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## The People's Front in France

Marcel Cachin

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MARCEL

CACHIN

MAURICE

THOREZ

ANDRE

MARTY

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# THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN FRANCE

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SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF  
THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

# The People's Front in France

*Speeches by*

MARCEL CACHIN  
MAURICE THOREZ  
ANDRE MARTY



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*The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International  
was held in Moscow from July 25 to August 20, 1935.*

**THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE  
FIGHTS FOR THE PEOPLE'S FRONT**

*Speech Delivered at the Seventh World Congress  
of the Communist International*

By MARCEL CACHIN

COMRADES, the French delegation this time presents a favorable balance sheet to the Congress of the Communist International. Our Party has grown numerically and morally. The membership of the Party has almost tripled. Our Young Communist League has increased its membership fivefold within the past year. The sport organizations, to which our Party is now giving very much attention, have realized the united front with the Socialist sport organizations, and at the present time number 40,000 members. (*Applause.*)

*L'Humanité* has increased its circulation by 50,000 during the last twelve months (*applause*) and our provincial press distributes more than 200,000 of its local papers every week. (*Applause.*)

Our election victories last May and June were considerable throughout France. But here we must mention our particularly brilliant successes in the Paris region. First of all, in Paris, where the Communist Party tops all the political parties. (*Applause.*) In the Paris suburbs there live, as you know, the workers forced out of the city by high rents; in the suburbs we won half of all the seats against all the other parties united. (*Applause.*) Thus we have encircled Paris. The day after the recent elections, the reactionary newspapers wrote: "From now on Paris is surrounded by a Red belt." That is true, comrades—this is the blockade of the bourgeoisie's Paris by the proletariat of the Paris region. (*Applause.*)

And let us not forget that the Department of the Seine, where we now hold first place, has 5,000,000 inhabitants, and that it has always played the decisive role in the history of our country. I must add, in truth, that our results in the provinces are still far behind what we achieved in Paris and in the region around Paris, but, nevertheless, we feel a peculiar commotion there. I do not need further proof than the last election in Toulon for the seat left vacant by the death of Renaudel. It was

a Communist who succeeded the head of French reformism.  
(*Applause.*)

Thus the political role of our Party has grown considerably during the past few months, and it has played a prominent part in the political life of the country. Our Party was the initiator of a very wide united front, which today has been extended into the People's Front. And the French Lefts particularly feel that the progress of fascism in France can be stopped only upon one condition: that the Communist Party and the revolutionary proletariat enter the battle to the full.

We can say, comrades, that there is no other Party in France at the present time that enjoys the confidence of the proletariat as much as the Communist Party, even beyond the limits of the Party.

Within the Party we observe a cohesion, a maturity, an activity, and at the same time a self-possession, of which we could give you many proofs. Here is one of them:

All of you here know Doriot. You know the role played by this man ever since the formation of our Party. You know that he was in some degree a spoiled child of the Communist Party. And when he left the Party under the conditions that you know, he doubtless thought that a large part of the French Communists and of the working class would follow him in his adventure. Well, the Party was not shaken in any of its nuclei by the departure of this man.

Comrades, I should like to give you an idea of the admirable devotion of the proletarians to the French Communist Party.

We have set up very many Committees for the Defense of *l'Humanité*. We ask our comrades to become distributors of the paper every Sunday, as well as whenever great events take place in France. At the present time there are 15,000 men and women in Paris and the Paris region who defy the fascists and the police every Sunday, in all kinds of weather, without any pay—in front of the subway entrances, in the markets, and in the streets.

But besides these numerous and daily deeds of individual and



collective devotion, our Party has furnished many proofs that it has become the leader of the masses.

Tremendous demonstrations took place in the streets of Paris after February 6, last year, after the first fascist venture: a veritable state of siege, with barricades. The night of February 9, ten of our comrades fell in battle, but the Communist Party found behind it tens of thousands of Parisians, sons of the Commune. It was this day, followed by the 12th, that stopped the first assault of fascism in France. Thenceforth, our Party placed itself at the head of the proletarian masses. It owes this mighty prestige to the loyalty that it has always observed towards its International.

I must mention here the great benefits that our French proletariat has received from its affiliation to the Communist International. The Communist International remains our guide, our star; we have absolute confidence in it. This is not a mystical confidence; it is a confidence founded on an experience of fifteen years by now, the years that have passed since our entrance into the Communist International.

I do not want to outline here the history of everything that has happened during the seven years since 1928. Our Comrade Thorez and other members of our delegation will give all the details of our Party's life.

At the time of the Sixth Congress, the whole capitalist universe believed itself invulnerable and invincible. Everybody had that conviction. The bourgeois spoke of nothing but prosperity. Tardieu and Hoover proclaimed themselves its champions. The Social-Democratic Parties also declared that capitalism was steadfast and that it was necessary to come to terms with it. They told the proletarians: "Don't look towards Moscow, look towards Detroit; don't salute the great figure of Stalin, look at Mr. Ford's results." And even in this very hall there were comrades (they were soon to become ex-comrades) who told us that it would be quite wrong to consider America a country on the eve of economic and financial catastrophe. But at that time there was one voice that declared there were cracks behind that facade.

It was the voice of the Communist International. In the whole world, comrades, it alone saw clearly. A year before the catastrophe it predicted it in the clearest fashion.

Prior to the Sixth World Congress there was held the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I should like to remind you of the speeches of Stalin and Manuilsky, and I ask leave to quote a concise and pregnant formulation of Stalin's in which he says:

"Partial stabilization gives rise to an accentuation of the crisis of capitalism and the growing crisis disrupts stabilization—such are the dialectics of the development of capitalism at the present historical moment."

This was the only correct view; a few months later, the major pillar of capitalist world economy tottered in proud America. The event burst like a thunderbolt, and the day we received the report of the crash, some of us were reminded of the predictions of the Communist International, which alone had clearly seen ahead.

