 was here, in the Reichstag, and took part in setting the Reichstag on fire. Yes or no, is this true?

President: I want to ask once more: did you set the fire?

Van der Lubbe: Yes.

Dimitrov: Is it true that he did not do that alone? (V a n d e r L u b b e k e e p s s i l e n t).

Dimitrov: Is it not true, Mr. President, that on account of the conduct of van der Lubbe in the Court, namely his silence, his answers: yes and no, his refusal to describe the real situation – is it not true that the behaviour of van der Lubbe* gives rise to the possibility of accusing innocent people, who are sitting here as sham-incendiaries of the Reichstag and does not this behaviour facilitate and intensify the possibility of carrying out a monstrous raid against the Communists...

President: Shut up!

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 179–182.

Published by the BCP, 1960

* During the whole trial van der Lubbe gave the impression of an abnormal man. He did not answer the questions, looked absentmindedly about or sat with his head dropping, his nose running. Numerous newspapers and medical experts explained van der Lubbe's condition by the fact that the fascist prison authorities had put narcotic poisons in his food.

TO DR. BÜNGER, *President of the 4th Penal Department of
the Supreme Court*

November 16, 1933

Dear Mr. President:

In connexion with the political aspect of the Reichstag fire trial, I propose to have the President of the German Communist Party, *Ernst Thaelmann*,⁷⁶ questioned as a witness.

He should especially be questioned about the following:

1. Whether it is true that the German Communist Party as early as 1932 was subjected to intensified persecutions, assaults and systematic restrictions of its possibilities to continue its activity and struggle?

2. Whether it is true that the persecutions of the German Communist Party were accompanied by a series of assaults upon Communist meetings and demonstrations, upon Communist premises and individual Communist workers and activists on the part of the armed detachments of the National Socialist Party, whether as a result of these assaults the Communists suffered numerous casualties and the party was thereby obliged to resist by means of mass struggle?

3. Whether it is true that these persecutions and assaults, carried out jointly by state officials and National Socialist detachments, turned, after January 30, 1933, into an extermination campaign against the German Communist Party and the workers' organizations through all-sided use of the state power?

4. Whether it is true that early in 1933 and at the time of the Reichstag fire the whole activity of the Party, in accordance with the decisions of the Communist International, was turned towards the political mobilization of the masses, the establishment of united front of the

proletariat and the defence of the workers' movement and its vanguard – the German Communist Party, and in no way towards an immediate armed struggle for power?

5. Whether it is true that, in connexion with these main problems and this political orientation, the Party resolutely and with all its power fought against terrorist deviations, against every terrorist degeneration, for persistent and systematic mass work and mass struggle of an economic and political nature?

6. Whether it is true that as early as 1932 the Party resolutely came out against any terrorist interpretation of the slogan 'beat the fascists' and later on, in order to avoid all misunderstanding, repealed this slogan altogether.

7. Whether it is true that the Party, in the course of its long years of development, carried out a series of purges and expelled from its ranks all alien, adventurous and undisciplined elements (the grouts of Ivan Katz, Ruth Fisher – Maslow,⁷⁷ the Trotskyites and so on) and that many of these elements found their place in the National Socialist Party and its SA and SS detachments?

Respectfully yours,
G. Dimitrov

MINUTES OF THE SPEECH BEFORE THE COURT

Delivered on December 16, 1933

Dimitrov: By virtue of Article 258 of the Criminal Procedure Code I am entitled to speak both as defender and as accused.

President: You have the right to the last word and you can make use of that right now.

Dimitrov: By virtue of the Criminal Procedure Code I have the right to argue with the prosecution and then to deliver my final speech.

My Lords Judges, Gentlemen for the Prosecution and the Defence. At the very beginning of this trial three months ago as an accused man I addressed a letter to the President of the Court. I wrote that I regretted that my attitude in Court should lead to collisions with the judges, but I categorically refuted the suggestion which was made against me that I had misused my right to put questions and my right to make statements in order to serve propagandist ends. Because I was wrongly accused before this Court I naturally used all the means at my disposal to defend myself against false charges.

I acknowledge, I wrote, that several of my questions had not been as apposite from the point of view of time and formulation as I could have wished. May I explain this by referring to the fact that I am not acquainted with German law and further that this is the first time in my life in which I have played a part in judicial proceedings of this character. If I had enjoyed the services of a lawyer of my own choice I should doubtless have known how to avoid these misunderstandings so harmful to my own defence.

Permit me to recall that all my requests for the admission as my defending counsel of Mr. Dechev, Moro-Giafferi, Campinchi, Torrès, Grigorov, Leo Gallagher from the United States and Dr. Lehman from Saarbrücken were one after another rejected by the Supreme Court for

various reasons. Mr. Dechev, as is now apparent, was even refused an entrance ticket.

I have no personal distrust of Dr. Paul Teichert either as a man or as a lawyer, but in the present conditions in Germany I cannot have the necessary confidence in his official defence. For this reason I am attempting to defend myself, a course in which I have been sometimes guilty of taking steps legally inapposite.

In the interests of my defence before the Supreme Court and also, as I am convinced, in the interests of the normal course of the trial, I now apply to the Court for the last time to permit the lawyer, *Marcel Willard*, engaged by my sister, to take part in my defence.

If the Court also rejects this application, then the only course remaining open for me is to defend myself as best I can alone.

Now that the Court has rejected my last application, I have decided to defend myself. I want neither the honey nor the poison of a defence which is forced upon me. During the whole course of these proceedings I have defended myself.

Naturally I do not feel myself in any way bound by the speech made by Dr. Teichert in my defence. Decisive for my case is only that which I say and have said myself to the Court: I do not wish to offend Torgler, particularly as, in my opinion, his defending counsel has already offended him enough, but as far as I am concerned I would sooner be sentenced to death by this Court though innocent, than be acquitted by the sort of defence put forward by Dr. Sack in favour of Torgler.

President (interrupting Dimitrov): It is none of your business to criticize us here.

Dimitrov: I admit that my tone is hard and grim. The struggle of my life has always been hard and grim. My tone is frank and open. I am used to calling a spade a spade. I am no lawyer appearing before this Court in the mere way of his profession.

I am defending myself, an accused Communist.

I am defending my political honour, my honour as a revolutionary.

I am defending my Communist ideology, my ideals.

I am defending the content and significance of my whole life.

For these reasons every word which I say in this Court is *a part of me*, each phrase is the expression of my deep indignation against the unjust accusation, against the putting of this anti-Communist crime, the burning of the Reichstag, to the account of the Communists.

I have often been reproached for not taking the highest Court in Germany seriously. That is absolutely unjustified.

It is true that the supreme law for me *as a Communist is the programme of the Communist International, the supreme court – the Control Commission of the Communist International.*

But to me as an accused man the Supreme Court of the Reich is something to be considered in all seriousness – not only in that its members possess high legal qualifications, but also because it is a highly important organism of state power, of the ruling order of society: a body which can dispose of the highest penalties. I can say with an easy conscience that everything which I have stated to this Court and everything which I have spoken to the public is the truth and nothing but the truth. As regards my Party, which has been forced underground, I have refused to make any statements. I have always spoken with seriousness and from my inner convictions.

President: I shall not permit you to indulge in Communist propaganda in this Court. You have persisted in it. If you do not refrain I shall have to prevent you from speaking.

Dimitrov: I must deny absolutely the suggestion that I have pursued propagandist aims. It may be that my defence before this Court has had a certain propagandist effect. It is also possible that my conduct before this Court may serve as an example for other accused Communists. But those were not the aims of my defence. My aims were these: to refute the indictment and to refute the accusation that Dimitrov, Torgler, Popov, and Tanev, that the German Communist Party and the Communist International had anything to do with the fire.

I know that no one in Bulgaria believes in our alleged complicity in the Reichstag fire. I know that everywhere else abroad hardly anyone believes that we have anything to do with it. But in Germany other conditions prevail and

in Germany it is not impossible that people might believe such extraordinary assertions. For this reason I desired to prove that the Communist Party had and has nothing whatever to do with the crime.

If the question of propaganda is to be raised, then I may fairly say that many utterances made within this Court were of a propagandist character. The speeches here of Goebbels and Goering had an indirect propagandist effect favourable to Communism, but no one can reproach them for their speeches having produced such results (c o m m o t i o n a n d l a u g h t e r i n C o u r t).

I have not only been roundly abused by the press – something to which I am completely indifferent – but my Bulgarian people have also, through me, been characterized as savage and barbarous. I have been called a suspicious character from the Balkans, and a wild Bulgarian, I cannot allow such things to pass in silence.

It is true that Bulgarian fascism is savage and barbarous. But the Bulgarian workers and peasants, the Bulgarian people's intelligentsia are by no means savage or barbarous. It is true that the standard of life is not so high in the Balkans as elsewhere in Europe, but it is false to say that the people of Bulgaria are politically or mentally on a lower scale than the peoples of other countries. Our political struggle, our political aspirations are no less lofty than those of other peoples. A people which lived for five hundred years under a foreign yoke without losing its language and its national character, our working class and peasantry who have fought and are fighting against Bulgarian fascism and for Communism – such a people is not savage and barbarous. Only fascism in Bulgaria is savage and barbarous. But I ask you, *in what country does not fascism bear these qualities?*

President (i n t e r r u p t i n g D i m i t r o v): Are you attempting to hint at the political situation in Germany?

Dimitrov (w i t h a n i r o n i c a l s m i l e): Of course not, Mr. President... . At a period of history when the German Emperor Karl V vowed that he would talk German only to his horses, at a time when the nobility and intellectual circles of Germany wrote only Latin and were

ashamed of their mother tongue, in 'barbarous' Bulgaria the apostles Cyril and Methodius invented and spread the use of the old Bulgarian script.

The Bulgarian people have fought obstinately and with all their strength against foreign oppression. Therefore I protest here and now against these attacks on my people. I have no cause to be ashamed of being Bulgarian, in fact I am proud to say that I am the son of the Bulgarian working class.

I must preface my discussion of the main issues with this statement. Dr. Teichert has seen fit to accuse us of being responsible for our own plight and position here. In reply I must say that much time has elapsed since March 9, 1933, when we were arrested, to the beginning of this trial. Any suspicious circumstance could have been thoroughly investigated during that period. During the preliminary inquiries I spoke with officials, members of the investigating committee concerning the Reichstag fire. Those officials assured me that we Bulgarians were not responsible for the burning of the Reichstag. We were accused solely of living with false passports, under adopted names, without registration forms and so on.

President: This is new matter. It has not been mentioned in the proceedings hitherto and therefore you have no right to raise it at this stage.

Dimitrov: Mr. President, during that time every circumstance could have been investigated in order promptly to clear us of that charge. The indictment declares that Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev have alleged that they were mere political fugitives from Bulgaria but that it must be considered as proved that they were in Germany for the purpose of illegal political activities.' They are, as the indictment further declares: 'emissaries of the Communist Party in Moscow, sent to Germany to prepare an armed insurrection.'

Page 83 of the indictment points out that although Dimitrov declares that he was not in Berlin from February 25 to 28 this does not materially affect the position and could not free him from the charge of being implicated in the burning of the Reichstag. Complicity, continues the in-

dictment, is proved not only by the evidence of Hellmer, but by other facts...

President (interrupting): You must not read the whole of the indictment here. The Court is quite familiar with it.

Dimitrov: As far as that goes, I must state that three-quarters of what the counsel for the prosecution and defence have said here was generally notorious long ago. But that fact did not prevent them from bringing it forward again (commotion and laughter in Court). Hellmer stated that Dimitrov and van der Lubbe were together in the Bayernhof restaurant. Now permit me to refer again to the indictment which says:

'Although Dimitrov was not caught red-handed at the scene of the crime, he nevertheless took part in the preparations for the burning of the Reichstag. He went to Munich in order to supply himself with an alibi. The Communist pamphlets found in Dimitrov's possession prove that he took part in the Communist movement in Germany.'

That is the basis of this precipitate, this abortive indictment.

President: (interrupting Dimitrov): You must not use this expression with respect to the indictment.

Dimitrov: I shall choose another expression.

President: In any case you must not use such disrespectful terms.

Dimitrov: I shall return in another context to the methods of the prosecution and the indictment.

The character of this trial has been determined by the theory that the burning of the Reichstag was an act of the German Communist Party, even of world Communism. This anti-communist deed, the Reichstag fire, was actually blamed upon the Communists and declared to be the signal for an armed Communist insurrection, a beacon fire for the overthrow of the present German Constitution. An anti-Communist character has been given to the whole proceedings by the use of this theory. The indictment runs:

The charge rests on the basis that this criminal outrage was to be a signal, a beacon for the enemies of the State who were then to launch their attack on the German Reich, to destroy it and to set up in its place a dictatorship of the proletariat, a Soviet State, at the orders of the Third International ...'

My Lords, this is not the first time that such an outrage has been falsely attributed to Communists. I cannot here enumerate all the instances, but I would remind you of a railway outrage committed at Jüterbog in Germany some time ago by a certain mentally-deranged adventurer and agent provocateur. For weeks the newspapers declared both in Germany and abroad that the outrage had been committed by the German Communist Party, that it was a terroristic act of Communists. Then it transpired that a mentally afflicted adventurer, Matushka, was the author of the crime. He was arrested and convicted.

Let me recall yet another instance, the assassination of the French President by Gorgulov. In this case too the press of many lands proclaimed for weeks that the hand of Communism had shown itself. Gorgulov was pronounced to be a Communist and a Soviet agent. And what was the truth? The outrage was the work of Russian White-guards, Gorgulov was an agent provocateur who aimed at sapping the friendly relations between France and the Soviet Union.

I would also remind you of the outrage in the Sofia Cathedral. This attempt was not organized by the Bulgarian Communist Party, but the Bulgarian Communist Party was persecuted on account of it. Under this false accusation two thousand workmen, peasants and intellectuals were brutally murdered by the fascists under the pretext that the Cathedral had been blown up by the Communists. That act of provocation, the blowing up of the Sofia Cathedral, was actually organized by the Bulgarian police. As early as 1920 the Chief of the Sofia police, Proutkin, during the railway strike organized himself a bomb attempt as a means of provoking the Bulgarian workers.

President (i n t e r r u p t i n g): This has nothing to do with this trial.

Dimitrov: The police official Heller spoke here in his evidence of Communist propaganda by arson, etc. I asked him whether he had ever heard of arson having been committed by capitalists in order to get insurance moneys and of Communists having been blamed for them. On October

5, 1933, the *Völkischer Beobachter* wrote that the Stettin police...

President: The article in question was not referred to at any time during these proceedings.

Dimitrov: (a t t e m p t s t o c o n t i n u e).

President: Do not dare to refer here to matters which have not been previously referred to in the course of the trial.

Dimitrov: A whole series of fires...

President: (a g a i n i n t e r r u p t s).

Dimitrov: It was dealt with during the preliminary proceedings, because the Communists were accused of having been responsible for a whole series of fires which turned out to have been committed by the owners of the buildings themselves 'in order to make employment.' I should like also for a moment to refer to the question of forged documents. Numbers of such forgeries have been made use of against the working class. Their name is legion. There was, for example, the notorious Zinoviev letter, a letter which never emanated from Zinoviev, and which was a deliberate forgery. The British Conservative Party made effective use of the forgery against the working class. I would like to remind you also of a series of forgeries which have played a part in German politics...

President: That lies outside the scope of these proceedings.

Dimitrov: It was alleged here that the burning of the Reichstag was to be the signal for the breaking out of an armed insurrection. Attempts were made to justify this theory after the following fashion:

'Goering declared before the Court that the German Communist Party was compelled to incite the masses and to undertake something when Hitler came to power. He proclaimed that the Communists were forced to act then or never. He stated that the Communist Party had for years been appealing to the masses against the National Socialist Party and that, when the latter attained power, the Communists had no alternative but to do something immediately or not at all. The Public Prosecutor attempted more clearly and ingenuously to formulate this hypothesis.'

President: I will not permit you to insult the Public Prosecutor.

Dimitrov: The statement which Goering as chief accuser made was developed by the Public Prosecutor in this Court. Dr. Werner declared:

'That the Communist Party had been forced into a situation in which it must either capitulate or give battle although preparations for a fight had not been fully completed. In the circumstances that was its only alternative: either to surrender its aims without a struggle or take a risk, dare a hazard which might after the circumstances in its favour. It might fail, but its situation even then would be no worse than having surrendered without firing a shot.'

This thesis, presented by the prosecution and laid at the door of the Communists, is certainly no Communist thesis. It shows that the enemies of the German Communist Party do not know it much. He who desires to fight his enemy well, must learn to know him. Prohibition of the Party, dissolution of the mass organizations, loss of legality are serious blows indeed for the revolutionary movement. *But this by no means signifies that all is lost.*

In February 1933 the Communist Party was faced with the threat of suppression, the Communist press had been prohibited and the destruction of the Party as a legal organization was momentarily expected. These things the German Communist Party knew well. They were pointed out in pamphlets and newspapers. The German Communist Party was well aware of the fact that although the Communist Parties of many other lands were illegal they nevertheless continued to exist and to carry on their activities. Such is the position in Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and many other lands.

From my own experience I am able to speak of the position in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Communist Party there was prohibited after the uprising of 1923, but has nevertheless continued to exist and to work. Despite great sacrifices it has in time become more powerful than in 1923, prior to its suppression. Anyone with a critical faculty can appreciate the importance of this phenomenon.