Comrades, five meetings of the Enlarged Executive of the C.I. have been held since the Sixth Congress. At each of these Plenums, the C.I. analyzed the various phases of the crisis, and the manner in which it was developing in different countries. It deduced all the conclusions; it showed how the various forms of fascism were born out of the development of the crisis. It characterized all the progress and each of the developments of fascism with scientific precision. This analysis is the essential condition for formulating correct tactics. It is only when the crisis is examined from the Marxist standpoint, and all the details analyzed in the light of dialectical materialism, that all the lessons and teachings can be drawn from experience to guide tactics in the struggle against the collapsing system.

Only here, in the Communist International, is the analysis of social facts made with a masterliness not to be found elsewhere. This was always the method of the Bolsheviks—serious analysis

of the economic facts that condition all the rest and that fix the exact rules of tactics.

These, comrades, are the secrets of the success of the Communist International's leaders; and it is because our Communist Party is convinced of it that it is so attached to the Communist International. The latter enabled it to follow the correct road in the proletarian struggle, and we are not prepared, comrades, to abandon this straight road. (*Applause.*)

The essential rule, I was going to say the golden rule, of the Communist International, the rule whose application it always demands of us, reads very simply: Communists, go to the masses! Go to the masses to win them, to line them up on your side in the daily battle, and for the battles to come. Unfortunately, it must be said that only too often have our Parties misunderstood the primary necessity of getting to work in a concrete, practical and positive fashion to realize this slogan of the Communist International. Our French Communist Party committed numerous mistakes for years and years. Sometimes it suffered from a mechanical "Leftism", when catechists full of abstractions draped themselves in fetishist formulas and felt it was unworthy of them, first to enlighten themselves, and then to stoop to the proletarians to speak to them in the simple and clear language of their class interests. (*Applause.*)

In our Party, I think I can say that the period of this sorry sectarian policy is happily past.

And on the other hand, it often happened that certain sections of the Party, as well as certain leaders, let themselves follow the easy and soft policy of the Right, *i.e.*, they underestimated the depth of the crisis; they denied that the danger of war was pressing; they tended to believe in the firmness of the capitalist regime; they despised Party discipline; they slid towards reformism.

Ever since we engaged in the struggle on two fronts, the rise of the Party has been continuous. It has ceased to be a sect; it has been able to find the road to the masses. It tenaciously defends the immediate demands of the toilers. In short, it has been able to apply the masterly tactics of the Communist Interna-

tional, the tactics of the united front, which have been complemented by those of the People's Front.

I believe that these results, this progress, are today decisive. Let me merely give you two dates: that of the debut, when we entered thoroughly into the idea of the united front and the People's Front—after the Amsterdam Congress in August 1932. And I am glad to greet here the organization formed by two men who have always given the Soviet Union tokens of their deepest sympathy, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse, the latter present in this hall. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, until then we were feeling our way, but from that time on we threw ourselves into the struggle completely.

It was our debut, our going into action. And here is the date of our arrival: the *14th of July, 1935*, which witnessed the massive realization of the twofold tactics of the united front and the People's Front.

Three years elapsed between these two dates, in the course of which serious difficulties made their appearance, arising on the one hand within the Party, which was not yet accustomed to this contact with great masses, and sometimes afraid of it. And then, another obstacle came from the attitude of some Socialist Party leaders. This was natural enough in our country—it was not always easy to realize the united front. I remember the first united front demonstrations, when I went together with the Socialist leaders to hold great people's demonstrations; there were comrades of ours who said: "Yes, the Party was well received today, but we are restoring a spotless shield to men compromised by their policy." Comrades, I do not dwell on the fact that there was a backward sectarianism in such an attitude. We had to keep in mind the slogan given us by the Communist International: that one must be able to distinguish between the rank and file and the leaders. Moreover, our comrades did not at once get closer to the workers and peasants; they did not always speak to them in the simple and clear language that was necessary. They did not enter into their daily struggles in order to adapt their own slogans to the latter, to explain them patiently to men who

often do not understand our special language, and for whom we must be able to explain in simple terms the complicated things in the great concept of Communism.

I do not say that this obstacle has been completely overcome, but nonetheless experience shows that progress is being made.

And then, a second obstacle: the bad faith of a certain number of Socialist Party leaders, as Pieck called to mind in very strong terms in the case of Germany. It is a matter of record that in Germany our Communist comrades solemnly proposed joint action and the united front to the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany during 1932 and at the beginning of 1933. The dates of these proposals have been called to mind: that of July 20, the time of Severing's capitulation, and then January 30, 1933, when Hitler took power. It should be recalled that on this latter day our comrades proposed the declaration of a general strike and the filling of the streets with demonstrating workers, but the Social-Democratic leaders rejected this violently and disdainfully. That is what history will retain of the tragic liability of German Social-Democracy. Our Central Committee had made five official offers of the united front to the Socialist Party since 1931, but it was only three years later, July 15, 1934, that the higher authorities of the French Socialist Party accepted these proposals for a united front. And it must be said that they did so under the vigorous pressure of the Socialist rank-and-file workers, especially in the region of Paris.

Now, the united front has been correctly functioning in France for one year; but we still see deplorable reservations on the part of numerous Socialist leaders. They persist, in spite of the successes of these tactics, and in spite of the absolute loyalty that our Party has manifested in all the joint demonstrations. Though they have nothing to reproach us with, though we, on the contrary, might have many things to say, it is not we who make the reservations, but certain Socialist leaders. We found these reservations aggravated in certain speeches at the recent Mulhouse Congress, and later in the columns of the newspaper *Le Populaire*.

At Mulhouse, however, one-third of the Socialist Party declared that it does not approve this attitude of certain leaders of the Socialist Party towards the united front. A third of the Socialist Party clearly stated that everything is urging it towards union with the Communist Party.

I am sure, comrades, that this attitude of the Socialist leaders who are making reservations regarding the united front does not suit the Socialist workers. I think that even within their own Party, these leaders will be reminded that it would be quite bad to forget the events in Germany and Austria, and that now is not the time to loosen the united front, much less to break it; that now is the time to strengthen it.