Given the necessary situation, the German Communist Party, although illegal, can still carry out a successful revolution. The

experience of the *Russian Communist Party* proves this. Despite its illegality and the violence of the persecution to which it was subjected, that Party won over the working class in the end and came to power at its head. The leaders of the German Communist Party could not possibly think that with the suppression of their Party all would be lost; that at any given moment the question was now or never; that the alternative was insurrection or doom. The leaders of the German Communist Party could not have entertained such foolish thoughts. Naturally they knew perfectly well that illegality would entail tremendous losses, that it would mean self-sacrifice and heroism, but they also knew that the revolutionary forces of the Party would increase again and that one day it would be able to accomplish its final tasks successfully. For these reasons the possibility of the German Communist Party seeking to indulge in any hazards at any moment must be rigorously excluded. *The Communists fortunately are not so nearsighted as their opponents; neither do they lose their heads in difficult situations.*

It must be added that, like every other Communist Party, the German Communist Party is a section of the Communist International. What is the Communist International? Permit me to quote from its programme.

Its first paragraph runs as follows:

The Communist International, an international association of workers, is the association of the Communist Parties in individual lands; it is a united world Communist Party, the leader and organizer of the universal revolutionary movement of the proletariat, the bearer of the principles and aims of Communism. Therefore, the Communist International fights to win the majority of the working class and the broad sections of the peasantry for the establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, for the creation of a world union of Socialist Soviet Republics, for the complete abolition of classes and for the setting up of Socialism as the first stage towards a Communist society.

In this Party of the Communist International, which numbers millions of members all over the world, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the strongest single unit. It is the governing Party of the Soviet Union, the largest State in the world. The Communist International, the world Communist Party, assesses the political situation together with the Communist Parties of all countries.

The Communist International to which all its sections are directly responsible is a world Party, not a mere organization of conspirators. *Such a world Party does not play with insurrection and revolution.* Such a Party cannot officially say one thing to its millions of adherents and at the same time in secret do *exactly the opposite.* Such a Party, my dear Dr. Sack, does not go in for double book-keeping.

Dr. Sack: All right. Carry on with your Communist propaganda.

Dimitrov: Such a Party proceeds with all seriousness and with a full awareness of its responsibility when it approaches the millions of the proletariat and when it adopts its decisions concerning tactics and immediate tasks. Permit me to quote from the decisions of the Twelfth Plenary Session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, for these decisions were quited in Court and I therefore have a right to read them out.

According to these decisions the chief tasks of the German Communist Party were:

'To mobilize the masses of the toilers in defence of their day-to-day demands, against the robber offensive of monopoly capital, against fascism, against the emergency decrees, against nationalism and chauvinism and, by developing political and economic strikes and the struggle for proletarian internationalism, as well as by demonstrations, to bring the masses to the point of a political general strike; to win over the main sections of the Social Democratic workers by overcoming the weakness in the trade union activity of the party. The main slogan which the German Communist Party must put in the forefront, against the slogan of the fascist dictatorship, the Third Reich and the slogan of the Social Democratic Party, the Weimar Republic, must be the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic, Soviet Socialist Germany, which in itself contains the possibility of the voluntary adherence of Austria and other German lands.'

Mass work, mass activity, mass opposition and the united front—no adventurism — these are the alpha and omega of Communist tactics.

A copy of the appeal of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was found in my possession. I take it that I may read from it. Two points in it are of particular importance. The appeal speaks of demonstrations in various countries in connexion with the events in Ger-

many. It further speaks of the tasks of the Communist Party in Germany in its fight against the National Socialist terror and for the defence of the organizations and the press of the working class.

This appeal reads in part as follows:

The main obstacle on the road to the establishment of a united front of the Communist and Social Democratic workers was and is the policy of co-operation with the bourgeoisie carried out by the Social Democratic parties, which have now exposed the international proletariat to the blows of the class enemy. This policy of co-operation with the bourgeoisie known as the so-called policy of the 'lesser evil' has in fact led to the triumph of fascist reaction in Germany.

The Communist International and the Communist parties in all countries have repeatedly expressed their readiness for a joint struggle with the Social Democratic workers against the onslaught of capital and political reaction and against the war peril. It was the Communist parties that organized the common struggle in spite of the opposition of the leaders of the Social Democratic parties which systematically foiled the united front of the working masses.

As early as July 20 last year, after von Papen forced out the Prussian Social Democratic Government, the German Communist Party proposed to the German Social Democratic Party and the All-German Trade Union Association to organize a joint strike against fascism. However, with the approval of the whole Second International, the German Social Democratic Party and the All-German Trade Union Association described the joint strike proposal as a provocation. The German Communist Party reiterated its proposal for united action at the time of Hitler's advent to power, calling upon the Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party and the leadership of the All-German Trade Union Association to organize united resistance against fascism; this proposal was again rejected. Moreover, when in November last the Berlin transport workers unanimously went on strike against the wage cuts, the Social Democrats foiled the united front of struggle. The history of the international working class movement abounds in similar examples.

The appeal of the Bureau of the Socialist Workers' International of February 19 this year contains a declaration by the Social Democratic Parties, members of the International, expressing their readiness to establish a united front with the Communists to combat fascist reaction in Germany. This declaration stands in sharp contrast with all former activities of the Socialist International and of the Social Democratic Parties. The entire policy and activity of the Socialist International so far give the Communist International and the Communist Parties grounds to distrust the sincerity of the declaration of the Bureau of the Socialist Workers' International which makes its proposal at a time when in a number of countries and, above all, in Germany the working class itself is taking the organization of a united front into its own hands.

Nevertheless, in the face of the fascist onslaught on the German working class – an onslaught which is unleashing all the forces of world reaction, the Executive Committee of the Communist International calls upon all the Communist Parties to make yet another attempt to establish a united front with the Social Democratic working masses through the Social Democratic Parties. The Executive Committee of the Communist International is making this attempt in the firm conviction that the united front of the working class against the bourgeoisie would repel the onslaught of capital and fascism and would precipitate the inevitable doom of every type of capitalist exploitation.

Due to the peculiar conditions prevailing in the different countries and to the different specific tasks which the working class in each of these countries is facing, the agreements between the Communist Parties and the Social Democratic Parties for concrete action against the bourgeoisie can best be carried out within the framework of each individual country. That is why the Executive Committee of the Communist International recommends to the Communist Parties to propose joint action against fascism and the onslaught of capital to the respective Central Committees of the Social Democratic Parties, members of the Socialist International. The essential conditions of the joint struggle against the onslaught of capital and fascism should form the basis of all negotiations to this effect. Without a specific programme of action against the bourgeoisie, any agreement between the parties would be directed against the interests of the working class.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International make these proposals before the entire world working class and calls upon all Communist Parties and; above all, upon the German Communist Party to proceed with the immediate establishment of joint action committees both with the Social Democratic workers and with the workers of all other trends, without waiting for the results of the negotiations and agreements for joint action with Social Democracy.

By their long struggle the Communists have demonstrated not in words but in practice that they have always stood and will always stand in the front ranks of the struggle for a united front in the class action against the bourgeoisie.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International is confident that the Social Democratic and non-party workers will overcome all obstacles, irrespective of the attitude the leaders of Social Democracy may take with regard to the establishment of a united front, and that together with the Communists they will achieve a united front not in words, but in practice.

Now that German fascism, in order to crush the working class movement in Germany, has organized a monstrous provocation – the setting of the Reichstag on fire, a forged document about an insurrection, etc. – precisely now every worker should realize his class duty in the struggle against the onslaught of capital and of fascist reaction.

This appeal contains no mention of any immediate struggle for power. Such a task was put forward neither by the German Communist Party, nor by the Communist International. It is of course true that the appeal of the Communist International does not preclude the possibility of armed insurrection.

From this the Court has falsely concluded that, having an armed insurrection as one of its aims, the German Communist Party must necessarily have prepared for an insurrection and worked for its immediate outbreak. But that is illogical, it is untrue, to use no stronger expression. Naturally the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the task of all Communist Parties the world over. That is our principle; that is our aim. But that is a definite programme, the realization of which requires the forces not merely of the working class but of the other sections of the working people as well.

Everyone knows that the German Communist Party was in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but that is by no means a point decisive for these proceedings. The point is simply this: was an armed insurrection aimed at the seizure of power actually planned to take place on February 27, 1933, in connexion with the Reichstag fire?

What, my Lords, have been the results of the legal investigations? The legend that the Reichstag fire was a Communist act has been completely shattered. Unlike some counsels here, I shall not quote much of the evidence. To any person of normal intelligence at least this point is now made completely clear, that the Reichstag fire had nothing whatever to do with any activity of the Communist Party, not only nothing to do with an insurrection, but even nothing to do with a strike, a demonstration or anything of that nature. *The legal investigations have proved this up to the hilt. The Reichstag fire was not regarded by anyone – I exclude criminals and the mentally deranged – as a signal for insurrection. No one observed any deed, act or attempt at insurrection in connexion with the Reichstag fire. No one had heard then anything of the kind. The very stories of such things expressly appertain to a much later date. At that moment the working class was in a position of defence*

against the attack of fascism. The German Communist Party was seeking to organize the opposition of the masses in their own defence. But it was proved that *the Reichstag fire furnished the occasion and the signal for unleashing the most terrific campaign of suppression against the German working class and its vanguard, the German Communist Party.*

It has been proved beyond refutation that the responsible members of the Government did not even consider the possibility of a Communist insurrection on February 27 or 28. Upon this point I put many questions to the witnesses who appeared here. In particular I asked Heller, the notorious Karwahne (*laughter in the Court*), Frey, Count Helldorf and the police officers such questions. Despite other contradictions in their evidence, they were all agreed on one thing, that they neither knew nor had heard anything about an imminent Communist insurrection. That indicates that the ruling circles had taken no measures of any kind against the possibility of such an insurrection.

President: A report from the head of the Western Department of the police was submitted, however, to the Court on this matter.

Dimitrov: The head of the Western Department of the police, in his report, stated that he was summoned to Goering who gave him verbal instructions concerning the fight against Communism, that is to say, for the suppression of Communist meetings, strikes, demonstrations, election propaganda, etc. But his evidence mentioned no measures to be taken against the threat of an imminent Communist insurrection.

Yesterday Dr. Seuffert dealt in his speech with the very same point and arrived at the conclusion that no governmental authority was anticipating the outbreak of any insurrection. He referred also to the evidence of Goebbels who stated, whether truly or not is another question, that when he first heard the news of the Reichstag fire he did not believe it.

To this point the Government's emergency decree of February 28, 1933, provides further proof. It was issued on the morning after the fire. Read the decree – what does it

say? It announces the suspension of various articles of the Constitution, particularly those guaranteeing the freedom of organization and the press, the inviolability of the person, the immunity of domicile and so forth. That is the essence of the emergency decree, its second paragraph; it is an assault on the working class.

President: Not against the workers, but against the Communists.

Dimitrov: I should like to point out that under this emergency decree not only Communists, but also Social Democratic and Christian workmen were arrested and their organizations suppressed. I would like to stress the fact that although this decree was directed chiefly against the Communist Party, it was not directed solely against it. This law, which was necessary for the proclamation of the state of emergency, was directed against all the other political parties and groups as well. It stands in direct organic connexion with the Reichstag fire.

President: If you attack the German Government, I shall deprive you of the right to address the Court.

Dimitrov: In this trial one question has not been at all elucidated.

President: You should address the judges and not the audience, for otherwise your speech might be considered as propaganda.

Dimitrov: One question has not been elucidated, either by the prosecution or by the defending counsel. This omission does not surprise me. For it is a question which must have given them some anxiety. I refer to the question of the political situation in Germany in February 1933 – a matter which I must perforce deal with now. The political situation towards the end of February 1933 was this, that a bitter struggle was taking place within the camp of the National Front!

President: You are again raising matters which I have repeatedly forbidden you to mention.

Dimitrov: I should like to remind the Court of my application that Schleicher, Brüning, von Papen, Hugenberg, Duesterberg, the Vice-Chairman of the

Stahlhelm organization, and others, should be summoned as witnesses.

President: The Court rejected the application and you have no right to refer to it again.

Dimitrov: I know that, and more, I know why.

President: It is unpleasant for me continually to have to interrupt you in your closing speech, but you must respect my directions.

Dimitrov: This struggle taking place in the camp of the National Front was connected with the behind-the-scenes struggle in Germany's leading economic circles. On the one hand was the Krupp-Thyssen circle (the war industry), which for many years past has supported the National Socialists; on the other hand, being gradually pushed into the background, were their opponents.

Thyssen and Krupp wished to establish the principle of absolutism, a political dictatorship under their own personal direction and to substantially depress the living standards of the working class; it was to this end that the crushing of the revolutionary working class was necessary. At the same time the Communist Party was striving to establish a united working class front and to consolidate all forces in resistance to the National Socialist attempts to destroy the working class movement. Part of the Social Democratic workers felt the need of a united front of the working class. They understood it. Many thousands of Social Democratic workers joined the ranks of the German Communist Party. But in February and March, the establishment of a united front meant the mobilization of the working class against the predatory drive of the capitalists and the violence of the National Socialists; it certainly did not mean insurrection or preparations for insurrection.

President (interrupting): You have always stressed that your sole interest was the Bulgarian political situation. Your present remarks, however, show that you were also keenly interested in the political situation in Germany.

Dimitrov: Mr. President, you are making an accusation against me. I can only make this reply: as a Bulgarian revolutionary I am interested in the revolutionary movement all over the world. I am, for instance, interested in

the political situation in South America and, although I have never been there, I know perhaps as much about it as I do of German politics. That does not mean that when a government building in South America is burned down I am the culprit. During these legal proceedings I have learned much and, thanks to my political capacity for appreciating things, many details have become clear to me.

The political situation at that time was governed by two chief factors: the first was the effort of the National Socialists to attain power, the second, the counter-factor, was the efforts of the German Communist Party to build up a united working class front. In my view, the accuracy of this has been made abundantly clear during these proceedings.

The National Socialists needed something which would both divert the attention of the people from the difficulties within the National Front and, at the same time, break up the united front of the working class. The 'National Government' needed a plausible excuse for its emergency decree of February 28, which abolished the freedom of the press and of the inviolability of the individual and introduced a system of police persecution, concentration camps and other measures against the Communists.

President(i n t e r r u p t i n g): Now you have reached the limit, you are dropping hints.

Dimitrov: My only desire is to explain the political situation in Germany on the eve of the fire, as I understand it to have been.

President: This Court is no place for unwarranted suggestions against the government and for statements long since refuted.

Dimitrov: The attitude of the working class at this time was a defensive one; the Communist Party was, therefore, doing its best to organize a united front in spite of the opposition of Wells and Breitscheid who are now raising a hysterical hue and cry abroad.

President: You must proceed to your own defence if you want to, otherwise you will not have sufficient time.

Dimitrov: Once before I stated that I was in accord with the indictment on one point, and now I am compelled to

reaffirm my agreement. I allude to the question whether van der Lubbe acted *alone* in setting fire to the Reichstag or whether he had accomplices. The junior prosecuting counsel, Parrisius, declared here that the fate of the accused depended upon the answer to the question whether van der Lubbe had accomplices. To this I answer, no, a thousand noes. Such a conclusion is illogical and does not follow. *My own deduction is that van der Lubbe did not set fire to the Reichstag alone.* On the basis of the experts' opinions and the evidence which has been submitted, I conclude that the fire in the Plenary Session Chamber of the Reichstag was of a nature different from that in the restaurant, the ground floor, etc. The Session Chamber was set on fire by other persons, employing other means. *Although coincident in time* with the fires caused by van der Lubbe himself, the fire in the Session Chamber is fundamentally *different*. Most probably van der Lubbe is the unconscious tool of these people, a tool they have misused. Van der Lubbe has by no means told the truth in this Court and he remains persistently silent. The answer to this question does not decide the fate of the other accused. Van der Lubbe was not *alone, true*; but neither Dimitrov, nor Torgler, nor Popov, nor Tanev was in his company.

Is it not probable that van der Lubbe met someone in Hennigsdorf on February 26 and told him of his attempts to set fire to the Town Hall and the Palace? Whereat the person in question replied that things such as those were mere child's play, that the burning down of the Reichstag during the elections would be something real. In this way the secret alliance between political insanity and political provocation resulted in the Reichstag fire. While the representative of political insanity sits today in the dock, the representatives of provocation are still free. This fool, van der Lubbe, could not know that, while he was carrying out his clumsy attempts at arson in the restaurant, corridor and lower floor, at the same time other unknown persons, making use of that secret inflammable liquid of which Dr. Schatz here spoke, set the Session Chamber on fire.

(At this point van der Lubbe began to laugh silently. His whole body was shaken with spasms of laughter. The attention of

everyone, the Court and the accused included, was directed upon him)

Dimitrov (pointing at van der Lubbe): The unknown provocateur made all the preparations for the conflagration. This Mephistopheles succeeded in disappearing without a trace. Now this stupid tool, this miserable Faustus is here in the dock, while Mephistopheles has disappeared. It is most probable that the link between van der Lubbe and the representatives of political provocation, the agents of the enemies of the working class, was forged in Hennigsdorf.

The Public Prosecutor Werner declared that van der Lubbe was a Communist. He went further, he asserted that even if van der Lubbe was not a Communist he carried out his deed in the interests of and in association with the Communist Party. That argument is entirely false.

What is van der Lubbe? A Communist? Inconceivable. An Anarchist? No. He is a declassed worker, a rebellious member of the scum of society. He is a misused creature who has been played off against the working class. No, he is neither a Communist nor an Anarchist. No Communist, no Anarchist anywhere in the world would conduct himself in Court as van der Lubbe has done. Genuine Anarchists often do senseless things, but invariably when they are haled into Court they stand up like men and explain their aims. If a Communist had done anything of this sort, he would not remain silent knowing that four innocent men stood in the dock alongside him. No, van der Lubbe is no Communist. He is no Anarchist; he is the misused tool of fascism.

The Chairman of the Communist Parliamentary Group and we Bulgarians accused alongside him have nothing in common, nor any connexion with this creature, this poor misused scapegoat, who has been misused to the detriment of Communism. Permit me to remind the Court that on the morning of February 28 Goering issued a statement on the fire, declaring that Torgler and Koenen had together fled from the Reichstag at 10 o'clock the previous evening.