Going to the masses, applying the directives of the Communist International—that meant first of all, for us French Communists, the realization of the united front of the working class. That also meant hastening trade union unity. (*Applause.*)

I hope that our Seventh Congress will not close without learning that trade union unity has been ratified in France. The current towards trade union unity has become so strong for the past few months that there are more than seven hundred united unions at the present time, and it is certain that the last barriers of resistance are going to be cleared away very shortly. And let me say, it is the persevering efforts of the militants in the C.G.T.U. that will have culminated in this victory over the spirit of division in the unions.

Comrades, the rally of July 14 demonstrated the breadth already achieved by the People's Front, which was initiated by our Communist Party. This extension of the united front is always the application of the same slogan: "Communists, go to the masses." And the general situation, national and international, imperatively demands of us this realist policy of rallying a wide People's Front.

All the victims of capital must be united: all those whom it is already crushing under the millstone of fascism, and those whom it intends to place under the shameful yoke. I appeal to our brothers in the countries already fascized, who have already

suffered so much, and who are still suffering from the terror and the crimes of fascism. I think they will be the first to understand the necessity of this attitude of the French working class at the very time when fascism threatens us in France so directly.

We do not want the French proletariat to undergo fascism. Now, comrades, we cannot deny that at the present time fascism has become very powerful in our country. It is led by retired high officers, together with high officers on the active list.

There is one man, a former nobleman, Count de la Rocque, who has an undeniable gift of organization—for one must know one's worst enemies well. He says that he has 300,000 armed men, motorized with airplanes, arms and munitions. He says that the Croix de Feu (Fiery Cross) is gaining 15,000 members a month at the present time. And from time to time he mobilizes his troops in giant demonstrations in the environs of Paris and deep into the provinces. At the present time his men feel or believe they are very close to victory. They announce it, and state that in a few weeks they are going to go into action. There will be "sport" they say, a scrap.

Comrades, the French working class replied to such insolence with magnificent sweep on July 14, and since that time, M. Count de la Rocque has perhaps begun to think it over a bit. But we well know that we cannot get the best of 300,000 armed men by street demonstrations, no matter how powerful, how moving they may be.

Next winter, or even before, the most severe events of an economic and financial nature will occur in our country. The economic crisis, which struck in France later than elsewhere, has arrived there at the present time in a very forcible manner.

It is certain that next winter will not pass without severe clashes and collisions, and it is up to us to prepare for the solution of important tasks.

Comrades, although the French Hitlerites have calmed down a bit today, we know that they have government approval, and that they are preparing to take their revenge. With more energy than ever before, we must ensure that fascism "shall not pass".

We have done so up to the present time, and we can do so tomorrow. But we say, and each of us will understand it from his own experience, that we are not yet strong enough to repulse fascism by ourselves. We must have allies in the battle. These allies are precisely the People's Front. And today we think the interests of the French proletariat and of the international proletariat require that the French Communists, the French proletariat, stop fascism absolutely. For in Continental Europe today there is only one major country that is still not ruled by fascism. And if by misfortune fascism should crush us in France, it would not be us alone who would be crushed; it is the Soviet Union itself that would be aimed at directly, for our French fascism now states that it wants to wipe out the French Communists, and it wants to do the same to the Soviet Union.

We have heard it said that these tactics of the People's Front, which we have already implanted and which we intend to intensify by all the means at our disposal, present a certain danger.

Comrades, it is evident that the application of all tactics, no matter how correct, presents dangers, especially in a situation bristling with difficulties; but is there a more pressing duty for the French proletarians at the present time, in July 1935, than driving back fascism, than preventing its victory by all means? But, nevertheless, when one is in a well-steered ship, one can escape the rocks. It is up to the Party of the proletariat to hold the helm of the ship of the People's Front firmly in its hands.

And what would the French workers say if, unfortunately, we should hesitate to adopt tactics imposed by events, and if, by so doing, we should put Hitler fascism in power in Paris? And what would the toilers of the Soviet Union say, if we should procure the support of French fascism for Hitler through a policy of sectarianism? Do not doubt it for a minute, comrades, the French fascists will be on Hitler's side, the day after their victory (if that ever takes place), preparing for war against the Soviet Union. We shall not do that, and our participation in the People's Front has no other reason than to



prevent this catastrophe. Hence we shall pursue the strengthening of the People's Front to repel fascism, and to prevent war as far as we are able.

Together with the whole Communist International we well know that we have reached the second cycle of revolutions and wars, but it is for that very reason, because we have the clear-cut sensation of danger, that we must do the impossible to tear away from capitalism the masses whom it wants to precipitate into fascism, as well as into war. We are endeavoring to line up on the side of the proletariat the most numerous people's forces; we want to tear them away from the influence of finance capital, which is, with fascism, preparing for war.

And if this method is rejected, I should like to have a better one shown us. This better method can never be that of the Second International, since after the terrible experience of 1933 in Berlin, and of 1934 in Vienna, I think that no one would dare any longer to propose them to the proletariat anywhere. Grouping in a single front all those who, for various reasons, are opposed to war at the present time is our objective; it was always the policy of the Soviets, nor is any other conceivable to us. The Franco-Soviet pact is one of the steps toward the struggle for peace. It is in this sense that the French workers and peasants, Communists, Socialists, democrats, have approved Stalin's clear remarks to Laval. The more the French workers reflect, the more they realize that this is the only possible road, and that once again our great Comrade Stalin has fulfilled his true function as leader. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the day that the report of Stalin's declaration was received in France, considerable excitement was caused, as you can imagine. The Socialist leaders were heard picturing themselves as irreconcilable pacifists, complaining about words which, they said, would cripple the fight against war. And at that time this was obviously accompanied by secret hopes that the Communist Party, dealt a heavy blow as they said, was going to find itself considerably embarrassed.

But once again their hopes were deceived. And when a few

days later we pasted on the walls a tremendous poster "*Stalin Is Right*", hundreds of thousands of workers of the Seine-Socialists, democrats, Communists, passed by the poster and cried "Bravo!"