This statement was broadcast all over Germany. In the same statement Goering declared that the Communists had

set the Reichstag on fire. Yet no attempt has been made to investigate van der Lubbe's movements in Hennigsdorf. No search is made for the man with whom van der Lubbe passed the night there.

President (i n t e r r u p t i n g): When do you intend to conclude your speech?

Dimitrov: I want to speak for another half-hour. I must express my views on this question...

President: You cannot go on for ever.

Dimitrov: Mr. President, during the three months this trial has lasted you have silenced me on many occasions with the promise that at the conclusion of the trial I should be able to speak fully in my defence. The trial is drawing to a close now, but contrary to your promise you are now limiting me in my right to address the Court.

The question of what happened in Hennigsdorf is indeed of importance. The man with whom van der Lubbe spent the night there, Waschinski, has not been found, and my suggestion that the police should search for him was rejected as useless. The assertion that van der Lubbe was in Hennigsdorf together with Communists is a lie, concocted here by the National Socialist witness, the barber Grawe. Had van der Lubbe met Communists in Hennigsdorf, the question would have been gone into long ago, Mr. President. But no one is interested in finding Waschinski.

The civilian who brought the first news of the fire to the police at the Brandenburger Tor has not been searched for, his identity remains unestablished, he is still unknown. The preliminary examination was conducted in a false direction. Dr. Albrecht, the National Socialist deputy who hurried out of the Reichstag after the fire had begun, was not interrogated. The incendiaries were sought where they were not to be found, in the ranks of the Communist Party, rather than where they would have been found. Thus the real culprits were permitted to disappear. It was decided that since the real incendiaries could and dared not be found, other persons had to be taken in their stead, Ersatz-incendiaries of the Reichstag.

President: I forbid you to make such statements and I give you another ten minutes.

Dimitrov: I have the right to lay my own reasoned proposals for the verdict before the Court. The Public Prosecutor stated that all the evidence given by Communists was not worthy of credence. I shall not adopt the contrary view. Thus I shall not declare that all National Socialist witnesses are liars. I believe that among the millions of National Socialists there are also honest people...

President: I forbid you to make such ill-intentioned remarks.

Dimitrov: But is it not remarkable that all the chief witnesses called in support of the prosecution are National Socialist deputies, journalists or hangers-on? The National Socialist deputy Karwahne declares that he saw Torgler with van der Lubbe in the Reichstag. The National Socialist deputy Frey declares that he saw Popov with Torgler in the Reichstag. The National Socialist Walter Hellmer declares that he saw Dimitrov with van der Lubbe. The National Socialist journalist Weberstedt asserts that he saw Tanev with van der Lubbe. Is this a mere accident? The witness, Dr. Droscher, known under the name of Zimmermann to contribute to the National Socialist *Völkischer Beobachter*...

President (i n t e r r u p t i n g): This has not been proved.

Dimitrov: ... Stated in Court that Dimitrov was responsible for the Sofia Cathedral outrage, which was completely disproved, and alleges that he has seen me with Torgler in the Reichstag. I declare with absolute certainty that Droscher and Zimmermann are one and the same person....

President: I reject this assertion. It has not been proved.

Dimitrov: Heller, the police official, read in Court a Communist poem out of a book published in 1925 to prove that the Communists set the Reichstag on fire in 1933.

Permit me also the pleasure of quoting a poem, a poem by the greatest German poet, Goethe:

Lerne zeitig klüger sein.
Auf des Glückes großer Waage
Steht die Zunge selten ein;
Du mußt steigen oder sinken,
Du mußt herrschen und gewinnen

Oder dienen und verlieren,
Leiden oder triumphieren,
Amboß oder Hammer sein.

Yes, he who does not want to be an anvil, must be a hammer.
The German working class did not realize the truth of this either in 1918, or in 1923, or on July 20, 1932, or in January 1933... The Social Democratic leaders bear the responsibility for this – the Wellses, the Severings, the Brauns, the Leiparts, the Grassmanns. The German workers can now understand this!

Much has been said here about German law and legality, and I should like to express my views on the matter. Undoubtedly, the political constellation ascendant at any particular moment and the prevailing political trends affect the decisions of a court of law.

The Court considers the Minister of Justice Kerl as a competent witness. I am quoting him:

The prejudice of formal-liberalistic law lies in the fact that objectivity should be the idol of justice. We have now arrived also at the source of the alienation of the people from justice, and all matters considered, justice is always responsible for this alienation. What does, after all, objectivity mean at a moment when a nation is fighting for its very existence? Is objectivity known to the soldier at war, is it known to the victorious army? The soldiers and the army have but one consideration, they recognize only one question: how to save freedom and honour, how to save the nation.

Thus, it is self-understood that the justice of a nation waging a life-and-death struggle cannot stand in awe before dead objectivity. The actions of the Court, the prosecutor's office and the bar should be dictated solely by one consideration: what is important for the life of the nation, what saves the nation.

Not unprincipled objectivity, which means stagnation and with it ossification, alienation from the people – no. All the actions, all the measures of the collective as a whole and of the individual should be subordinated to the vital needs of the people, of the nation.

Thus, justice is a relative concept ...

President: This is irrelevant. You must now bring forward your proposals.

Dimitrov: The Public Prosecutor has proposed that the Bulgarians accused should be acquitted for lack of proof. I am far from being satisfied. The question is not quite that

simple. This would not clear us from suspicion. The truth is that this trial has proved absolutely conclusively that we had nothing whatsoever to do with the Reichstag fire and that there is not the slightest ground to entertain further suspicions against us. We Bulgarians, and Torgler too, must all be acquitted, not for lack of proof, but because we, as Communists, neither have nor could have anything to do with an anti-Communist deed.

I therefore propose the following verdict:

1. That Torgler, Popov, Tanev and myself should be pronounced innocent by the Supreme Court and that the indictment be quashed as ill-founded;

2. That van der Lubbe should be declared to be the mis-used tool of the enemies of the working class;

3. That those responsible for the false charges against us should be made criminally liable for them;

4. That we should be compensated for the losses which we have sustained through this trial, for our wasted time, our impaired health and for the sufferings which we have undergone.

President: These so-called proposals of yours will be taken into consideration by the Court during the deliberations on the verdict.

Dimitrov: A time will come when such proposals will have to be settled, with interest. The elucidation of the Reichstag fire and the identification of the real incendiaries is a task which will fall to the People's Court of the future proletarian dictatorship.

In the seventeenth century the founder of scientific physics, Galileo, was arraigned before the stern Court of the Inquisition which had to condemn him to death as a heretic. With profound conviction and determination he exclaimed:

'Eppur si muove!'

This scientific law later became known to all mankind.

President (curtly interrupts Dimitrov, rises, collects his papers and prepares to leave).

Dimitrov(c o n t i n u e s): *No less determined than old Galileo we, Communists, declare today:*

Eppur si muove!

The wheel of history moves on towards Soviet Europe, towards a World Union of Soviet Republics.

And neither any measures of extermination, nor prisons or death sentences will be able to stop this wheel, driven by the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist International. It moves and moves towards the final victory of Communism.

(The police seizes Dimitrov and forcefully compels him to sit down in the dock of the defendants.

The President and the Court retire to deliberate on whether Dimitrov should be permitted to continue his speech. After deliberation, the Court returns and announces that Dimitrov is forbidden to speak further).

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 256-287

Published by the BCP, 1960

REMARKS ON THE SENTENCE⁷⁸

Drafted Outline of an Unpronounced Speech before the Court

The Court is confronted with a difficult task: it has to pay Peter without robbing Paul. The sentence is an unsuccessful attempt at solving the unsolvable problem.

It will be up to the future proletarian dictatorship in Germany to find and sentence the real culprits and the persons behind the scenes – 'Mephistopheles'.

The Chief Prosecutor found himself in the position of a mother who has had a miscarriage.

Why a 'miscarriage'?

Because to formally pronounce Communism as guilty, after all disclosures before the Court to the contrary, actually is tantamount to an indirect admission that the National Socialists are guilty!

If van der Lubbe had had accomplices and if these were neither Torgler nor the other accused persons, then what?...

The question then comes up: *Why*, in the course of five months of preliminary inquest and three months of Court sessions, were the real accomplices not discovered?

And what is more, these accomplices must have been 'insiders', i. e. persons familiar with the distribution and inside structure of the Reichstag. Otherwise van der Lubbe could not have perpetrated the fire; but who, apart from the National Socialists, could have known these things at that time?

Who could, at a time when the Communists were under strict observation and persecuted, calmly and unhindered enter and leave the Reichstag?

And then:

Hennigsdorf – the asylum? Other asylums? The young man in Spandau?

The unknown civilian?

The National Socialist deputy Dr. Albrecht?

The legend about the conversation in Neuköln?

The police interrogation of van der Lubbe without a Dutch translator?

Karwahne, Frey, Kroyer, Weberstedt, Droscher, Hellmer?

Kämpfer, Kunzak, Lebermann, Grohte?

An appeal? A signal? But what for?

For a 'national revolution,' for an extermination campaign against the workers' movement and the German Communist Party.

For the establishment of a 'totalitarian state', of National Socialist 'total power'!

'High treason'? No!

High treason against the people, i. e. betrayal of the German people!

Fascist dictatorship – the dictatorship of capital: Thyssen and Krupp!

December 23, 1933

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 291-292

Published by the BCP, 1960

AN INTERVIEW WITH DIMITROV

'Goering wants me to be executed!'

London, February 7, 1934

Daily Express published an interview with Dimitrov. The conversation took place at the office of criminal councillor Heller in the Secret State Police building in Berlin.

'A door was opened,' wrote the correspondent, 'and Dimitrov entered, accompanied by a guard... His first words revealed that he was suffering.'

'Physically I feel alright,' he said. 'It is true that I have been smoking much, but I am in good spirit. You can easily understand that. For five months in manacles, three months before the Court, and in the end - this. No, I am not in good shape. The prison has an adverse effect on a man like myself... Why do they not release me? I understand that Goering wants me to be executed, and I too would think like him if I were a member of the German government, but to keep a man in prison after a verdict of 'not guilty' - that is what I cannot understand. I protest against this, and believe that you too will protest for me.'

'For a moment,' wrote the correspondent, 'I caught a glimpse of that Dimitrov who had resisted judges, lawyers and witnesses.. a man fighting for his life.'

'When set free,' explained Dimitrov, 'I shall not go to Russia. Russia is the motherland of every revolutionary, but I have not lost my Bulgarian citizenship, and I wish to go to my own country. I sent a letter to the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Moushanov, but do not doubt that he will have me arrested at the frontier...'

To the journalist's question whether after his release he would not leave for America to shoot films, Dimitrov explained with a smile: 'Of course not. I shall continue to fight for my Communist ideals. I am a Communist, a true Communist and shall always be a Communist.'

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 353-354

Published by the BCP, 1960

TO THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS
DR. FRICK

Berlin, February 7, 1934

A month and a half has already elapsed since the day on which a verdict of 'not guilty' was announced in the Reichstag fire trial, but we, the three acquitted Bulgarians, are still being kept in prison – in underground cells noxious to our health, deprived of daylight, utterly humid, almost hermetically isolated from the outside world, in which we feel like buried alive.

I, for instance, am forbidden to read not only any foreign newspapers, but even Bulgarian governmental newspapers, newspapers of my own country.

My mother and sister are not allowed to inform me during our meetings even about the situation and developments in Bulgaria.

Up to this day I have received no official explanation of the reasons for my arrest.

My wires and letters addressed to you have remained unanswered.

From the hints of different officials one can arrive at most diverse conclusions:

1. We are to remain under arrest, because we represent a political threat to the government.
2. We are being kept under arrest for the sake of our own personal safety.
3. We are still in prison, because negotiations are underway with other countries for our extradition.

The first explanation, of course, cannot be taken as serious. A government, which feels so secure, cannot possibly risk any danger in connexion with the release and expulsion of three Bulgarian political emigrants.

The second explanation is groundless, because it cannot be assumed that any convinced National Socialist could be

found who, on his own initiative, might assault innocent foreign Communist.

The third explanation has already been refuted by the bare fact that, as has already been established, Poland is ready to grant us a transit visa, and the Soviet Union – to admit us as political emigrants.

And if, in spite of all this, we are still being kept under arrest, that might be with the following ends in view: either we are to be gradually turned into physical and moral invalids or, at a 'convenient' moment, with the aid of 'irresponsible' factors, be liquidated.

I think that politically this is not in the interest of the government, and that is why from day to day I am waiting for our case to be closed by our being sent at once to the Soviet Union or to one of the neighbouring countries.

If, unfortunately, this should not happen soon, I will have no other alternative – and I state this outright not as a threat, but as a dilemma imposed on me – but to resort to the only means of personal defence of innocent prisoners – to go on a hunger strike. My health and patience are almost exhausted. Better an end with horror than horror without end.

For exactly eleven months I have been in this terrible prison.

Respectfully yours
G. Dimitrov

INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOVIET AND FOREIGN PRESS⁷⁹

Some 100 correspondents of foreign and Soviet papers and telegraph agencies were present at the interview of *Dimitrov*, held in the evening of February 27.

Comrade Dimitrov told us how he was set free. 'We are, of course, a little worn out,' he explained. 'Today, at 5 o'clock in the morning, we were all of a sudden awakened by Prussian State Secret Police officials with the order: 'Get up and pack'. Without any explanation of why, where and what for. At the last minute they explained to us that we were being expelled from Germany and would be sent by plane today to the Soviet frontier. Our request to call a representative of the Soviet Legation, was of no avail. We supposed that our, the Soviet Legation, had not been informed about this, so to say, pleasant expulsion. From information coming from Berlin I understand that the Soviet Legation did not know that today we should be sent by plane from Berlin directly to Moscow.

'The first thing we wish to say – is to express our boundless and wholehearted gratitude to the international proletariat, to the broad masses of working people in all countries, to the honest intelligentsia, which all fought for our release. Our gratitude, naturally, is in the first place extended to the proletariat, the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union – our socialist state. I can state with full conviction that we would not have been free today in Moscow had it not been for the international campaign mobilized against German fascism. The fascists wanted even at the last moment to keep us, to take vengeance on us and destroy us physically and spiritually on various pretexts. The great fiasco of the Reichstag fire trial had to be compensated by wreaking vengeance on us.

'Unfortunately I and my comrades learned rather late about this campaign abroad and throughout the world. We were isolated, got no information from our people and

could not get any even from our relatives. We were strictly isolated. It is only now, after our stay here for several hours, that in conversing with our comrades we learned a lot about what had been going on around us. I am deeply convinced that this campaign has helped to save hundreds and thousands of revolutionary workers. Not only we four, the three Bulgarians and Torgler, have been saved, but hundreds and thousands of responsible comrades who were to be destroyed, as Goering publicly declared in his depositions as a witness. This campaign deprived the fascists of the possibility of organizing a new provocation, in order to use it to destroy the leading cadres of the German revolutionary proletariat.

I think that our comrades and friends abroad do not have an exact idea of the significance of this international campaign, in this respect, just as we were unable to assess the significance of this campaign on the outside for our own liberation.

What I, as an accused, repeatedly declared before the Court and which today, February 27, the anniversary of the Reichstag fire, must resound throughout the world, should be stated over again – *That the Reichstag fire was the work of German fascism, which used the unfortunate Lubbe as its tool.* The real organizers and instigators undoubtedly occupy governmental posts in Germany. These facts have indeed become obvious not only abroad. I think that in Germany, this huge and multifarious prison, the broad masses and even those who at first believed that the Communists had set the Reichstag on fire today no longer believe it. On the contrary, I have many indications that quite a few National Socialists know and are convinced, that the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the National Socialist leadership, which they feel as a disgrace for the National Socialist Party.

The trial was meant to be a means of rehabilitating the real incendiaries of the Reichstag. But as the real Reichstag incendiaries could not be brought before the Court, that had to be done with others, casually arrested, as it were substitute-incendiaries. That was Torgler, those were we, the Bulgarian Communists. I am convinced that if the

rulers of Germany had known beforehand what the outcome of the trial would be, they would surely not have implicated us, the Bulgarians. They cooked a broth, the taste of which subsequently was not to their liking. I once told this to the prosecutor, Dr. Werner. We were acquitted, not because we were innocent, but because there was no other way out as a result of the foreign campaign, the mobilization abroad, as a result of the revelations before the Court itself. The fascist "Court" was unable to sentence us. The way the trial went, that was out of the question.

'Acquitted but not set free! Acquitted but kept in prison. Dragged from prison to prison, the farther, the worse our imprisonment. Early in February we were transferred to the Berlin prison of the Prussian Secret State Police. What a prison that is – I would like the fascist butchers of the German proletariat to be detained in the cells of these *catacombs*... . It was the small ward for special cases, for such political Communist prisoners who were subjected to a special regime. Compared with this ward, even Moabit is a sanatorium, paradise. The cells are underground, no sun comes in. Inside, of course, it is humid, because the cells are built in the ground. If one is kept in those catacombs for a few months, he will turn, I am convinced, into a living corpse and an invalid for life.

'It is no secret to us why this is done. When one enters there and is weak, in a few days or weeks he will capitulate to fascism, or will be done for without capitulation. It is such a place – and our transfer today proves it – from where the prisoners, unnoticed and unseen by anyone, can be dragged out and taken anywhere and might, if the fascists find it useful, be "removed" altogether.