Comrades, we were facing elections at that time in the Paris suburbs, elections where we put up candidates everywhere; and the Right press, and sometimes the Socialist press, too, tried to hamper the activity of the Party by insinuating that Stalin's declaration had given Laval a trump card in his fight against our movement. But the working class of the Paris suburbs, which is subtle and clear-sighted, understood very well what that meant. Never had we had such success in our public meetings.

I say, therefore, comrades, that Stalin's statement met with an excellent reception in our country. Not unanimous, of course. There are Hitlerites, first of all; there are the neo-fascists; and then there are the Trotskyites, their little and dubious group. And then, last of all, there is Doriot.

Doriot has just given interviews to the big newspapers of the bourgeoisie, the exact text of which I want to give you. Doriot attacks the policy of the People's Front, representing it as subordinated to the policy of the Soviet Union; he says that it leads to war, and he demands that it be replaced by a rapprochement with Germany, "such as she is"—that is to say, with Hitler.

In the interview that Doriot has just given the *Petit Journal* (of July 13), he says literally:

"It is inadmissible for the policy of a big French party to be dominated by the diplomatic needs of a foreign country, no matter what one it is. [When he says a foreign country, he means the Soviet Union—M. C.] I dread this Russian alliance, because I believe that Russia is interested, or thinks it is interested, in war, while we want peace. Peace must be sought for by the most logical means, Franco-German rapprochement. Here is the policy that conforms to the interests of the masses."

And he concludes:

"The Russian influences must be eliminated from the People's Front in order that its actions be inspired by French needs."

I need not tell you that the French proletarians will not believe a word of what Doriot tells them. They know that it is a shameful slander to say that the Soviet Union is interested in war. They know very well, and we prove it to them every day, that the U.S.S.R. is, on the contrary, the only power that tries to avoid war by every possible means. The Soviet Union has foiled the plans of imperialism, which wished to isolate it. It is collaborating with all the little countries that are menaced in their independence at the present time, and with those that are not interested in breaking the peace at the present historical moment. It offers its pacts of non-aggression, peace guarantees, and mutual assistance to all nations, no matter which they are. One must have a brazen face to say under these conditions that the Soviet Union wants war and is preparing for it.

No! All honest minds know very well that the U.S.S.R. is a great peaceable nation, the only really peaceable nation in the whole world. (*Applause.*)

This, comrades, is the abyss into which Doriot has fallen. This is where his vulgar hatred of the Communist Party and of the Communist International, of which he was still a member yesterday, has led him.

Comrades, all of you here are revolutionaries with stout hearts and clear minds. Many of you here on these benches, among the delegates of the Bolshevik Party of the U.S.S.R., have participated in the greatest revolution of all time, and you have known how to lead it to victory. Others among our Chinese comrades, to whom I bow very low, have been heroically fighting with arms for seven years to liberate their country and raise their class to power.

They have already succeeded in large part, since the Chinese Soviet Republic already includes tens of millions of toilers. Some of the other Parties represented in this assemblage count by the

thousands their brave militants who have fallen in revolutionary struggle.

There is not a revolutionary authority in the world higher than this assemblage, which has come together in the capital of the world revolution.

Our Communist International has decided to take the initiative for anything that could be usefully proposed to prolong peace under the shameless predatory regime of imperialism. But we have no right to be blind and deaf to the events going on around us. Of course, we count only upon the peoples to defend peace and defend the Soviet Union and not upon the governments of the bourgeoisie, no matter what they are. But it is our duty to utilize to the maximum, for the benefit of the exploited, the contradictions of the capitalist regime and the internal antagonisms that rend it apart.

We well know that it is in the nature of capitalism to produce war. Let us bring together against its regime all those who hate war, no matter who they are. We well know where the rallying of these wills in a People's Front, inspired and directed by the vanguard of the world proletariat, will finally lead.

Comrades, the Soviet Union was never more threatened than today by decadent imperialism. But at the same time we see the Communist proletarians, the Socialists, and many of those who are still attached to the forms of bourgeois democracy, the best intellectuals, the best artists, the greatest scientists in the world, are turning from imperialism and are being drawn towards the fatherland of socialism.

All those who think, realize that an eclipse of the Soviet Union would mean darkness over the whole world; they all realize that the World Soviet Union is the only way out for human civilization. And that is why the toilers throughout the world will rise in revolt against all attempts at anti-Soviet aggression. Since the October Revolution they have repeatedly and concretely manifested their resolution not to let the U.S.S.R. be touched. But in the stage of decisive social struggles that we now have reached, everyone understands that he must give him-

self without reservation to the defense of the Soviet Union, must identify it with his own defense. Numerous democrats and the best of the intellectuals know it as well as we do, and they have made their choice already. The duty of the Communists is now tremendous; it is their job to prepare to direct these coming struggles in the light of the precedent of October. To lead the proletariat to victory they retain their complete confidence in their Communist International. It has already brought well-being to one-sixth of the globe.

*(Prolonged, stormy applause. The whole hall rises and gives Comrade Cachin an ovation. The whole hall sings the "Internationale".)*

**THE SUCCESSES OF THE ANTI-FASCIST  
UNITED FRONT**

*Speech Delivered at the Seventh World Congress  
of the Communist International*

By MAURICE THOREZ

COMRADES, the report on the offensive of fascism and the struggle for the unity of the working class against fascism, presented at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, raises questions of considerable importance and of unusual international significance. No one could have treated such questions with more competence and authority than our Comrade Dimitroff, the hero of the Leipzig trial. (*Applause.*)

It was at Leipzig, face to face with Goebbels and Goering, the sinister lieutenants of the sinister Hitler, that Dimitroff set forth the indictment of the bloody barbarism of fascism pronounced from this tribunal, the highest that exists, in a masterly manner—in the name, as he proudly declared, of the Communist International and of all the toilers of the world.

It was again Dimitroff who, by the example of his calm and indomitable courage, stimulated the unity of the working class, the union of all anti-fascists against the greatest crime known to history. Throughout the world, millions upon millions, Communists, Socialists, anti-fascists, toilers and intellectuals, followed with tense emotion the heroic struggle of Dimitroff against the executioners of the German people, the persecutors of our courageous Thaelmann.