'Sometimes, but rarely, foreign correspondents came to visit us. I assumed that happened in connexion with the particularly noisy campaign abroad. They asked us questions about our health and how we were treated, and lately especially whether the regime was humane. "You were not tortured or beaten, were you?", the Reuters correspondent asked once. In this connexion it must be said that under the influence of the campaign abroad the attitude towards us was humane. But in general, they prac-

tised *a refined system of moral tortures*. I wish also to stress the fact that while the lower police officials and those of the storm troops treated us in general humanely, precisely the prison doctors of the Gestapo behaved rudely and incorrectly. Doctor after doctor came during the last two weeks. First one doctor in the uniform of a storm trooper, and then two doctors dressed in plain clothes. Not one of them wanted to examine us, while Popov in the last days suffered from a serious stomach ache. One of those doctors said that he was going to examine Popov; but he left without doing anything and without prescribing any medicine. I called the attention of one of those doctors to the fact that such an attitude was inexplicable and impossible to understand, all the more so as we were innocent and had been acquitted by the higher German Court. The doctor's answer was a snigger, and then he left. We thus had neither examinations nor medical care.

I must mention here the difference between the regime in the Moabit prison, where the inquiry was carried out, and in Leipzig, where the doctors – I must underscore this – were not rude and careless and did not behave like enemies. The doctors of the first type work in such prisons as the former military prison in Tempelhof, where hundreds of Communists and other political prisoners are kept. I can imagine, if those doctors behaved towards us in this way, how they must treat the other Communists, the sick and dying German Communists.

'We are happy to have come to our motherland. We left Germany this morning. We hate only German fascism, but we nurture deep and abiding sympathy for the German proletariat, for the German revolutionary workers, for the German Communists. We could not learn in detail how these German workers bore the persecutions and how they fought fascism, owing to our isolation, but we felt on hundreds and thousands of occasions in the Courtroom and outside the Court and in the prison that the great, united German Communist Party, in spite of the most terrible blows, was standing at its post. This we were able to deduce from the moods and depositions of the witnesses before the Court, witnesses who had spent 8 or 10 months in concen-

tration camps. What loyalty to the Party, what devotion to the cause of Communism, the cause of the German proletariat, what a worthy behaviour before the Court! The same cannot be said about the National Socialist witnesses, for instance, about the National Socialist deputy Karwahne, about Grohte or other agents-provocateurs and thieves. The Communist witnesses were true, strong proletarian fighters, who behaved like revolutionaries. We got a number of expressions of sympathy and love as accused during the trial, as well as after the Court sessions in prison, during transfers, wherever we might happen to be. Even many among the rank and file of the National Socialist Party are convinced that the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the fascist leaders. Our indignation and hate in leaving Germany were directed toward fascism and were accompanied by deep sympathy and gratitude for the German proletariat, which fought for our liberation. Hundreds and thousands of people are smarting in Germany's concentration camps and prisons. Hundreds of trials are conducted, death sentences are imposed and carried out and a number of new trials are on the agenda.

'The struggle against German fascism and the liberation of the imprisoned anti-fascists must continue, so as to save hundreds of thousands of revolutionary workers and fighters from fascism. At every step in its struggle the German proletariat, which was sold out and betrayed by the d... bureaucracy of the Social Democrats and the trade unions, needs international support.

'I think that I did not make a mistake when today, on taking leave in Königsberg, I answered the representative of the secret state police who expressed the wish that I would be objective abroad... .' (A v o i c e: What is the name of this official? *Dimitrov*: Criminal Counsellor Heller. V o i c e: A former Social Democrat? *Dimitrov*: Yes. ... 'I answered: Of course, I shall be objective. Then I added that I hoped to return to Germany, but as guest of the German Soviet Government'.

At the request of those present, *Dimitrov* who up to this moment had spoken in German, began to speak in Russian.

The representatives of the bourgeois press asked him a number of questions: 'What is your opinion of Goering?'

'I have no reason to add anything to the opinion which I expressed at our personal meeting before the Court,' replied Dimitrov.

'What are you going to do here?', Dimitrov was asked. His reply was:

'What I am going to do here is quite clear. I am a soldier of the proletarian revolution, a soldier of the Comintern. As such I was brought before the Court. Here I shall be doing my duty as a soldier of the proletarian revolution – to the last minute of my life.'

The correspondent of *New York Times* asked Dimitrov to sum up his opinion about the trial. Dimitrov answered: 'The trial was, in brief, a provocation, just as was the burning of the Reichstag. By means of this trial they wanted to hide the real incendiaries and pin the guilt for the fire on others. But according to the laws of dialectics, the laws of the class struggle, this trial was transformed into its opposite. The anti-Communist trial became a powerful anti-fascist demonstration, a shameful fiasco for fascism. The fascists, in setting fire to the Reichstag, wanted to deceive the German people that the Communists were the incendiaries, but the trial proved the opposite.'

A representative of the German Communist press put the following questions to Dimitrov: 'Did you learn while in prison that the leader of the German Communist Party, comrade Thaelmann, was transferred to the prison of the Secret State Police?' Dimitrov: 'Yes, I know this, but do not know any details.'

To the question whether, while in prison, he had learned the leading comrades of the German Communist Party, such as comrades Scheer, Schönhaar and a number of others had been killed, Dimitrov replied: 'Unfortunately I learned this only today. We knew nothing about that.'

The next question of the representative of the German Communist press was: 'The bourgeois press published a photograph showing you, Tanev and Popov in a cell of the Secret State Police. A large cigar is seen in your hand. This photograph was distributed to show what a good time

those acquitted at the Leipzig fire trial had in prison. Do you know how this picture was taken and do you recognize it?

Dimitrov: 'Of course, we know this photograph. We protested against this story. An American correspondent came to us, an alleged representative of the *New York Times*. I say alleged, because this man spoke German very well and looked like a German. He said that he wanted to take a picture. At first we hesitated, but then made the mistake to give him our consent. We did so, because we thought that not only the photograph, but also our statement, our decisive protest against our detention in prison after our acquittal, against all that unheard-of affair would be published. This was, of course, a mistake. *Völkischer Beobachter* published the photograph and wrote that they had sent an American correspondent to take the picture as a proof that we were in a good condition. This, however, happened not in the prison of the Secret State Police, but in the Leipzig prison. That same day our so-called official defence-council came and 'showed interest' in how we were getting on. He asked: 'Are you still in good health?' We replied: 'Yes.' He then asked: 'Have you anything to eat?' - 'Yes.' 'Do you play chess?' - 'Yes.' One or two days before we had played chess. Then our official defence counsel told us that the German Information Bureau had informed the German and foreign newspapers that we were in excellent health and enjoyed a splendid regime. We protested against the photograph and against this deception.'

Several bourgeois correspondents wanted to know: 'How come Goering declared that he was going to square accounts with you, yet did nothing?'

Dimitrov shrugged his shoulders: 'Not everything happens according to one's wishes. Goering expressed the most cherished desire of the fascist top clique, but besides him there is an international proletariat, there is Moscow, too. We got to know our judges quite well. These judges, who were not all racially pure political Arians, had to solve the problem so as to pay Peter without robbing Poul. Even the wise Solomon was not able to solve this problem in his

time. That is why our judges formulated the sentence very poorly. But they were compelled to acquit us, they had no alternative. If they had condemned us, that would have been a condemnation of fascism: The Pauls remained hale and hearty – until when, the doctors are going to tell us this tomorrow. But Peter is not too pleased either, for we were acquitted. It so happened that we are dissatisfied with the trial and so are Hitler and Goering.'

In dwelling again on the trial, Dimitrov declared that the accused were deprived of real defence counsel. 'According to the German Laws, we had the right to choose our defence-counsel, but we were given officially appointed lawyers. If I had left my defence to him, today I would be a political corpse. He would have discredited me and destroyed me politically.'

At the request of the foreign correspondents, Dimitrov gave a detailed description of *the conditions during the inquiry*.

During the trial we were isolated from each other. Towards the end of the Court hearings I sharply insisted before the President to explain to us why we were being held isolated. I told him that I did not approve of this and that now after the hearing was nearing its end, I insisted on meeting my comrades. After the trial we continued to be kept isolated. It was only on the 16th or 17th that they brought us together in the same cell. After our transfer to Berlin, we were again kept isolated at first for a few days. The fascists got us involved in this trial although we were innocent and after our acquittal kept us imprisoned. *For five months before the trial by day and by night* our hands were manacled. No one who has not lived through this experience can have an idea of what it means. To sleep in this way for five months by day and by night; and your hands to be left free for only fifteen minutes a day to dress and to eat. For five months all night your hands in those accursed manacles. And then they say that they treated us humanely and that we were in excellent health. During all this time I did not sleep properly a single night. I used to wake up twenty, thirty, fifty times a night from the pain. And all this depended upon that police official. If they

tighten the manacles just a little, one suffers immensely. I and my comrades had to do our writing to the Court and to the examining magistrate with manacled hands. In connection with that regime I should like to say the following: Our comrade Tanev did not know a word of German. His situation was much worse than ours. His nerves were so strained that he attempted to commit suicide. Fortunately he did not succeed. But those manacles and the moral terror in the course of months could produce such a consequence. He gets the indictment and does not understand a word! A week passes! He asks for an interpreter. They appoint one a little before the trial. This interpreter translates only parts of the indictment to Popov and Tanev...'

The lively conference was interrupted, owing to the late hour and Dimitrov's fatigue.

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 358-369

Published by the BCP, 1960

WE SHALL AGAIN BE IN SOVIET GERMANY!

Speech at the meeting in celebration of the 65th anniversary of Comrade N.K. Krupskaya⁸⁰ at the Association of Old Bolsheviks on February 28, 1934

Comrades, two days ago I could not have even supposed that on this very day, the 65th anniversary of our dear friend Krupskaya, I would be fortunate enough personally to congratulate Comrade *Krupskaya* here, in this family of old militants and pioneers of the movement.

I am very happy to be able here today personally to convey these greetings on my behalf and on behalf of my friends from the fascist prison in Germany.

I am very sorry that I am not in a position to tell you much at this moment. But I do wish to say a few words to you. I do not know how I was admitted to membership at the Association of Old Bolsheviks: whether I have really deserved this. For this is a very high honour. It is a particular title. True Bolsheviks, and old Bolsheviks at that, were to be found actually only in our Russian Bolshevik Party. These Bolsheviks in prisons and in exile, in the course of long years have staunchly endured all the horrors of the tsarist regime. Those old Bolsheviks – the Old Bolshevik Guard of our great Communist Party, together with the young pioneers, the members of the Komsomol and our youthful forces, have for decades now been building socialism in one sixth of the world.

It seems to me that we have been extolled and glorified too much in the press, both here and abroad. Personally I had no idea in the Berlin prison, in those catacombs, of what was going on around our persons. I think, comrades that we had only a single goal: to fulfil, loyally to fulfil, our revolutionary proletarian duty.

We were at the front in the fight between fascism and communism in fascist Germany and were taken in captivity as prisoners in the civil war. Before the Court, in one of the sectors of this tremendous front in the fight between

the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the fascists and the Communists, between capitalism and the Soviet Union – in this sector of the front we only fulfilled our duty: *to fight*. And within our possibilities, we fought to the best of our ability. I think that it is no merit but a *duty* for every Communist, and especially for those who are fighting for the implementation of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, to fight against fascist reaction, to fight against the perpetrators and fomentors of a new world war. And as an old Bolshevik I feel that in spite of everything I succeeded in doing just my duty as a soldier of the revolution.

I harbour only one wish: that our old Bolsheviks may live to see at least the complete destruction of capitalism in the whole world. I was and am still convinced that I will live some 20 more years and will see the triumph of the proletarian revolution in all Europe. It was this conviction that I expressed at Königsberg yesterday on parting with the representatives of the fascist government when I told them: I hope to come again to Germany, but then as a *guest of Soviet Germany*.

It is hardly necessary for us to express our gratitude. But the hearts of my comrades and myself are brimming with gratitude, gratitude towards the millions of the proletariat in all countries and, first of all, towards the proletariat in the Soviet Union.

The solidarity, love and support, which penetrated to us like rays through the walls of the fascist prison, helped us to endure all sufferings and all tortures.

At moments when I felt particularly oppressed – and there were such moments – being manacled day and night, I very often recalled the fortitude and endurance of our old Russian Bolsheviks. I recalled the tenacity, firmness and the unflinching march forward, despite all difficulties, of our great All-Union Communist Party under Lenin's leadership.

In the hardest moments in prison and before the fascist court, I always remembered that, in spite of everything, there was Moscow in the world – the capital of that great land, the land of the proletarian revolution, the land of the proletarian dictatorship! And when they told us in the

prison that the Soviet Government had admitted us and that we were Soviet citizens, we said: That's the end now, that's all! Today, tomorrow, in a month or two, that made no difference, for it put an end to the designs of the fascist government and personally of Goering against us. Our liberation might be sabotaged, our imprisonment might be prolonged, but as long as the Soviet Union, as long as Moscow stood back of us, it was impossible for us, the communists, to be annihilated, that was impossible.

The international situation and the internal force of the Soviet Union, the enthusiasm, the readiness to defend it, this moral, organizational, cultural and political mobilization, which is effected under the leadership of the Communist Bolshevik Party, acts and falls like a cold shower on the heated fascist heads. These fascist heroes of Cervantes, these criminal gang-leaders are preparing a war against the Soviet Union. But the might, the revolutionary might of the Soviet Union is growing. I can see and sense what great changes have taken place in the two years that I was not in Moscow; I can see how the revolutionary forces in the other countries are growing, how they are growing in fascist Germany itself.

One of the old pioneers was right in remarking here that we shall break the neck of our enemies, the enemies of communism. We shall try to do this with our own forces; we shall try, as Comrade Krzyanowski said, to go on living, until the final victory of socialist construction, until victory on the front of the class struggle in the other countries, for the great cause, *until the final triumph of the world proletarian revolution!*

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 370-372

Published by the BCP, 1960

LETTER TO THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS

I

In front of me is a letter dated December 7, 1933, which I received in the Leipzig prison as late as January 15, 1934. This letter is from a group of workers at Karl Marx-Hof, which today, after the February events, has won world fame. Here are the contents of the letter:

Vienna, Dec. 7, 1933

Karl Marx-Hof

Dear Comrade Dimitrov,

On behalf of many people, we are sending you our warmest greetings. Millions are listening to your bold words. With them you are lending fresh forces to millions. Your fight will not have been in vain; it is also our fight. The great army of the class-conscious proletariat stands united behind you.

We ask you, Comrade, to send us a few lines.

With proletarian greeting and freedom

(Follow a number of signatures)

On the same day on which the letter got into my hands, I tried to send through the strict police censorship the following brief reply:

'Today I received your friendly letter of December 7, 1933, and read it with great joy and gratitude. As to my conduct before the court, I only endeavoured to do my proletarian duty and to remain completely loyal to my heroic class.

'With fraternal militant greetings.'

I do not know even whether this brief reply ever reached its destination.

I kept re-reading this letter of the Austrian workers, when in the underground of Goering's secret police in Berlin, I learned from the German fascist papers about the heroic struggles of the Austrian workers. Most profoundly moved, I followed the developments and the outcome of

the armed struggle between the Austrian proletariat and fascism. Your proletarian heroism filled me with boundless joy, and it was with profound disgust that I heard about the treacherous policy of the Social Democratic leadership.

After my arrival in the Soviet Union, still in bad health owing to the hard prison regime and the strain during the trial, I tried first to get acquainted in greater detail with the Austrian developments and with the historic lessons to be drawn from them not only for the Austrian workers, but also for the workers in all capitalist countries.

I would like now to share my impressions and exchange a few thoughts on the Austrian developments with those comrades who wrote to me, as well as with all Austrian fighters for the proletarian cause.

I do not know who of the authors of that letter has remained alive. But every communist today is linked with the Austrian fighters who have remained alive, as well as with those who lost their life in the fight, through the indissoluble tie of fighters for the common cause of the working class.

Today, when Austrian reaction is celebrating its bloody victory over the working class, we, communists, hold the workers who fought and who are still fighting still closer to our hearts. Thousands of massacred workers, thousands of wounded and imprisoned; unbridled terror throughout the country, a prisoner's regime for the proletariat which can be compared only with the fascist regime in Germany – that is the balance sheet of the butchery perpetrated by the Dollfuss government⁸¹.

The bourgeoisie is crowning with laurels the heads of the Dollfusses and Feys, who ordered the shooting by howitzers of the workers, together with their wives and children.

The Papal Nuntius gives his blessing to those butchers. At the same time the craven leaders of the Social Democrats instruct the workers that they should not have resorted to arms, that the proletariat had made a mistake when it retaliated with arms in hand to the brutal general attack of fascism which threatened to nullify not only the economic and political gains of almost 50 years of struggle

of the Austrian working class, but also threatened its most elementary existence.

But would a surrender without a fight have saved the Austrian proletariat from the reactionaries? Surely not. This would have made the reactionaries still more insolent, still more self-confident.

The Austrian proletariat did not want to go back on itself as a class. And it was right. It did not want to resign itself humbly and without a fight to the sufferings which have become the destiny of the German working class which was betrayed by the Social Democrats. The armed struggle of the Austrian proletariat was a palpable warning not only to the Austrian bourgeoisie, but also to the bourgeoisie of all countries. It shows that the proletariat will never get reconciled with fascist rule.

No, the armed struggle of the Austrian working class was not a mistake. The mistake consisted in the fact that this struggle was not organized and was not waged in a revolutionary, a Bolshevik fashion.

The main weakness of the February struggle of the Austrian workers lay in the fact that, owing to the pernicious influence of the Social Democrats, they failed to grasp that it was not enough to resist the attack of fascism, but that they should have turned their armed resistance into a fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and for seizing power by the proletariat. The armed fight of the Austrian proletariat was not transformed into an actual armed uprising. Herein lies the main error.

Reaction in Austria came out victorious. But this is only a temporary victory. Even today it contains elements of the future defeat of the bourgeoisie. For the Austrian workers the important thing now is not to lose heart, not to lose faith in the strength of their class, but, on the contrary, to be able to draw all the necessary political and organizational conclusions from the lessons of the February struggle, in the first place with regard to the Social Democrats.

Please, friends, remember 1905 in Russia. Tsarism then crushed the heroic uprising of the Russian workers. Who, however, does not know that precisely that uprising was

the historical prerequisite for the triumphant October Revolution in 1917? In 1923 the September uprising of the Bulgarian proletariat was crushed. But just as the Russian proletariat in 1905 under Lenin's leadership was able to draw all lessons from its uprising and gain faith in its cause, so today the Bulgarian workers under the leadership of the Communist Party and under the guidance of the Communist International, after the crushing of the uprising steeled their forces still more, are consolidating their Party and are today unflinchingly fighting against Bulgarian fascism. The experience of the September uprising enabled the Bulgarian proletariat to see clearly the roots of its weakness, the correctness of the theory and practice of bolshevism. The Bulgarian proletariat and its Party which was driven underground turned the Bolshevik teaching into the unshakeable basis of their activity and their struggle, thus transforming the defeat of the September uprising into a prerequisite for the triumphant development of the revolutionary proletarian movement in Bulgaria. Today even the class enemies are compelled to admit that the Bulgarian proletariat and its Party have become much stronger than they were prior to the September 1923 uprising.

The Austrian workers should draw a number of fundamental lessons from these historical examples. As in 1905 in Russia, as in 1923 in Bulgaria, so today in Austria, the impassable gulf which was opened between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie by the bloody crushing of the fighting workers, is one of the preconditions for the victory of the proletariat.

II

Otto Bauer⁸² speaks of a disaster in Austria. Yes, there is a disaster. It is the disaster of the whole Second International, its theory, its policy and tactics, the collapse of the Social Democratic theory on the peaceful, painless evolution of capitalism into socialism by means of parliamentary bourgeois democracy, a collapse of the reformist policy which tried to patch up disintegrating capitalism, the

collapse of a tactics aimed at preventing the proletarian revolution.

This is already the second disaster after that of the German Social Democratic Party. And the social democratic parties in the other capitalist countries are also headed for a disaster. In vain is Otto Bauer invoking Germany to prove the inevitable seizure of power by the fascists, where, as he says – neither the powerful Social Democrats nor the big Communist Party were able to offer resistance to Hitler's seizure of power. But did not the German Social Democratic Party fight a bloody struggle over a long period of time, with the aid of its Severing, Zörgiebel, Gresinsky, against the anti-fascist front formed under the leadership of the Communist Party? Did it not sabotage the repeated proposals of the German Communist Party for the establishment of a united front against fascism, including also the proposal for a united front, made in January 1933? Did it not reject the proposal of the German Communist Party for a prompt proclamation of a general strike and did it not foil the joint action of the communist and social democratic workers against fascism? If the German Social Democratic Party had not acted that way, the German proletariat would certainly have prevented the seizure of power by the fascists and the German people would not have become the victim of the bloody fascist orgy. Unfortunately at that moment the German Communist Party was not sufficiently strong to overcome the sabotage and treachery of the German Social Democratic Party and lead the German workers to an open armed struggle against the nazi gangs. It is clear that the entire responsibility for the victory of fascism, both in Germany and now in Austria, falls on the Social Democrats.

In the light of the victorious construction of socialism in the Soviet Union, the developments in Austria and Germany have the significance of a test, undertaken on the basis of the experience of millions of people, of the two roads to socialism: on the one hand, the road of Lenin's Party, the road of the Communist International and, on the other hand, the road of Austrian and German Social Democracy, of the Second International. The first road, the

road of the proletarian revolution, has already brought the working class and, under its influence, the bulk of the peasantry to socialism in the Soviet Union. The second road, the road of a compromise with the bourgeoisie, has led, as developments in Italy,⁸³ Germany⁸⁴ and Austria have clearly demonstrated, to the victory of the counter-revolution, to the triumph of fascism.

The Soviet Union, the mighty achievement of the Bolsheviks, stands now like an unshakeable rock: the bourgeoisie and the big landowners have been eliminated, the power of the working class has been built up, a strong proletarian state has been set up with a mighty Red Army of workers and peasants, a new, socialist economic system has been built up, unemployment and pauperization in the countryside have been overcome, the material and cultural level of the masses in town and country is steadily rising. In Austria and Germany, on the contrary, no trace has been left of 'democratic socialism'. Dollfusses and Feys, Hitlers, Goerings are ruling there inseparably, the working class is bereft of all rights, the arms are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the town hall is occupied by the Heimwehr, the workers' dwellings of the Vienna municipality which the Social Democrats used to point out as a symbol of the 'peaceful growing into socialism' are half-destroyed by the guns and are being taken away from the Austrian proletarians.

Yet, in 1918, comrades, everything was in your hands. The arms were in your hands and you were setting up your workers' and soldiers' councils. On two sides you were surrounded by Soviet republics: Hungary and Bavaria. The bourgeoisie had lost its presence of mind: it was afraid that you would deal with it as the Russian workers had dealt in 1917 with their bourgeoisie. It was afraid that *you* would confiscate its houses and villas for the workers. Today, however, *it* has lined up guns against your workers' houses and is allotting your dwellings to the murderers of your wives and children. It expected that *you* would disband and ban all its political parties. Today, however, *it* has banned your organizations. It expected *you* to ban the bourgeois press. Today *it* has banned yours. It expected *you*

to put the Dollfusses, Feys, Starhembergs and other butchers of the working class in prison. Today, however, it imprisons the workers and executes the revolutionaries.

If the Austrian and German proletariat had in 1918 set out along the road of the Russian Bolsheviki, there would have been no fascism today – neither in Austria and Germany, nor in Poland and in the Balkans. And there can be no doubt that not the bourgeoisie but the workers would long have been masters of the situation in Europe.

But Austrian Social Democracy headed by Adler⁸⁵ and Otto Bauer led the working class along a different road. It concluded an alliance with the bourgeoisie against the revolution. It strove to frighten the Austrian workers with the hardships of the heroic struggle of the Russian workers and peasants, promised socialism to the proletariat without a revolution, without bloodshed, only with the aid of the ballot and parliamentary machinations. It did not lead the workers to a fight against the bourgeoisie, but to civil peace with it on the basis of minor, temporary concessions, which for the bourgeoisie were only a means to save itself from the revolution. Unfortunately you, comrades, did not heed the voice of the communists, who were trying to convince you of the fact that this road was disastrous. For years on end you suffered the treachery of the Social Democratic Party leadership which, through its capitulation before reaction, was leading the working class from retreat to retreat, from defeat to defeat. Reaction and fascism organized their forces systematically and unhampered under the very eyes of the Social Democratic Party in the course of 15 years.

Could this organizing of the forces of reaction and the road of Austrian fascism have been barred? There is no doubt that this was possible. But only through a revolutionary struggle. Remember, comrades, July 15, 1927, when the masses went out into the street in reply to the acquittal of the fascist murderers of Schattendorf. This was a turning-point in the class struggle and in the balance of class forces in Austria. The bourgeoisie then gained a substantial superiority over the proletariat, and started feverish preparations for the establishment of a fascist dic-

tatorship in Austria. If the Social Democratic Party had preserved at least a spark of its fighting spirit, it would have been easy for it to turn the July 1927 movement into a proletarian revolution⁸⁶. But even if it had lacked the courage for it, it could in any case have achieved the crushing of fascism: all it needed to do in this case was not to restrain the workers. But Social Democracy undermined this powerful drive of the Austrian proletariat against fascism. In 1927 it gave away the workers' arms from the arsenal; in 1928 it concluded the Hüttenberg Pact which threw wide open the gates of the plants to the fascists; it created the law of Julius Deutsch on army discipline, which facilitated the purge of proletarian elements from the army; it gave its consent to the constitutional reform of December 8, 1929, which suited the demands of the Heimwehr; through Mayor Seitz, it allowed fascist demonstrations and forbade those of the communists in 1930.

Social Democracy owned arsenals, had its own paramilitary organization, the *Schutzbund*, and behind it stood two-thirds of the Viennese population, was it not so? It had almost a monopoly influence on the working class throughout Austria. Yet, before its own eyes the fascists, unpunished, perpetrated murder after murder of workers, and every time the Social Democrats retreated, threatening only that at the next murder they would compell the bourgeoisie through 'the force of the organized working class' to discontinue its terror. But the Dollfusses and Feys and the Heimwehr continued their work unhampered — they knew the value of these social democratic declarations. The might of the working class cannot be demonstrated when one always retreats.

III

Nevertheless, the Austrian proletariat could have won victory as late as 1934, if you, the social democratic workers, had refused to follow the policy of the social democratic leaders who, through their policy of surrender and defeatism, demobilized your struggle from the very

start, if you had, together with the communists, in good time taken the organization and leadership of the struggle into your own hands.

The armed struggle is not an action detached from the general policy of the party. A party which always retreats, which in the course of 15 years urges the workers to avoid fighting, can in no case reconstruct itself politically and organizationally within 24 hours to wage an armed struggle.

In his pamphlet entitled 'The Uprising of the Austrian Workers' Otto Bauer now bewails the failure of the general strike. But did the Social Democrats prepare the general strike? On the contrary, Social Democratic leadership was trying to renounce all responsibility for the general strike before the bourgeoisie, stating that the workers themselves would take the initiative for a strike, if one of the well-known 'four points' were implemented (anti-constitutional promulgation of a fascist constitution, disbandment of the Social Democratic Party, dissolution of the trade unions or their transformation into official bodies and appointment of a government commissar in Vienna).

And those workers were absolutely right about whom Otto Bauer in his pamphlet writes: 'At the factories and the Party's sections the voices of the impatient, of those eager to fight and those who insisted on action increased: Let us not wait any longer! We shall no longer be fit to fight if one of these four cases sets in. Let us attack while we are still able to fight! Otherwise the same fate will befall us as our comrades in Germany' (Otto Bauer, *The Uprising of the Austrian Workers*, p. 14).

Today Otto Bauer himself assures us that in those February days the leadership of the Social Democratic Party was against a fight, but that it was no longer able to restrain the workers and that they started it spontaneously. In recalling the crisis, Otto Bauer tries to justify the treachery of the railway functionaries who foiled the railwaymen's strike and thereby made it possible for the Government quite unhindered to transport artillery and troops from the provinces, while the Floridsdorf workers were shedding their blood.

He also attempts to wash clean the trade union functionaries of the printers' union, who on February 13, the day of the armed struggle, appealed to the printers to discontinue the strikes and return to their jobs.

In his pamphlet Otto Bauer says that the social democratic leaders let themselves be arrested to avoid joining the workers' fight. Precisely those leaders got arrested 'who did not take part in the fight and who on Monday and on the following days sat in the trade union secretariats, at their official jobs in the Vienna municipality, in their district offices, counties and communities' (p. 3).

Yes, that is what actually happened. That is how the traitors of the working class always act. But the secretary of the Second International, the leader of the Austrian Social Democrats Fritz Adler is not much better than those cowardly deserters, who call themselves working class leaders. Personally he stayed away from the struggle and, while the Austrian workers were fighting arms in hand, he publicly declared that he was unable to take part in their struggle, because he was busy with 'current business'.

Is it possible, comrades, to go out fighting with such deserters? Why, those are all people who even before the fight cry that they are defeated, and who at the first shot try to provoke a panic in the ranks of the fighting workers. Those people do not want a victory of the working class, they are afraid of it. They just want to frighten the bourgeoisie a little, to make it more lenient in its concessions to them and capable of being talked to. That is why they first restrain the workers and then consciously try to limit their action in size and exclude the masses from taking part in it. They told the workers who wanted to help the Schutzbund in the fight: 'go home and get your meal while there is still gas. The armed struggle is no business of yours. It is the business of the Schutzbund'. And they did not give arms to the workers who wanted to fight.

Pain and sorrow grip one's heart at the thought of the heavy sacrifices which today the Austrian working class has to pay for the crimes committed by the Social Democratic leadership.

Fully conscious as a soldier of the revolution, I cannot

get reconciled with the fact that the glorious fighters of Karl Marx-Hof were members of the same party as the functionaries of the Social Democratic organizations of Carinthia and Vorarlberg, who at the first shot in Linz passed over to the camp of the Heimwehr. One cannot get reconciled with the fact that the social democratic proletarians, who fought so heroically and died as heroes, for years on end were led by such pitiful political philistines and cowards as Otto Bauer, Fritz Adler, Deutsch and Seitz.

*

Your armed struggle was essentially a struggle for the restoration of the Constitution which had been violated by Dollfuss. It did not go beyond those limits and was never transformed into a struggle for power. In the century of the general crisis of capitalism, however, when the bourgeoisie is no longer in a position to rule with the methods of parliamentary democracy and when it embarks on the road of fascism, the decisive question in the workers' struggle is no longer the restoration of the outdated bourgeois democracy, but that of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the fight for the proletarian dictatorship. Only the slogan for Soviet power, brought to the consciousness of the broad masses, would solidly tighten the ranks of the fighters and establish an indissoluble link between the fighting workers and the whole remaining part of the proletariat and the peasantry. Only if the Austrian workers had set themselves the task of fighting for Soviet power, could their armed campaign have been transformed into a real armed uprising.

Yes, comrades, unfortunately your armed struggle was not a struggle for power and that is why, as Marx and Lenin taught, it was not a real armed uprising. The fact that this goal – the seizure of power – was missing in your armed struggle, constituted the main weakness of your heroic action.

The fact that the Austrian workers in their struggle did not go beyond the limits of armed resistance is not at all ac-

cidental. It was a necessary consequence of the entire political orientation of Austrian social democracy. 'We do not want yet to overthrow either capitalism or the bourgeoisie,' that is how the political thesis of the social democratic leaders ran. In other words, in the concrete set-up this meant: you, militant workers, must not attack the enemy, you must only defend yourselves against him in your municipal halls. With such an orientation, the workers let the initiative in the fight get out of their hands and ceded it entirely to the enemy.

What was the destiny of the workers guided by this policy of the social democratic leaders? Locked up in their homes, without any contact among each other, they sat like in mouse traps. They had not secured either the points of entry to these houses, or the heights from which the enemy could unpunished occupy positions like those of the workers at Karl Marx-Hof under its artillery fire. By their instructions given to the workers to stay at their homes and wait for the outcome of the struggle of the Schutzbund, the social democratic leaders placed the streets in the workers' quarters at the disposal of the Government troops, so that they could move along them unhindered. The Government troops had the possibility of occupying one after the other the strong points of the workers who defended themselves. An aggressive tactics on the part of the workers, on the contrary, would have sown confusion in the ranks of the Government forces and would have won over the vacillating elements to the side of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie did not hesitate to requisition private means of transport for its fight against the workers and to take prisoners as hostages. The fighting workers, however, who had passed through the school of Austrian social democracy, preferred to starve rather than infringe on sacrosanct private property by a confiscation of provisions. It did not even occur to them to take hostages from among the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Today Otto Bauer and the leader of the Schutzbund, Julius Deutsch, cite this petty-bourgeois wishy-washiness as an example of civic virtue. If at the time the Russian workers had followed the same tac-

tics, today their own Dollfusses and Feys would be sitting on their necks.

Just think: What heroism and what selfless bravery were displayed by the workers and what criminal shedding of workers' blood on the part of the social democratic leaders!

IV

What is there to be done now, comrades? First of all, we must make a thorough check of the road travelled since 1918 until the armed struggle in February 1934. It is necessary to make use of the lessons to be drawn from this struggle, which reflects the whole bankruptcy of social democratic policy. The sooner this is done, the better for you and for the entire Austrian working class, and the nearer will be its sure victory.

In contrast to Bauer's 'criticism', endeavouring to efface his own crimes as well as those of the entire Social Democratic Party leadership, you have to subject the system of ideas with which the social democratic leadership poisoned the workers to the sharpest and most severe criticism. Examine and reassess the road travelled by you under the leadership of the social democrats. Recall what the social democratic press and the social democratic leadership wrote and spoke in defence of this road, and compare their words with the stark facts. Analyze critically Otto Bauer's pamphlet which in its essence is an indictment against the author himself, as well as against the entire policy of the social democrats. Remember, on the other hand, what the Communist International has been saying in the course of these 15 years. And you are bound to let your class know the truth, however bitter it may be.

This truth will lead you to the conclusion that not the social democrats but the communists, not the Second International but the Communist International were right. The communists were right when they maintained that the Austrian social democrats were leading the 1918 revolution to defeat. They were right when they warned you that the policy of the social democrats led to a consolidation of

bourgeois dictatorship. The communists were right when they said that social democracy was saving the rule of capitalism, that it did not lead to socialism. They were right when they maintained that all economic, political and social gains which the workers had wrested from the bourgeoisie, that all their communal houses, etc., were always under a threat, and that the bourgeoisie would take them away from them unless it were shorn of power. The communists were right when they said that the defence of the interests of the working class could not be achieved through compromises with the bourgeoisie, but only through an intransigent class struggle against it.

The truth further compels you to admit that Austrian social democracy has gone politically bankrupt today. A part which was given so much and which lost and squandered everything – such a party has no longer any justification for its existence. Such a party deserves only the workers' hatred. Only after overcoming the political and organizational influence of the social democrats will the Austrian proletarians be able to embark on a new road, a road that will lead them to victory, to a victory over Dollfusses and Feys, over the Heinewehr, over fascism.

It is a question, comrades, of your organizational break with the Social Democratic Party, and of establishing, together with the communist workers, a genuine fighting unity of the Austrian working class. This fighting unity is possible only on the basis of the revolutionary struggle. This unity will multiply tenfold the forces of the working class and will make several times weaker the offensive of fascism, will increase the revolutionary influence of the proletariat on the peasantry and will create the prerequisites for a victorious struggle against the bourgeoisie and the capitalists and for a fight for Soviet power.