The name of the Bolshevik Dimitroff is pronounced with heartfelt gratitude and affectionate admiration by all those who want to unite in order to repel the brutal assault of fascism.

Marcel Cachin has already given the Congress a vivid account of the great battle going on in France between the forces of reactionary fascism and those of progressive and revolutionary anti-fascism. There is no doubt that our struggle in France possesses great international significance. The future of the people of France and of the peoples of Europe, for many years to come, depends upon the issue of this battle and upon the outcome of our anti-fascist movement. Conscious of the responsibilities of our Communist Party, not only to the proletariat of France but

to our brothers in other countries as well, we shall endeavor to make a contribution based upon the rich experience of our anti-fascist movement to the discussion of the report of our Comrade Dimitroff, so powerful, and at the same time so simple and so moving.

### *I. Fascism in France—A Real and Immediate Danger*

The mighty demonstration of the People's Front on July 14 in France has had wide repercussions throughout the world. Never before had a manifestation of such magnitude been witnessed in Paris. Half a million men and women marched from the Place de la Bastille to the Place de la Nation through the old Faubourg Saint-Antoine, rich in revolutionary memories. At the initiative of the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee,\* numerous organizations participated in the people's demonstration of July 14 in Paris and throughout France. Among them were the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Radical-Socialist Party, the two C.G.T.'s (General Confederation of Labor), unitary and reformist, the League of the Rights of Man, various ex-servicemen's associations, the United Sports' Federation, the Young Communist, Young Socialist, Young Radical and Young Republican Leagues, etc. The crowd was ardent and enthusiastic. It acclaimed the People's Front and its slogans of immediate struggle for peace, bread and liberty. It manifested particular attachment to our Communist Party, the champion of workers' unity, the initiator and organizer of the People's Front. It launched the slogan, from then on the most widespread slogan in France, "*Soviets Everywhere*".

However, as Comrade Dimitroff emphasized yesterday, it would be quite dangerous to yield to the illusion that fascism is already overcome. At the very hour that the people of Paris was proclaiming its readiness not to let fascism pass, Colonel Count

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\* The International Congress of the Amsterdam Anti-War Movement took place in 1933 in the Salle Pleyel in Paris.



de la Rocque was reviewing his civil war troops. There were 35,000 of them, invited by the head of the government to relight the Memorial Flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They marched past in cadenced step, in military formation. And we know that the *Croix de Feu* (Fiery Cross) possesses arms, motorcycles, automobiles and airplanes. The fascist enemy has not been crushed. It is regrouping its forces and is preparing for its next attacks. The danger continues to grow. The profound causes that give birth to fascism, that permit it to develop and to gain in strength, have not disappeared. The continued aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism, and the persistence of the economic crisis, are making the toilers' living conditions more and more miserable. In order to prevent and limit the revolt of the laboring masses, and to prepare for war by *ensuring its hinterland*, the bourgeoisie on an international scale requires fascism.

In France the curve of production has again fallen, dropping toward the previous low point of 1932. Unemployment is greater than last year. In spite of the restrictions of every kind imposed upon the workers, the minor government officials, the peasants, the small shopkeepers, and the ex-servicemen, for the past three years, the deficit in the state budget persists and grows. Fifteen billion francs have already been cut from salaries, pensions, allowances, relief, and credits beneficial to the community. But on the one hand, tax receipts are dropping steadily owing to the economic crisis, and on the other, the war and police budgets are expanding out of all measure. Moreover, the Laval government has again decided to effect a *saving* of eleven billions by means of emergency decrees. It is reducing the salaries of civil servants, employees and workers of the big public services by 10 per cent. It is making a 10 per cent cut in the pensions paid the ex-servicemen and war victims, and in the allowances paid to retired government officials. It has cut the income of small rentiers by 10 per cent.

A mighty wave of discontent is rising through the country. In Paris and in the provinces, in spite of bans, arrests and dismissals, the demonstrations multiply, imposing and militant. The

revolutionary upsurge is growing. Communist influence is increasing. That is why the French bourgeoisie is turning toward fascist dictatorship, is arming and inciting its mercenary bands. That is why Premier Laval tolerates, encourages and even legalizes the Croix de Feu at a time when the People's Front demands its disarming and dissolution.

Moreover, certain sections of the big bourgeoisie are opposing the Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance. They are carrying on a campaign against the Soviet Union and against Communism in general. They demand a rapprochement with Hitler Germany. They base themselves upon the most reactionary elements and upon the fascist groups; their leaders are negotiating with Hitler. They have even found a mouthpiece in the person of the renegade Doriot.

As we shall show in greater detail in a moment, fascism in France possesses this peculiarity, as compared to other countries, of being less developed in the countryside. Up to now it has recruited much more in the cities—among the office workers and the managing personnel of the big enterprises and government institutions, among the shopkeepers and the members of the free professions—than among the peasants, in spite of the great efforts it is making in the villages.

This is due, as we shall see, to historical and political conditions, and particularly to the fact that France is a country of old bourgeois democracy, ever since the Revolution of 1789.

In analyzing the general and special conditions of fascist development, we must pay very special attention to the subjective causes which rendered the temporary victory of fascism possible in several countries. These are, above all: the isolation of the working class, or its insufficient influence among the middle classes drawn along by fascism and placed under the political leadership of the big bourgeoisie; as well as the division of the working class provoked and maintained by the reformist policy of Social-Democracy.

The course of events in Germany—where we witnessed several purely Socialist or coalition governments, and in Austria and

Spain—where Socialist leaders likewise sat in the councils of government—particularly illustrates this tragic reality. Social-Democracy's accord with the bourgeoisie had as its complement obstinate rejection of the united front with the Communists.

The armed struggles of the Austrian and Spanish proletariat, the fighting in Vienna and in the Asturias, even though they were unable to prevent the victory of fascism, nonetheless resulted in a widening of the united front. The Communist and Socialist proletarians shed their blood together against the common enemy for the same great and noble cause of the liberation of the working class. The events in Germany, Austria and Spain suddenly illuminated the road for a large number of our Socialist brothers.

These events opened their eyes to another policy, to the policy of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, to the policy of the Communist International.

What a startling contrast between the results of the two policies, the two roads proposed to the working class: one by Social-Democracy, the other by the Communist International!

On the one hand, defeat, fascism, terror, the economic crisis and its formidable consequences for the working class: unemployment, penury, starvation, the degradation of man; and against this somber background the mad race of armaments, the preparation for a frightful war which would plunge the world into an abyss of ruin and blood.

On the other hand, the victorious building of socialism, the miracles of industrialization and collectivization, the well-being, the cultural blossoming, of free peoples; the joy of living discovered again in the love of creative labor; a new world that exalts the personality while elevating the collective; the land of the Soviets that is fighting for peace.

*Glory to the Bolshevik Party!*

*Glory to Lenin*, who led the working class to power over one-sixth of the globe and traced the road along which we are marching!

*Glory to Stalin*, whose genius has solved the problems of

building socialism in the U.S.S.R., and who is leading the international proletariat to victory! (*Applause.*)

The Soviet Union, by its very existence, lays bare and accentuates the internal and external contradictions of capitalism. It intensifies the general crisis of capitalism, and makes it more profound. It is the lever of the proletarian revolution throughout the world. By its living example, it wins the workers and the toiling masses for the cause of socialism; it draws these masses into the struggle for the conquest of power and for the building of socialism in their own countries.

It is under these general conditions of the offensive of fascism and of the parallel growth of the forces of revolution, that the resistance of the masses, the extent of the anti-fascist movement in France, acquire a great international significance.

Hitler's coming to power in Germany has galvanized the forces of reaction in all the countries of capitalism. In Austria, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, even in France, the success of National-Socialism, while arousing the working class, has reinforced the fascist elements and tendencies, and fortified fascism wherever it is in power. At the same time the menace of a new imperialist war grew, as did the threat of aggression against the Soviet Union.

The successes gained in our anti-fascist struggle in France are galvanizing the forces of the working class and of anti-fascism in all the capitalist countries, at the same time helping to put off the imperialist war and to prevent aggression against the Soviet Union.

The breadth and the drive of the anti-fascist movement in France are modifying to a certain extent the relationship of forces on an international scale, in favor of the camp of the proletarian revolution.

## *II. The Lessons of International Experience*

Before speaking of the course of the battle between fascism and the working class in France, I think it is useful to emphasize

the extent to which the toilers of France have been taught by their painful lessons and by international experience, particularly by the events in Germany.

Comrade Dimitroff explained in his report that the Communist Parties had not been strong enough to draw the working class and all the toilers, divided by the noxious policy of Social-Democracy, into the struggle against fascism.

Many weaknesses and omissions in the anti-fascist struggle in other countries were due to an inaccurate estimate of *fascism*, and at the very least, confusion regarding the specific content of fascism compared to bourgeois democracy. From this fundamental error there could only follow passivity, underestimation of the fascist danger and of the terrible menace that it represents for all peoples, both by the exercise of its bestial dictatorship, as well as by its foreign policy of adventure and provocation, which leads directly to war.

When the phrase "fascism is here" was used at every turn to characterize the slightest fact of repression, understanding of the fascist danger and of the methods to be used in repelling it was not made easier for the workers. When Neumann wrote in the *Rote Fahne* that "*the Bruening government was a fascist dictatorship*," he confused our comrades in Germany and hampered the Communist Party of Germany in its efforts to rally all the toilers against their worst enemy, Hitler fascism.

The failure to understand the role of fascism, which is at one and the same time a product of capitalist decomposition and the instrument of the brutal and violent offensive of capital against the working class, also resulted in a certain fatalism.

At the Eleventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, in March, 1931, Comrade Manuilsky denounced the monstrous error of those who, seeing only the role of fascism in the decay of capitalism, ascribe to fascism a revolutionary role.

At the Twelfth Plenum Comrade Ercoli pointed out how dangerous it could be to wait for an automatic and rapid collapse of fascism after it seized power. An analogous position on the

part of our Communist Party of Italy, where sectarian tendencies dominated for a long time, did not allow it to make use of the crisis that followed the assassination of Matteotti.

Other weaknesses or defects came from a superficial and very inaccurate evaluation of the development of the struggle, of the relationship of class forces, of the episodes of fascism's advance and retreat and of the phenomena of differentiation and regrouping that were taking place within it. Lenin was fond of saying that "*the course of the revolution is not as straight as the Nevsky Prospect*".\* Nor, consequently, is the course of counter-revolution any more uniform.

The periods of success and strengthening of fascism are followed either by a standstill or by a retreat under the pressure of the masses or under its growing difficulties. Friction, internal conflicts arise within fascism itself. In such a case it is necessary to redouble the attack on fascism but it should not be proclaimed that "fascism is already overcome", or that it is on the eve of collapse.

The major weakness in several countries, and in Germany above all, was the absence of a fighting united front of the working class against fascism. German Social-Democracy preferred to bury itself under the ruins of the Weimar Republic rather than consent to a united front of the working class. Unfortunately, the summons of Thaelmann and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for the organization of the united front was not realized.

The crisis of Social-Democracy, the drop in its influence and in its organized membership, the disarray in the masses of workers do not always represent progress, irrespective of the reactionary leaders of Social-Democracy—since the workers, leaving the Social-Democracy, are not drawn into the united front. This leads to a weakening of the working class by which fascism profited. The considerable progress of our sister Party of Germany, which succeeded in obtaining 6,000,000 votes, was less than that of the

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\* A street in Leningrad.—Ed.

National-Socialists. Similar facts have recently occurred in the German areas of Czechoslovakia. Our Czech Communist Party won a great election victory in the Czech and Slovak regions, and in the Carpathian Ukraine. But in the German-speaking areas it was the pro-Nazi Henlein party that absorbed the bourgeois parties, and, to a large extent, the Social-Democracy, and caused us losses.