The greatest danger for the revolutionary unity of the Austrian working class today would be an attempt to revitalize Austrian social democracy, so that it may be saved on the basis of a new, 'leftist' programme. Nothing would come out of such attempts, except a disintegration of the Austrian workers' movement. Were there not in your

ranks people who in the course of 15 years have done nothing else but trying to 'correct to the left' the policy of your social democracy? The results are now at hand!

It would be no less a deception if the workers, disappointed by the social democrats in their fight against the fascism of Dollfuss, came to the conclusion to seek salvation in Hitler's fascism. In the armed struggle of the Austrian proletariat the Austrian national socialists stood on the side of the murderers of the workers. Today, like brown vultures, they circle above the battlefields and seek demagogically to make use of the sacrifices and sufferings of the proletariat, in order to win over to Hitler's fascism the Austrian workers, who are disappointed by the social democrats and are standing at a crossroads.

We, communists, are filled with faith in the bright morrow of the Austrian working class. We are firmly convinced in the final victory of the proletariat throughout the world. This unshakeable conviction gave me the courage during the Reichstag Fire Trial to look straight into the eyes of the raging enemy, just as the brave fighters of Karl Marx-Hof looked straight into the face of death. Behind the blazing fires, behind the slavery and misery which fascism carries with it, we see in the East the powerful bastion of the world proletariat – the Soviet Union. There is no power on earth that can check the historical development of mankind towards socialism. A battle has come to an end, the fighters are counting their dead, but they have not been crushed. The great proletarian army continues its march forward to the final victory.

Maybe, comrades social democratic workers, you will find it difficult to adopt the thoughts expounded herein. Nevertheless, I hope that this letter will help you to make a critical reassessment of the past, and draw the respective conclusions. If, however, there is something in this letter that is not quite clear to you or gives rise to any doubts, I shall be glad to have you share this with me.

Moscow, hospital,
March 1934

Georgi Dimitrov

*

These lines had already been written, when at the end of March I received the following letter dated March 2, 1934, from one of the authors of the first letter:

Dear Comrade Dimitrov,

I was glad to learn that you, as well as your comrades Popov and Tanev, have left the brown inferno and are already in the Soviet Union. Thousands of proletarians are heaving a sigh of relief, because we need such heroic fighters in our ranks. If we had had such fighters, we would not have landed in such straits for the Austrian working class to suffer ignominious defeat through treachery. For us this was a bloody lesson. For us it is the Russian year of 1905. And let us hope that it will not last so long and that we, too, shall proclaim Soviet Austria and will be able to extend a fraternal hand to Russia and together build up a new state in which only the proletarians will be able to live. A genuine workers' state*.

Dear Comrade Dimitrov, be kind enough and write us a few lines so that we may see that you are indeed in Russia, because we have become pessimists now.

Militant greetings:

* Here you have allowed a misunderstanding to slip in, comrades. You naturally have in mind the Soviet state, which is a state of the proletarian dictatorship. But not only workers live in it, but all working people who, under the leadership of the proletarians, are building socialism.

Yes, comrades, you are right. If you had been led by real Bolshevik fighters, your heroic fight would surely have had another outcome. But such fighters can grow up only in an irreconcilable class struggle against the bourgeoisie. The social democrats did not wage such a struggle – on the contrary, your Otto Bauers and Fritz Adlers obstructed this fight. Only in a constant struggle of the revolutionary united front against fascism can new and steeled fighters be created. It is only under the banner of Marx, Engels and Lenin that the new Bolshevik leaders will be created and the Austrian proletariat will at last receive what it lacked to come out victorious in its heroic struggle: a powerful Bolshevik party.

April, 1934

Georgi Dimitrov

CAN FASCISM WIN IN FRANCE?

In its issue which is due to come out on April 27, the illustrated magazine *'Regard'* publishes an interview of G. Dimitrov by its special correspondent in Moscow.

In this interview, G. Dimitrov answers the following three questions:

Can fascism win in France?

What do you think of the events of February 6?

Is a united front possible in *France*?

We are indebted to *'Regard'* for being able to publish today G. Dimitrov's reply to the first question.

Question: Can fascism win in France?

Answer: If the question is formulated in general, we must say that the possibility of a fascist victory in France, of course, cannot be excluded. Although the victory of fascism – owing to the deep-going revolutionary traditions which exist among the French masses – would be, of course, more difficult in the country of the Great French Revolution, of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, and particularly of the Paris Commune, than in Italy or Germany, France, too, has its potential Hitlers and Goerings. That is why, in the struggle against reaction and fascism, which has already been started by the French working people, the aim is to do all that is possible to check in good time the road to fascism by mobilizing the masses. Nothing can be achieved by itself. The discontent and indignation of the proletariat, of the petty and middling employees and civil servants, and of a large section of the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie, affected by the crisis, against reaction and fascism is increasing every day.

The proletariat and the masses, in general, are also deeply indignant at the growing unemployment, the falling salaries and wages and increasing misery. Their most elementary living standards are jeopardized. But the situa-

tion cannot be altered just by indignation and hate. Only the fight of the masses, organized and led by a revolutionary party, a fight not only defensive but also offensive, can bring victory.

Victory is possible if we prevent reaction and fascism from rallying their forces and consolidating their positions and from enlisting the dissatisfied masses. Victory is possible if you work systematically to mercilessly unmask in an accessible manner every one of their manoeuvres, their nationalistic and chauvinistic ideology, their demagogical slogans, if the real interests and goals that lie hidden behind their campaigns are bared, if you show where and from what quarters the fascist movement gets its financial support.

Victory is possible if you unmask in a concrete way the elements, groups, the methods and means in which the fascist cadres have been formed and the military fascist organizations have been set up. In this connexion, the developments in Germany and Austria, which were so dearly paid for by the Austrian and German workers, will be a precious lesson.

A particularly essential condition for the victory over fascism is to timely unmask before the proletariat and the masses all the concrete manoeuvres of the parties and groups, the methods and means which tend to strengthen fascism and to check, confuse, paralyze and disorganize the mass anti-fascist struggle.

These parties and groups are endeavouring to divert the anti-fascist movement from its revolutionary path, to turn it into a movement of a parliamentary type, to reduce the struggle to threats and to passive oral appeals.

For the conditions existing in France, this boils down to the necessity systematically to unmask the policy and practice of all parties belonging to the so-called 'left' bloc namely the Socialist Party and the leaders of the General Confederation of Labour and, more particularly, to the necessity of unmasking all attempts at plunging the mass anti-fascist movement – with the aid of demagogical slogans for a 'defence of the Republic', 'democracy', etc. – into the mire of a 'left' bourgeois bloc. This would be a fresh and monstrous deception of the masses, through which the

reactionary fascist forces endeavour to achieve their unification and consolidation.

A great part of the dissatisfied petty bourgeois elements which, disappointed by the party of the 'left' bloc, may be used by the fascists as a social mass basis, should be enlisted by the proletariat under the leadership of its vanguard, the Communist Party, in the mass revolutionary struggle.

The rallying of the proletariat, of the masses and progressive elements from among the intelligentsia in the committees of the united front for a fight against fascism, a fight for the partial demands of the workers against the big businessmen, the financial oligarchy, its cartels, trusts, banks, trade unions, parties and para-military organizations, a fight combined with mass demonstrations, mass 24-hour or longer political strikes, led in the different localities (at enterprises, plants, factories and wards) by strike or united front committees, elected by the masses themselves – that is how I visualize the concrete, real road of the anti-fascist struggle in France.

All those who check and hinder the development of a revolutionary initiative among the masses, all those who hinder the setting up of these elective committees of the militant united front and who try to destroy the revolutionary unity of the anti-fascist movement and to hide from the masses the lessons drawn from the treachery of the German, Austrian and Italian social democracy and of the Second International in general; all those who think that it is possible to complet fascism to withdraw by itself, only by blowing the trumpets of Jerico – are, whatever their subjective desires and aims may be, objectively abettors of fascism. A daily and concrete mass struggle, led in an organized and resolute manner, and passing over from the defensive to an anti-fascist offensive, unmasking all would be 'friends' of the anti-fascist united front movement – herein lies the road to victory over the reactionary fascist forces. There is no and there cannot be any other road.

l'Humanité,

No. 12, April 26, 1934

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 427–430

Published by the BCP, 1960

May Day was first celebrated in the streets of Sofia in 1898. Major clashes with the police took place, because the demonstration had been prohibited. We defended ourselves with bricks and stones. The police wounded many workers. Unusual indignation reigned among the population.

At that time, I was working as type-setter at the printing shop of the Liberal Party, where its central organ *Narodno Pravo* was printed. The leader of that Party, Dr. Radoslavov⁸⁷, was the responsible editor of the paper. His handwriting was so difficult to decipher that only two type-setters in the whole printing shop could read it: an old type-setter and myself. Two weeks prior to May Day that old man had fallen ill and that is why I was the only one who could set Radoslavov's article.

On May 2 Radoslavov wrote an editorial on the turbulent events of the previous day. In sharp language he described the 'anti-state' demonstration and the participants in it, calling them 'vagabonds', drunkards and robbers.

'This rabble,' he wrote, 'which had the cheek to attack the defenders of the state with stones, should be dealt with ruthlessly, if we do not want the socialist gang in our country to assume such proportions as it has assumed in other countries.'

I started setting the article into type, and suddenly came upon this insulting passage.

'I'm not going to set this into type,' I said to the technical manager.

'Why?'

'Because Radoslavov's article is slanderous!'

'But the whole paper is ready now and we're waiting only for the editorial.'

I stood my ground, refusing to set the type. They sent for Radoslavov.

After a little while he came and started railing at me:

'What does all this mean? You're working here and I'm paying you for it. It isn't your business to criticize what is written or how it is written. A type-setter has to set all kinds of type. Your conduct is unbearable! It's scandalous! You're dismissed.'

I said to him:

'I know very well my duties as type-setter. Up to now I set type for everything, although I was often filled with indignation. I'm not going to set type for this article, however. If you can find a type-setter able to set this into type - go ahead! But I rather doubt that you'll be able to find one.'

He cast a malicious glance at me and went to the editorial office. The manager of the printing shop tried to persuade me to agree to set the type, for otherwise I would be dismissed. He turned to another type-setter, but the latter couldn't make out a word. At last he tried to do it himself, but failed.

After a few minutes Radoslavov came back, came up to me and asked me:

'What the devil don't you like in the article? It's for the first time in my life that such a thing has happened to me...'

He called me to his room and I told him:

'We are neither robbers, nor bandits, nor a rabble; these names are quite undeserved: we are workers.'

'Yes,' he said, 'maybe you are a decent fellow, but how can you believe and how can you be sure that all are as decent as you? The others are not such decent people.'

'Workers are decent people, especially those who demonstrated yesterday. Not a single type-setter will set this into type.'

'Well, then,' he said with a sigh, 'let's strike this out.'

And he struck out the whole paragraph, so that the paper might come out in time.

In 1905 I was deputy to the National Assembly, and Dr. Radoslavov was Prime Minister.

Once I spoke at the National Assembly in connexion with the outrageous treatment of the prisoners of war. When I stepped on the rostrum, Dr. Radoslavov happened to be next to me. He looked at me and smiled. I started speaking about the military censorship.

'The persecution of the press is an unheard-of suppression of public opinion.'

Suddenly Radoslavov jumped up from his seat and yelled:

'And you're speaking about censorship, precisely you, Dimitrov? You'll recall perhaps that while you worked for me you subjected even my own article to your censorship?'

'That was quite another matter,' I replied. 'Then, as now, I defended the interests and the honour of the working class. But then you were repressing the opinion of the working masses, as you are doing now. You use the censorship to repress the working people now, in the same way in which you used your newspaper then to slander the workers. At that time I was fighting against it and I'm doing the same thing now.'

How deeply he must have been affected by that May Day that he remembered it after the lapse of so many years!

Komsomolskaya Pravda.

May 1, 1934

Signed: G. Dimitrov

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 444-447

Published by the BCP, 1960

ON A TURN IN THE PARTY

*Speech delivered on the 10th anniversary of the death of
Dimitar Blagoev*

May, 17, 1934

Comrades, as a result of many May-Day and post-May-Day speeches, my health has unfortunately again deteriorated. My physicians have therefore forbidden me to make any speeches for a certain time. If, in spite of this, I have come here this evening for a little, I have done so because I felt it my duty to take an immediate personal part in this remarkable demonstration of unity between Blagoev's Party and the old Russian Bolsheviks. I would like personally, on behalf of this Party and from this rostrum, to express our firm determination to follow in the steps of the glorious Russian Bolsheviks.

I am, comrades, one of Blagoev's pupils and have been one of his closest collaborators for a good many years. Blagoev, the founder of our Party, had certain distinctive features which were characteristic of Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism and which testify to the kinship between Left-wing Socialism in Bulgaria and Bolshevism.

These distinctive features of our late leader Blagoev are the following:

1. *Class implacability towards the bourgeoisie and its Right-wing Socialist (Menshevik) tools. Class against class – that was the slogan, that was the motto, that was the policy of Blagoev and Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism.*

2. *All for the Party of the proletariat.* Complete subordination of one's personal life, interests and will to the interests and will of the Party of the proletariat.

3. *Abiding, boundless faith in the forces and future of the working class.* It seems to me that this was the prime cause for the great successes of our revolutionary movement in Bulgaria prior to the war and immediately after it. This also enabled us to smash the Bulgarian Mensheviks (the

Right-wing Socialists, the common-causers) in a way, in which Social-Democracy was smashed nowhere else, except in Russia at the hands of the Bolsheviks. This mainly helped the Bulgarian Party to follow the Bolshevik path after the war and to become, together with the Russian Bolshevik Party and under its leadership, one of the founders of the Third Communist International.

But Blagoev and Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism *differed from the Bolsheviks and Bolshevism*. Even when we become co-founders of the Communist International, we were still far from being Bolsheviks, real Bolsheviks. And the fact that we were not Bolsheviks led us to the mistakes in 1918 in the soldiers' insurrection immediately after the war, as well as during the fascist coup d'état of June 9, 1923. This circumstance prevented us from organizing and directing the glorious September 1923 Anti-fascist Uprising in a Bolshevik manner and thus from securing its possible victory. Finally, this prevented us from seeing in time and from properly grasping the profound difference between Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism and Bolshevism on the basic problems of the proletarian revolution.

Comrades, in my 35 years' revolutionary and political life, I have made no few mistakes, but there are two mistakes which I shall never forget and for which I can never forgive myself: the first mistake I made together with the Central Committee of the Party on June 9, 1923, when we took a so-called 'neutral' stand during the fascist coup d'état, and the second, when not only I but the whole Party failed to understand in time (as early as 1918-19) that our revolutionary Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism *was not as yet Bolshevism*. We did not draw the necessary conclusion from the difference between Left-wing Socialism and Bolshevism, we did not learn the necessary lesson, and thereby delayed the bolshevization of our Party, which undoubtedly would then have proceeded much faster and much less painfully.

Comrades, not only our friends, but also our foes, everyone in his own way, noted my personal bravery in Leipzig. But, comrades, during and after the trial, I stated that while in Bulgaria, in our revolutionary movement I per-

sonally manifested such bravery many a time, and not only I, but tens, hundreds and thousands of Left-wing Socialists who always fought manfully, and I must tell you that one of the distinctive features of Bulgarian Left-wing Socialism is its manly struggle against its enemies. Thousands of Left-wing Socialists perished in the September 1923 Uprising without forsaking Communism. Many of them could have saved their life, had they only pledged to renounce Communism. If I had appeared at the Reichstag Fire Trial as an old-type Left-wing Socialist, I would have behaved with manliness and dignity, but I would have confined myself to personal self-defence and would not have waged that battle against fascism which won the admiration of the workers all over the world. When in Leipzig and Berlin, before the fascist tribunal, I was holding in one hand, in my left, the Legal Procedure Code of the German state and in my right hand – *the Programme of the Communist International*, when I was using at every step Lenin's arguments against the enemy, against fascism, I was fighting not as a *Left-wing Socialist*, but as a *Bolshevik* because only Lenin's teachings, only the Bolshevik methods and *only Bolshevik heroism* enable us to fight and win that way.

I am of the opinion that the Left-wing Socialist past, the Left-wing Socialist probation period in the Bulgarian revolutionary movement *is not a minus* but, on the contrary, *a plus*. On condition, however, that the Left-wing Socialist traditions and the virtues of the old Left-wing Socialist, Marxist experience be *melted down in the Bolshevik cauldron*. Our Party has made the basic steps in this respect. It still faces much work along this road. But only by following this road did it draw all lessons from the September 1923 Uprising for its bolshevization. In this way the Party turned the defeat of this uprising into a condition for the victory of the future proletarian revolution in Bulgaria. It won over the majority of the working class. And only by fighting to win over and consolidate the alliance between the proletariat and the working peasants, does our Party march forward under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, towards the decisive battle for Soviet Bulgaria.

Comrades, we learned, we are learning and we will learn in the future from the glorious Russian Bolsheviks. We are happy that, following the example of the still living old Bolsheviks, we can further steel our will to fight and our conviction in victory. While staying handcuffed in prison, I personally recalled during the most trying moments how the revolutionary proletariat used to live in old tsarist Russia. I remembered with what energy and fearlessness hundreds and thousands of our old Bolsheviks fought against all hardships and perils. What heroism Russian Bolsheviks manifested during the Civil War and after that in the field of socialist construction. And if they – I used to say to myself – endured all these trials with honour and dignity, I, a Bulgarian Communist, was duty-bound, remaining unflinchingly on my post, standing on a world rostrum, to set an example to the German proletariat, to my Bulgarian brothers and to the whole international proletariat, of how a Bolshevik can and ought to fight against the bourgeoisie and fascism, deeply convinced in the inevitability of the final triumph of the proletarian revolution...