The other essential weaknesses consisted in insufficient attention to the partial demands of the toiling masses, principally to the needs of the middle classes, which became an easy prey to fascist demagogy. Finally, there was some hesitation at times when the situation dictated resolute mass action which alone could have caused the balance to tip in favor of the working class.

### *III. The Fascist Offensive and the Resistance of the Masses in France*

In his remarkable work *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx wrote that revolution organizes counter-revolution, and that, by an application of the laws of dialectics, counter-revolution in turn arms the revolution by giving it a real revolutionary party matured in the battle against its adversary.

Marx's thesis enables us better to grasp the stages and aspects of the development of fascism in France, and of the growing resistance of the masses to the fascist offensive.

The first groupings of a clear fascist character appeared in France at the end of 1924, following the mighty demonstration that accompanied the remains of Jaurès from the Chamber of Deputies to the Pantheon. It was at the time of the first cartel, that is to say, of Radical cabinets supported by the Socialist Party. Communist influence was on the rise after the courageous campaign of our Party against the occupation of the Ruhr and against the Poincaré government.

The bourgeoisie financed the organization of fighting detach-

ments against the working class. This first attempt met with failure owing to the general situation, as well as to the Party's vigorous counter-thrust. The activity of the Leagues was met by a greater activity of the Communist Party. At that time we alone fought at the head of the toilers against the war in Morocco, and later against the Poincare government.

In 1929, with the growing authority of the Party, owing to the repercussions of its campaigns, and at a time when French imperialism was at the head of the sworn enemies of the Soviet Union and was feverishly preparing for war, a new attack was made upon the Communist Party and its newspaper *l'Humanité*. The fascist groups reappeared on the scene. A feature of this period was that the French bourgeoisie encouraged the groups of counter-revolutionary emigrés, of whiteguards, and supported their criminal enterprises.

Profiting by the arrest of the principal leaders of the Communist Party, the Barbé-Célor group succeeded in getting hold of the leadership of the Party at this time. This group put the revolutionary movement on a sectarian path which facilitated the attack of the bourgeoisie as well as the treason of the Pupist\* leaders.

After the Barbé-Célor group had been exposed and its sectarian opportunist policy rejected, the Party began a new advance. Nineteen-thirty-two was the period of the second cartel, coinciding with the aggravation of the economic crisis, the commencement of the financial crisis, and the chronic deficit in the state budget, as well as the period of the rapid offensive of fascism in Central Europe. The growing discontent of the masses and a correct policy of demands pursued by the Communist Party aided the current of the united front and of trade union unity. The Amsterdam-Pleyel movement successfully developed at the call of Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse.

After a great financial scandal had been uncovered at the

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\* Pupists—a group of renegades that seceded from the Communist Party and formed the so-called "Party of Proletarian Unity".



end of 1933, the fascist groups endeavored to exploit it for a campaign against Parliament and against the Radical Party that was in power at the time.

The leaders of the fascist leagues and the reactionary politicians endeavored to prevent the legitimate discontent and indignation of the people against the swindlers and their accomplices—members of Parliament, ministers, high judicial officials, ambassadors, prefects, retired generals and members of the Legion of Honor—turning into Communist channels, and endeavored to direct them into channels favorable to capital. They carried on a violent press campaign; they attempted numerous demonstrations. On February 6, 1934, the fascist and reactionary leaders launched their troops in an attack against the Chamber of Deputies. They were unable to succeed in their enterprise. The reply of the working class was prompt and effective. On the 6th, our Party had organized counter-demonstrations. On the 7th, the aroused working class quarters were at the boiling point. The Daladier government resigned; the reactionary Doumergue was called to power. All demonstrations were prohibited. The Socialist Party abandoned a demonstration that it had called for the 8th in the Place de la Bastille.

The Communist Party, ignoring the police prohibition, persisted in the demonstration that it had fixed for the 9th of February in the Place de la République. The grandsons of the Communards, the proletarians of Paris and of the Red suburbs, replied without hesitation to the call of the Communist Party. They fought the police for five hours to the cry of "Soviets Everywhere!" "Down with Fascism!" throughout a third of Paris, in the districts of the east and around the Place de la République.

Numerous Socialist workers had left the places where they were being kept confined to join their Communist brothers. The independent union of government employees marched in a column down the Boulevard Magenta towards the Place de la République. Ten dead were left on the pavement, among them a cement-

worker belonging to the reformist trade union and several non-Party workers.

The courageous battle of Communist Paris electrified the workers and peasants in the provinces. It was a signal and an example. On February 12 the general strike called by the C.G.T., under the pressure of the C.G.T.U. (Unitary Confederation of Labor) and the Communist Party, pulled 4,500,000 workers out of the factories. For the first time Communists, Socialists, and workers organized in both the revolutionary and reformist trade union federations were united on a huge scale in demonstrations. There were more than 1,000,000 demonstrators, 200,000 of them in Paris. An equal number, ardent and stirred, participated in the funeral of the victims on February 17. The working class of France, influenced by the energetic action of the Communist Party, had repulsed the first great attack of fascism. (*Applause.*)

But Doumergue is in power—the National Union, a political coalition serving big business. It favors the criminal acts of the fascist bands, who are trying to regain influence after their half-defeat in February. Throughout the country attempts at fascist parades or meetings meet with vigorous counter-demonstrations by the workers. A dozen toilers are killed in battle against the fascists, who are armed and protected by the police. But each victim fallen for the cause strengthens still more the will to struggle of the working class. Meanwhile, the pact of common struggle against fascism is signed by the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. The middle classes begin to feel the attraction of the united working class.

The Communist Party wins a brilliant victory in the cantonal elections in October, 1934, limiting the advance of the Right parties that favor fascism. Doumergue is forced to resign.

Then, face to face with the growth of Communist influence and with the development of united action, the fascist groups redouble their activity. Some of them have remained sects, mercenary bands without great influence among the masses. The Croix de Feu, on the other hand, has developed, and it multiplies its civil war maneuvers.