G. Dimitrov, Works, Vol. 9, pp. 464–468
Published by the BCP, 1960

NOTES

to the Selected Works of Georgi Dimitrov

1. By 'social policy' Georgi Dimitrov meant the policy of sops and stick towards the working class, practised by the Second Stambolovist regime (1903-08). On the one hand, under the pressure of the workers' movement, headed by the social democracy, it was compelled to make certain concessions (Law on Woman and Child Labour, Law on Assistance to Disabled State Workers) and, on the other, it passed a number of laws depriving the working class of its elementary rights and freedoms.

2. *Zubatovshchina* – from Zubatov, a police colonel of the Russian Okhrana, who at the start of our century set up police-controlled legal workers' organizations to counteract the class workers' organizations.

3. *The Union of Bulgarian Industrialists* was founded on March, 17, 1903.

4. The first Industrial and Crafts Congress was held in Sofia on June 29, 1901, on the initiative of the Central Committee of the Crafts Associations. There the Industrial and Crafts Union was founded, which was joined by tradesmen, industrialists and craftsmen.

5. Two trends crystallized in the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party (BSDP) after the turn of the century: the one revolutionary and the other opportunistic; they differed on matters of principle, tactics and organizations. The former, headed by Dimitar Blagoev, Georgi Kirkov, Gavril Gavrilov, Georgi Dimitrov and others, adhered to the principles of Marxism, defended the class character of the Party, and stood for a truly proletarian Party, ideologically united, militant, capable of heading revolutionary struggles. The opportunistic trend, headed by Yanko Sakuzov, advocated class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and represented the Bulgarian version of Bernstein revisionism. After the split in 1903, when the reformist wing was expelled, the BSDP emerged as a Marxist Party of the working class. Subsequently it adopted Lenin's teaching on the party, and became a party of a new type. During the Party split, the trade unions, in which the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia predominated, sided with the reformists, while the unions in the principal towns, where workers predominated, side with the Party of the Left-Wing (Narrow) Socialists.

6. On June 18, 1906 the miners of Pernik, headed by Georgi Dimitrov, went on strike, demanding among other things, the right to set up their own trade unions. They received nation-wide support from the workers, who organized meetings, rallies and collected strike funds.

The 35-day strike achieved its main purpose – the Miners' Trade Union was founded, thus giving a strong impetus to the trade union movement in Bulgaria.

7. On December 20, 1906, the railwaymen spontaneously went on strike, the biggest until then in the annals of Bulgaria. It was preceded by a petition to the National Assembly, signed by more than 3,000 workers and employees, but Prime Minister Dimitar Petkov refused to receive the delegation. Instead, the Government hastened to pass two laws, the one forbidding state workers to strike, and the other depriving them of their pension in case they take part in strikes, as well as of the right to organize in trade unions and to publish their own newspapers. The bourgeois opposition tried to take advantage of the 42-day strike to overthrow the Petkov Government. Railwaymen's Trade Union under the guidance of the Party joined the strike but did not head it, confining itself to publishing a leaflet in which it exposed the demagogical policy of the bourgeois opposition parties.

8. Under the headline 'A Strike-Breaker Bloc' several bourgeois papers announced in February 1907 that the organizations of industrialists, tradesmen and craftsmen were negotiating to form a bloc for an all-out fight against strikes. A committee, composed of prominent members of these organizations, was set up for the purpose.

9. Referring to Bulgaria's liberation from Ottoman rule by the Russian army as a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78.

10. See note 7.

11. The plight of the railwaymen on the Eastern Company's Belovo-Plovdiv-Svilengrad-Istanbul line, most of whom were foreigners, set off a general strike both in Turkey and, almost simultaneously in Bulgaria (September 5, 1908). The strikers demanded higher wages, shorter working hours and regulated relations with the management of the company.

12. Early in 1907, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties in opposition: the Populists, Tsankovists, Democrats, Radicals and Right-Wing Socialists formed the 'Patriotic Bloc', a coalition against the National-Liberal Party (Stambolov's followers). Masking its factional aspirations, it pretended to fight against the 'personal regime', but at the end of May 1907, when the position of the National Liberals became shaky and Ferdinand showed an inclination to call to power a party of the Bloc, it disintegrated.

13. Taking advantage of the crisis in Turkey, following the Young Turk coup d'état, the Government of the Democrats proclaimed Bulgaria an independent kingdom on September 22, 1908, and awarded Prince Ferdinand the title of 'King of the Bulgarians'. In 1911 the Fifth Grand National Assembly was called to amend the Constitution; it voted an amendment to Art. 17, granting the king the right to conclude secret political agreements without consulting the national assembly.

14. The *American Federation of Labour* (AFL), founded in 1881, comprising mainly the workers' aristocracy under a mercenary clique of reactionary leaders, such as Gompers up to 1925 (whom Lenin compared to Zubatov), Green and Carey, adopted a hostile attitude to the

Russian Revolution. Refusing to join the World Trade Union Federation, it is actively working to split the world trade union movement.

15. At the International Trade Union Conference in Paris (August 17-18, 1909) the delegate of the Bulgarian trade union participated with a deliberative vote, as the union had not yet established official relations with the International Secretariat. In connexion with the central question discussed at the conference, the Arbitrary Measures of the Prussian Government against Foreign Workers, it was decided that a joint campaign be launched by the International Trade Union Secretariat and the International Socialist Bureau. The American and British delegates proposed that measures be taken against the passing of blacklegs from one country into another. The attention of the Secretariat was drawn to the fact that it had to contact the Russian trade unions, which at that time were subjected to hard reprisals by the tsarist Government. A cable was received at the conference from the workers on strike at the Kostenets Match Factory, asking the International Secretariat to do all that was within its power to boycott the sale of Bulgarian matches to other states.

16. Jouhaux, Léon (born in 1878), leader of the French reformist trade union movement, one of the foremost leaders of the Amsterdam Trade Unions International. Prior to the First World War he was an anarchist anti-militarist, but then became an outspoken advocate of 'civil peace'. Lenin called him one of the most disgusting social conciliators. Jouhaux tried to split the French Confederation of Labour but failed: he organized the 'Force ouvrière', a reformist trade union organization.

17. The *Confederation Generale de Travail* (CGT) was from 1895 to 1921 the leading trade union centre in France. During and after the First World War it advocated conciliation with capitalism, which at the end of 1921 led to a split and to the expulsion of the revolutionary elements who later established the Confederation Generale de Travail (unitaire), while the former CGT became the main prop of the Amsterdam International. At first the anarchist trade unionists tried to capture the CGTU, but in 1924 they left it, realizing that most of the trade union members stood for revolutionary tactics and for the principles of the Trade Unions International (Profintern). Today the CGT is a member of the World Trade Union Federation and takes an active part in the fight for peace. Its daily paper is 'La vie ouvrière'.

18. *Legien, Karl* (1861-1920), German trade union leader, right-wing Social Democrat, member of Reichstag from 1893, President of the German General Trade Unions and Secretary of the International Trade Union Secretariat from 1890, and after 1913 its President, during World War I an outspoken chauvinist sacrificing the trade unions to the interests of the military, and after the German revolution in 1918 promoter of co-operation between businessmen and trade unions.

19. A *Balkan Democratic Federation* was raised as a slogan at the First Balkan Socialist Conference in Belgrade in 1910, in connexion with the growing threat of imperialist aggression on the Balkans. The Balkan socialist parties advocated fraternal understanding of the Balkan

peoples, which would enable them to defend their freedom and national independence against the aggressive encroachments of the imperialists. The federation was to facilitate the settlement of all outstanding national issues in the Balkans, including the Macedonian question. Macedonia, which was split into three parts, was to be reunited into a single state enjoying equal rights within the framework of the Balkan Democratic Federation (Georgi Dimitrov).

The Balkan Communist Federation (1919–1939) opposed the imperialist attempts to turn the Balkans into a bridgehead for an anti-Soviet war and advocated friendship with the Soviet peoples.

20. The *International Socialist Bureau* is the executive organ of the 2nd International. Set up after the Paris Congress (1900) with headquarters in Brussels, it actually ceased to exist after Belgium's occupation by the Germans during the First World War.

21. 'Civil peace' or *Burgfrieden* in Germany, 'sacred unity' in France, 'industrial peace' in Great Britain, were the slogans put forward by the bourgeoisie during the First World War and taken up by the 2nd International. They aimed at putting an end to the class struggle during the war. The Left-Wing Socialists, unlike the Right-Wing Socialists, continue to fight against the bourgeoisie and the war, and in the Bulgarian National Assembly voted against the war credits.

22. *Luxemburg, Rosa* (1871–1919) – prominent revolutionary, one of the leaders of the Polish and German proletariat and organizer of the German Communist Party, representing like Lenin the left-wing in the 2nd International at the Congresses of Paris (1900) and Amsterdam (1903). At the Stuttgart Congress (1907) Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg introduced in the anti-war resolution the famous amendment on turning an imperialist war into a civil war. Rosa Luxemburg spent almost all the war years in prison and during the January 1919 rising she and Liebknecht were brutally murdered.

23. *Liebknecht Karl* (1871–1919) – one of the leaders of the German proletariat, tribune of the German Revolution, took an active part in the youth conference in Stuttgart (1907), which laid the foundations of the political organization of Germany's working youth. After the first Russian Revolution, he advocated the Russian methods of struggle – a general political strike. On December 2, 1914, Liebknecht was the only Reichstag member to vote against the war credits, after which he became the banner of internationalism and of the revolutionary anti-war struggle. In 1915 he wrote his famous leaflet *The Main Enemy Is within Our Own Country*, rising the slogan *Not civil peace, but civil war!* On May 1, 1916, he addressed a meeting in Berlin, spreading leaflets with the slogans 'Down with the War!', 'Down with the Government!' Arrested, he was sentenced to four years of forced labour. In 1917 and 1918, in letters sent from the prison, Liebknecht addressed ardent appeals to the German workers in defence of the Russian Revolution. On December 30, 1918, he co-chaired with Rosa Luxemburg a conference of the Spartacus Union, turning it into a constituent congress of the German Communist Party. As leader of the January Rising (1919) in Berlin, Liebknecht, together with Rosa Luxemburg, was brutally murdered on

January 19, 1919 by the police gangs of the Social Democrats Eberts, Scheidemann, and Noske.

24. Referring to the *Entente* between France, Russia and Great Britain and in 1915 joined by Italy, a member of the Triple Alliance in prewar days.

25. *Asquith, Herbert Henry* (1858–1928) – British statesman, leader of the Liberal Party, barrister, Minister of Home Affairs (1892–95) in the Gladstone Government. Prime Minister 1908–1916. On his orders the policy shot down the striking miners in Featherstone. On the eve of the First World War he submitted a bill on granting self-government to Ireland, which was twice rejected by the House of Lords. In 1916 he was replaced by Lloyd George, after which Asquith became a Lord and ceased to play a political role.

26. On April 23, 1916, revolutionary workers and nationalists organized in the Irish Civil Army and the Irish Volunteers (later the Irish Republican Army), captured Dublin and proclaimed an Irish Republic. Dublin held out for five days, but the expected general rising failed to break out owing to the betrayal of the national bourgeoisie, and the rising, known as 'Bloody Easter' was crushed. All leaders were executed. According to Lenin, it was the misfortune of the Irish that they rose when conditions were not yet ripe for a European proletarian revolution.

27. *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* – written by Marx and Engels on the order of the Union of Communists, the first international organization of the revolutionary proletariat, founded in London in 1847. 'This little book is worth many volumes. The entire organized and militant proletariat in the civilized world has been living to this day in its spirit.' (Lenin, Works, Vol. 2, pp. 10–11)

28. *International, or International Workers' Association*, headed by Karl Marx, was founded in 1864. In the declaration of its principles, which became known under the name of Constitutive Manifesto, Marx developed the ideas which had already been expounded in the Communist Manifesto: the International was to be a class organization of the proletariat, fighting for the victory of socialism by wresting political power from the ruling classes.

29. A General Trade Union Congress was called in Halberstadt on March 14–18, 1892 after the repeal of the exceptional laws against the German socialists. There a general trade union committee under the presidency of Karl Legien was elected, which became the centre of the German trade union movement, as well as a focus of opportunism. The German trade unions pursued a policy of so-called neutrality and were called 'free' trade unions.

30. *Wilhelm II* (1858–1914) – the last German Emperor and Prussian King, a mediocre and narrow-minded politician, known for his pompous and megalomaniacal speeches reflecting the aggressive foreign policy of German imperialism. Compelled to abdicate and flee to Holland (November 9, 1918) after the November Revolution in Germany, Wilhelm II later expressed his solidarity with the nazis and in 1940 hailed the invasion of Holland by Hitler's armies.

31. See note 14.

32. *Anarcho-syndicalism* or *self-syndicalism* – an anarchistic current sprung up in the '80s, which considered trade unions as the only real class organizations, believed solely in the strike weapon as the natural form of class struggle, and was opposed to the political struggle of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Flourishing at the turn of the century, especially in France, Italy and Spain, this current began to decline after the Russian Revolution.

33. After the defeat of Kolchak and Denikin, the Entente staked its hopes on Pilsudski, a reactionary nationalist and the strong man of bourgeois Poland, on the one hand, and on White-Russian General Wrangel, on the other. In April 1920 the Polish forces invaded the Ukraine and captured Kiev, while Wrangel advanced from the south and threatened the Donbas. The Red Army launched a counter-offensive, liberated Kiev and advanced to the gates of Warsaw, whereupon Poland concluded a peace treaty with the Soviets (October 20, 1920).

34. *The International Labour Organization* (I. L. O.) was set up at the League of Nations in 1919. Its functions included the international codification of social legislation, scientific research and information on labour conditions. Its executive organ, the International Labour Office, was subordinated to the administrative council. Subsidized by the League of Nations, I. L. O. was closely linked in its work with the Amsterdam International and served the interests of the capitalists.

35. *The Second Profintern (Red Trade Unions) Congress* was held in Moscow from November 19 to December 22, 1922, under the slogan of a united workers' front. The period between the first and second congresses was characterized by the world-wide offensive of capitalism. The 8-hour working day was repealed in many countries and wages were reduced almost everywhere. As early as 1921 the Profintern approached the Amsterdam International on three occasions with proposals for joint action against the offensive of capitalism and against reaction in Spain and Yugoslavia, but received no reply.

In its resolution the Second Congress indicated the necessity of setting up a united front. It also examined organizational problems, with G. Dimitrov taking part in the discussions.

36. *A Workers' Government* was set up in Saxony on October 11, 1923, following the mass revolutionary movement which spread throughout Germany as a reaction to the Ruhr occupation by French and Belgian forces. It included five Social Democrats and two Communists; the latter, pursuing a weak-kneed policy of compromises, together with the left-wing Social Democrats, impeded the arming of the proletariat and put a brake on revolutionary developments in Germany. On October 30, 1923, German army units overthrew the Workers' government.

37. On the eve of June 9, 1923, a fascist *coup d'état*, headed by the National Union (*Naroden Sgovor*) and the Military League, and supported by the Army and Macedonian armed detachments, was carried out in Bulgaria. In many provincial districts the masses, headed by local com-

munist and Agrarian leaders, spontaneously put up an armed struggle against it, but, deprived of a unified command, lost out. The main reason for the success of the coup was the existing dissension between the Bulgarian Agrarian Union and the Communist Party, with the latter officially adopting a neutral position in what it erroneously defined as a clash between two bourgeois camps.

38. *The Law on Land Ownership* was passed by the 19th National Assembly on April 25, 1921. According to its stipulations, landless peasants were granted land on a 20-year payment basis from a fund constituted by purchasing the lands of the big landowners in excess of 30 hectares.

39. *Lyapchev, Andrei* (1866–1933) – bourgeois politician, a leader of the Democratic Party, after World War I one of the leaders of the Constitutional Bloc and, after the *coup d'état* of 1923, a leader of the Democratic Union, (the former expanded National Union).

40. *Narod* (People) – a daily organ of the Social Democratic Party, published from November 15, 1911 to June 30, 1934, purveyor of chauvinism and anti-Soviet slander.

41. *Epoha* (Epoch) – Social Democratic daily, edited by Grigor Cheshmedjiev, published in Sofia from 1923 to 1925.

42. *Genadiev, Nikola* (1866–1923) – bourgeois politician and journalist; Minister of Justice, then Minister of Trade and Agriculture in the Liberal governments (1903–08); Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Radoslavov Government (1913–15).

43. *Daskalov, Raiko* (1886–1923) – a leader of the Agrarian Union and Minister of the Stamboliiski Government, murdered in 1923 by fascist mercenaries after the 1923 *coup d'état*.

44. *Koubrat Military League* – fascist organization set up in 1922; its constitution was patterned after that of the Italian Fascist Party.

45. *Adler, Friedrich* – one of the leaders of the Austrian Social Democratic Party and of the 2nd International.

46. *Tseretelli, I. G.* – Russian Social Democrat, Menshevik, one of the foremost enemies of the Soviet Union.

47. *Osvobozhdenié (Liberation) Workers' Co-operative Society* was founded in 1919. Its construction department did all the construction work for the Party and the trade unions; its department for the import and export of consumer goods developed a varied activity, including the collection, storing, transport and export of grain, gathered by the working people, to succour the famine-stricken Volga region in the USSR in 1921; its publishing department and printing house financed and published all Party newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets and books.

48. After June 9, 1923, the Communist Party was not immediately banned, although actually it was driven underground. In February 1924 the Constituent Congress decided to set up the Labour Party as a legal manifestation of the Communist Party with its own organ, the *Labour Banner*.

49. Referring to the Vitosha Conference of the Bulgarian Communist Party, held on May 17 and 18, 1924.

50. The Fifth Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 17 to July 8, 1924.

51. Referring to the establishment of a new national government in Canton (July 1925) which headed the national-liberation movement in China. This movement assumed an anti-imperialistic and more particularly anti-British character and marked the beginning of the 1926–27 revolutionary struggle against imperialist oppression and for national independence.

52. Referring to the uprising of the Riff tribes under Abd-el Krim in Northern Morocco against Spanish rule, which broke out in the spring of 1921 and was crushed by the combined military forces of Spain and France.

53. *Ebert, Friedrich* (1871–1925) – leader of the German Social Democratic Party, elected first President of the German Republic at the Weimar Constituent Assembly in February 1919.

54. *Hindenburg, Paul von* (1847–1934) – German Feldmarschall, typical representative of the Prussian military cast, elected German President (1925–1934) after Ebert's death, and facilitated Hitler's advent to power.

55. *Kenner, Dr. Karl* – a leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Austrian Republic after the 1918 revolution.

56. *Seipel, Ignaz* (1876–1932) – Austrian politician, leader of the Christian Social Party in the Constituent Assembly.

57. Referring to the 50-day transport workers' strike from December 27, 1919 to February 19, 1920 which, although supported by a one-week general strike proclaimed by the BCP on December 29, 1919, ended in failure.

Georgi Dimitrov took an immediate part in heading this historic strike.

58. Referring to the Reichstag vote of the German Social Democratic Parliamentary faction in favour of military credits.

59. Referring to the Spartakus Revolt in Berlin in early 1919, headed by Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, which was ruthlessly crushed by the Social Democratic Government, headed by Noske, Scheidemann and others, as well as to the alliance of the Austrian Social Democratic leaders with the bourgeoisie in 1919, leaving the state apparatus in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the big landowners and preserving the reactionary laws of the monarchy.

Both in Germany and in Austria, the Social Democrats turned the workers' councils (*soviets*) which were then formed into tools of the counter-revolution.

60. Referring to the strikes in September 1920, when the workers occupied the factories and plants in Milan, Genoa and Turin. The reformist leadership of the General Confederation of Labour hastened to conclude a compromise with the left wing of the Liberal Party, compelling the workers to evacuate the occupied factories and plants.

61. The 'independent Social Democrats' on April 13, 1919 proclaimed a *Bavarian Soviet Republic*, but did nothing to defend the

people's interests, and on May 1, 1919 it was overthrown by the counter-revolutionary forces of Hoffmann and Noske.

62. The Social Democrats in Hungary also played a double-faced role during the short existence of the Soviet Republic proclaimed on March 22, 1919. After merging with the Communist Party, they undermined the alliance between workers and peasants, thus allowing the extreme reactionary and fascist Horthy to assume power.

63. Yugoslavia was swept by peasant revolts and proletariat mass action throughout 1920. The general strike of the transport workers (April 16 to 19), was followed by that of the miners in Slovenia (July 17) and later (December 21) in Bosnia as well. In 1921 the Government issued a law on the mobilization of railwaymen and miners and another one on the defence of the state known as *Obznana*, banning the Communist Party, the youth communist organization and the trade unions.

64. *International Anti-imperialist League* – founded in 1925 by progressive West-European intellectuals headed by Barbusse, Romain Rolland and others in defence of the victims of terror in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the Balkans. On its initiative, Barbusse toured those countries and wrote his well-known book *The Hangmen*, and in 1929 an international conference against fascism, presided over by Barbusse, was called in Berlin.

65. A fire broke out in the German Reichstag building on February 27, 1933. Late at night, the official German radio announced that the incendiary, the 'Dutch communist' van der Lubbe, had been arrested in the Reichstag building with a Communist Party membership card in his pocket.

On the next day a communiqué inspired by the Prime-Minister of Prussia, Goering, was published, stating that the Reichstag fire was started by the German Communist Party as a signal for an armed uprising. It was immediately followed by an extraordinary decree on crushing 'communist acts of terror'; a number of articles of the Weimar Constitution were repealed and the Communist and Social Democratic newspapers were banned. By virtue of Goering's order, the police arrested many militants of the German Communist Party. The Nazis exploited the Reichstag fire to launch a crusade against the Communist Party, the workers' movement and democracy in Germany. On March 9, 1933, Georgi Dimitrov was arrested in Berlin with two other Bulgarians. When Torgler, chairman of the communist parliamentary faction, without the Party's permission, appeared at the police 'to rehabilitate himself', he too was arrested. The depositions of a restaurant waiter, the Nazi party member Hellmer, served as a pretext for Georgi Dimitrov's arrest. Hellmer claimed that he had seen Georgi Dimitrov and van der Lubbe together.

The inquiry was held by the Commissar of the Berlin Polizeipresidium. Georgi Dimitrov, kept arrested at the Polizeipresidium prison, refused to sign the records of the inquiry, protesting against the accusation of being an accomplice of van der Lubbe and stating that he had no confidence in the German police and in any police for that matter and that anything he might have to say would be written down by him.

On March 20, 1933 this document (shown here) was written and delivered to the police authorities. It is the only one written in Bulgarian; all the other documents were written by Georgi Dimitrov in German.

66. After several months of preparations, on September 21 the session of the 4th Penal Department of the Imperial Court in Leipzig was opened. The court sittings were attended by 82 foreign correspondents and 42 German newsmen; correspondents of communist, social democratic and even of leftist bourgeois papers were barred from the court sessions. At first Soviet press representatives were also excluded, but after the Soviet Government took retaliatory measures, they were allowed to attend the second part of the trial.

The Nazi authorities, which had intended to exploit the trial as an attack on communism and the workers' movement with themselves posing as the saviours of the bourgeois system from the 'Bolshevik incendiaries', at first broadcast the court sittings over the radio. But after September 23, when Georgi Dimitrov made his statements and asked pertinent questions, the broadcasts were discontinued.

At the opening of the court session, violating the generally accepted practice, Court President Büniger pronounced an introductory speech, in which he attempted to refute the allegations of the international inquiry commission and of the foreign press to the effect that the Nazi authorities had trumped up false charges and were staging a bogus trial. Torgler's Nazi lawyer, Sack, then made a long statement, attacking the Brown Book. From the very start the Nazis were driven into the defensive by the broad anti-fascist campaign which had been launched abroad against the flagrant Reichstag fire provocation. An international inquiry commission had been set up and the so-called Brown Book, containing many documents exposing Nazism and its provocation in connexion with the burning of the Reichstag, had been published.

Periodicals in many countries were also devoting much space to this question. The court started the trial by summoning four witnesses, whose task it was to disprove some of the assertions of the Brown Book.

The Nazi authorities triumphantly proclaimed the failure of the anti-fascist campaign which was carried on abroad, but September 23 marked a sharp turn in the course of the trial. On that day Georgi Dimitrov started making his depositions, assuming the offensive from the very first start by attacking the court, the Nazi authorities and the whole Nazi regime.

The *Pravda* then wrote about the trial:

'Thus two days elapsed but on the third the trial suffered a reverberating fiasco. There are no more beaten paths. Gone is the cast of *dramatis personae*, with its oddly written parts studied by heart in advance. The Court President Büniger and the Bulgarian communist Dimitrov appeared before the whole world, each representing his own class, his own outlook, his own party, his own moral code... Dimitrov's moral courage produced a tremendous impression not only on the millions of proletarian masses in all countries where his voice can be

heard, but also in Germany itself where the press and the hangmen are powerless to stifle this voice. This moral courage rests on the political force and purposeful behaviour of a proletariat revolutionary.

'Six months of torture have failed to crush the revolutionary and communist, have left no visible trace on his disposition ...

'... Comrade Georgi Dimitrov has a big audience in front of him, and the international proletariat follows his every word with bated breath. Like every fighting communist caught by the enemy, Dimitrov does not think about his own self, his life and his safety. He continues to perform his Party task, for he knows that not only with his speech but also with his entire conduct he will serve as an example in the revolutionary struggle to millions of proletarians. Dimitrov does not even bother to clear himself of the charge of having set the Reichstag on fire. He accuses the Nazi authorities...'

Even the German press had to admit the tremendous impact produced upon world public opinion by Georgi Dimitrov's conduct.

67. The court trial was taken down in shorthand and recorded on gramophone discs. The shorthand minutes comprise several thousand typewritten pages.

The shorthand records of the sittings were placed at the disposal of the members of the court, the public prosecutor and the lawyers. The defendants did not get any copies of these records. After a stubborn struggle, Georgi Dimitrov managed to obtain the shorthand records of a few sittings. He took excerpts from these shorthand records in his notebook.

Some sittings were taken down in shorthand by the correspondents present at court and published at the time in the international progressive press.

The shorthand records published in this volume are excerpts from the court records. Still, they give a vivid picture of the court sittings, convey the general set-up and reveal Dimitrov's fight at the trial.

68. In reply to Georgi Dimitrov's depositions made at the trial, the court resorted to various reprisals against him. On October 6, 1933, he was removed from the courtroom after revealing the illegal methods used in conducting the preliminary inquest by the police officers and the organs of investigation, impeaching them before the court of having divulged false information. On October 11, Dimitrov was again removed from the court sitting.

In this connexion, Georgi Dimitrov sent a letter protesting against the court's illegal measures, defending his rights as a political prisoner and unmasking those who were responsible for the Reichstag fire.

69. *Count Hellendorf* — leader of the Berlin storm-troopers, police president of Berlin.

70. To consolidate the fascist dictatorship and prepare Germany for war a terrorist apparatus was set up, in which the storm troops (SA) played a key role up to the middle of 1934. Later its fighting battalions (SS) assumed this role. The *Gestapo* (Secret Police) and the State Security were also subordinated to the supreme command of the SS. The leading nucleus of the Nazi party also formed part of this terrorist apparatus.

71. *Schleicher, Kurt von* – German general and statesman, Minister of Defence in the von Papen Government in 1932, then shortlived Reichskanzler.

72. *NSDAP* – National Socialist German Workers' Party – the Party of Hitler.

73. *Erzberger, Mathias* (1875–1921) – German statesman, leader of the left wing of the Centre Party.

74. *Rathenau, Walter* (1867–1922) – outstanding German democratic politician, favoured a compromise with the Entente and a rapprochement with the USSR, signed the Rapallo Treaty with the Soviet Union at the Genoa Conference (1922), murdered by the fascists, in June, 1922.

75. *Schopenhauer, Arthur* (1788–1860) – reactionary German idealist philosopher, ideologist of the Prussian *Junkers*, whose hatred of mankind is one of the sources of the predatory 'ideology' of German nazism.

76. The Nazis launched a monstrous campaign against the Communist Party. Dimitrov's proposal that Thaelmann, whom the Nazis had arrested and imprisoned, as well as other communist functionaries, be summoned, aimed at turning the court into a public tribune to refute the slanderous concoctions of the Nazis and to expound the true line of the German Communist Party. It was overruled by the court.

77. The ultra-left group of Katz-Ruth Fischer – Maslow was elected to the Central Committee of the German Communist Party at the Frankfurt Congress (1924) after the rightist opportunist group of Brandler and Talheimer had proved a failure. Late in 1925 Ruth Fischer, Maslow, and their adherents were removed from their posts for anti-party activity, and in 1926 they were expelled from the Party as agents of the class enemy. Ernst Thaelmann then assumed the leadership of the Party.

78. Georgi Dimitrov's heroic struggle at the trial and the powerful campaign of anti-fascist solidarity which was developed abroad, exposed the nazi incendiaries of the Reichstag and saved the life of the innocent defendants.

On December 23 the Leipzig court acquitted the three Bulgarians and Torgler for 'lack of evidence.' The nazi tool, van der Lubbe, was sentenced to death.

The nazis trying to save face, formulated the sentence in a such manner as to lay the blame for the Reichstag fire on the German Communist Party, insinuating that the culprits should be sought within its ranks.

Georgi Dimitrov dealt a telling blow at this manoeuvre. After the announcement of the sentence and the Court President's speech, he asked for the floor. Upset by this new speech, which threatened to further expose nazism, the panic-stricken President gathered his papers and, without uttering a word, hastened out of the courtroom.

79. Georgi Dimitrov's re-imprisonment after his acquittal aroused a storm of indignation among world public opinion. His intrepid struggle at the court had given great impetus to the campaign which had been

launched on the eve of the trial. Letters from all parts of the world, by various organizations and individuals, were sent to the German government, demanding the release of the anti-fascist fighter, whom even the supreme court of Nazi Germany had been compelled to acquit.

Georgi Dimitrov, too, insisted on his immediate release. Since he was still a Bulgarian citizen he probed the possibility of being sent to Bulgaria or some other country. The Bulgarian government, however, unwilling to help extricate him from the clutches of German fascism, hastened to state that it did not consider Georgi Dimitrov a Bulgarian citizen.

On February 15, 1934, the Soviet government decided to grant Georgi Dimitrov Soviet citizenship and asked the German authorities for his release. This settled the issue. Legalistically the Nazis, still cowed by the Leipzig boomerang, were cornered and had to accede to this demand.

On February 27, the prison authorities asked Georgi Dimitrov to pack his belongings, and then he was hurried off to the airport, where he was informed that he was being sent to the USSR. Everything was done in great secrecy and haste, lest the masses should hear about Georgi Dimitrov's release and departure and turn the latter into an impressive anti-fascist demonstration.

On February 27, Georgi Dimitrov left Berlin by special plane and landed the same evening in Moscow, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by representatives of the Communist International and by delegations of workers who had heard about his arrival.

Georgi Dimitrov's release from fascist captivity was a triumph of proletarian international solidarity and a clear demonstration of the force of the working class and the masses, who opposed fascism in a united front.

Georgi Dimitrov immediately resumed his struggle against fascism. 'I am a soldier of the proletarian revolution, a soldier of the Comintern... I am resolved to do my duty here to the last minute of my life,' he declared in his interview with press representatives on the evening of his arrival in Moscow. The next day Georgi Dimitrov spoke before the Association of Old Bolsheviks. Three days later, a speech of his was published in *Pravda*. He then made several statements and had talks on the Reichstag Fire Trial.

80. *Krupskaya, Nadezhda Konstantinovna* (1869-1939) - an old member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and an eminent educator in the USSR, doctor of pedagogical sciences. From 1891 to 1896 she worked at a Sunday school and evening courses for workers, while also conducting social-democratic propaganda and participating in the organization of the Petersburg Union for the Emancipation of the Working Class. At that time she met Lenin and later became his wife. During the Petersburg strikes (1896) she was arrested and, after spending six months in prison, was exiled to Shushenskoé, Minusinsk district, where Lenin was also in exile. In 1901, she went abroad, where she worked as secretary of the old *Iskra*, and after the Third Congress of the Party as secretary of the central organ and the foreign section of the Cen-

tral Committee. In 1905 she returned to Petersburg and worked as secretary of the Central Committee, but in 1908 she was forced to leave the country again, returning together with Lenin in 1917.

After the October Revolution she became one of the leading workers of the People's commissariat of Education of the Russian Socialist Federal Republic, took part in the re-organization of Soviet schools, and worked in the field of extra-curricular education and political education. From 1934 on she was head of the library department of the People's Commissariat of Education. She was a member of the Central Committee of the Party and of the Supreme Central Executive Committee of the Russian Socialist Federal Republic. Besides her *Recollections of Lenin* she has written a number of articles and pamphlets on problems of education.

81. Referring to the proclamation of a fascist 'authoritarian form of government' in Austria on April 1, 1933, when the freedom of the press and of meetings was suppressed, parliament was dissolved, and the Social Democratic para-military organization *Schutzbund* was disbanded. The Communist Party was outlawed on May 26.

In 1933-34 Austria became the arena of a violent struggle for power between the followers of Italian fascism and the Austrian nazis. The Dollfuss' Government suppressed the National-Socialist Party and set out to crush the workers' movement. On February 12, 1934, fascist bands of the Heimwehr started occupying the 'workers' homes (the centres of Social Democratic organizations). Bloody battles were waged in Vienna, Linz and elsewhere for three days. The underground Communist Party called on the workers to start a general strike and an armed offensive. But the leaders of the Social Democratic Party refused to back the masses' mobilization for struggle and sabotaged the general strike.

82. *Bauer, Otto* (1882-1938) - a leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party and of the Second International, a founder of the 2 1/2 International and Minister of Foreign Affairs after World War I.

83. See note 60.

84. Referring to the Berlin events of January 1919, when 150,000 workers came out into the streets to demonstrate against the Scheidemann Government. The general strike affected all the city's enterprises. But the 'Independent' Social Democrats sought a compromise with the Government, thereby enabling Noske, Minister of War, to organize counter-revolutionary 'volunteer' detachments and to route the army of the proletariat. Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and other leaders were killed in those days.

85. See note 45.

86. On July 15, 1927, the working people of Vienna organized a big demonstration in protest against the provocative acquittal of the fascists who had fired on a workers' demonstration in the provinces and killed several workers. The police opened fire against the demonstrators, the workers stormed the police stations and the Ministry of Justice. Some 140 workers were killed and more than 1,500 were wounded in the street fighting. The Social Democratic leaders refused to satisfy the workers' demand to be armed and thus checked their struggle. The Com-

unist Party was too weak to exercise a decisive influence on the course of events.

87. *Radoslavov, Vassil* (1854–1929) – bourgeois politician of the Liberal Party, Prime Minister (1913–1918) when he involved Bulgaria in World War I on the side of German imperialism, and fled to Germany during the Soldiers' Insurrection of September 1918, fearing the wrath of the people.

GEORGI DIMITROV
Selected Works
Volume I

Art Editor: VESSELIN TSAKOV
Artist: TSVETAN ALEKSIEV
Technical Editor: ROUMYANA BRAYANOVA
Proof readers: MIRKOVA, SIMEONOVA
Format 84/108/32; 29 Printers' sheets
Balkan State Printing House

22 953173531
0001 - 78