During the recent ministerial crises Colonel Count de la Rocque, head of the Croix de Feu, stated "*that there would be sport if the Left government were to take over the direction of affairs*". The insolent threats of de la Rocque, his rehearsals of future punitive expeditions, had as their result the rapprochement of the Radicals with the People's Front. They joined in the rally of July 14.

And now the battle is going to develop and rise to a higher level, owing to the ferment provoked by the application of Laval's emergency decrees.

There is at present a marking time, and in some cases even a decline, in the influence of fascism in France. We see polemics going on between the different fascist groups, dissensions within several of these groups. The French fascists have not been able to unify their movement entirely. The Camelots du Roi are quarreling with the Young Patriots; the Francists and the Solidarité Française polemicize against the Croix de Feu in their press, etc.

The Agrarian Party has not yet succeeded in organizing the peasant front. Once its leaders denounced the fascist Dorgeres, who was acting on behalf of a clan of country squires and big landed proprietors. The Taxpayers' League, led by reactionaries, has suffered its first split and is threatened by a second, because its leadership, tributary to big business, attempts to justify the emergency decrees. Likewise, among the ex-servicemen and in the association of small tradesmen, among those who backed the fascist groups on the evening of February 6, the reactionary and pro-fascist chiefs are often put in a difficult situation by their rank-and-file adherents who are influenced by the Communist Party and the People's Front.

Voices are already being raised among the Catholics against fascist penetration of the Catholic organizations. Sections of the Young Christian Workers have expelled members of the Young Patriots from their ranks. Hitler's attack upon the churches has not been without its repercussions in France. On July 27 last, a big meeting for the liberation of Thaelmann rallied an audience of 10,000 in Boulogne, a suburb of Paris. At this meeting, along-

side the Communists there spoke Socialists, after Pierre Cot, former Radical minister, and a Catholic priest who got up and denounced Hitler's persecution of the church and called for organized struggle against fascism. Finally, certain reactionary leaders, such as Tardieu, former premier, profess a gloomy pessimism. He publicly vents his rancor against his friends of yesterday. He blames all of them, accusing all of them of lacking courage.

But once again, the big bourgeoisie, under the spur of necessity and fearing for its domination, is forcing the leaders and the most resolute and bellicose elements of fascism into a regrouping of their forces. That is what has brought about the great development of the Croix de Feu movement. The Croix de Feu, an organization of national volunteers, now claims more than 300,000 members. It has established sections sub-divided into groups. Its head, Colonel Count de la Rocque, whose brother is in the service of the pretender to the throne of France, is an ex-officer of the espionage service, the Second Bureau of the French General Staff. He left the army in order to enter the service of the electricity trust, in a highly paid job. After he had become president of the Fiery Cross movement, he steered the latter into a sharply fascist course. His program is expressed in the formula: "*French Reconciliation—Love of Country—Reform of the Constitution.*" Translated for the working class, this reads: In the service of capital against the working class. The anti-capitalist, anti-parliamentary and anti-government demagoguery of the Croix de Feu movement poorly veils the actual points of its program, such as repeal of the social insurance law and, at the present time, acceptance of the emergency decrees. The leaders of the Croix de Feu are at the service of those who pay them, the electricity trust with M. Mercier, member of the Croix de Feu, at its head, the great French banks with Finaly at their head, and the Comité des Forges and the Bank of France, with de Wendel, who carries membership card No. 13 in the Croix de Feu.

A few words on the methods of the Croix de Feu. They have organized soup kitchens, workshops to teach sewing to young

girls, charity clothing clubs, dispensaries for the sick, visiting nurse services imitating the enterprises of the Communist municipalities. They established social welfare services, children's groups, and crèches. They have organized young people's clubs, theaters, choruses, gymnasiums, and vacation camps. They have even organized some repair shops for the young unemployed, under the guise of apprenticeship. They have equipped a solarium, as well as convalescent homes.

The Croix de Feu established one of its soup kitchens at Villejuif, a town with a Communist administration. The Party recommended the unemployed to go and eat the soup of the Croix de Feu while demonstrating against the fascist leaders. For three weeks an unusual struggle thus took place which aroused the workers all over the country. The unemployed, with Communists at their head, went to the soup kitchens singing the *Internationale* and hissing the Fiery Cross members, shouting: "To the lamp-post with de la Rocque!" (*Applause.*)

It need not be added that the Croix de Feu did not continue soup kitchens of this sort for a long time.

I have already mentioned a speech made by de la Rocque at Algiers, announcing that if a Left government were formed there would be sport.

Here is another statement made at Chartres on June 23. Speaking at night in a meadow by torchlight, after the Hitler fashion, he said: "Weighing the full gravity of my words, Croix de Feu, I say to you: You are performing your armed vigil this evening. In a few weeks, at most, our ideas will be in power—I swear to you. Actively employ the little time that remains to us to perfect your sections, so that at my order, and at the moment that I shall choose, everything be ready down to the slightest detail. We shall sweep away parliamentarism . . . the French flag must be master on every bit of territory."

The fascists are carrying on chauvinist campaigns against foreign workers, the "metics". In particular, they are fomenting anti-Semitism.

They are endeavoring to arrive at an understanding with

Hitler against the Soviet Union, against Communism.

Without dwelling again on the considerable funds at the disposal of the Croix de Feu, I should like to say a word or two about their methods of mobilizing their forces. All the Croix de Feu members within a radius of 100 kilometers assemble at a given place. Their leader arrives from Paris in an auto or by plane. When he travelled in Algeria, de la Rocque reviewed the crews of some thirty planes. The Croix de Feu is linked up with the higher officers and the generals, and particularly with the present Air Minister. M. Laval had to admit this in his statement at the time Parliament recessed. The Croix de Feu is supported by the church, by the high clergy.

The French fascists have already assassinated toilers. They speak a cynical language. In Moselle the fascists distributed a tract which says that "Fascism will triumph even if we have to rip open their bellies, tear out their hearts, and open their guts to the sun". The fascist groups openly practise shooting. They have molested and wounded even Radicals who tend towards the People's Front.

*The victory of fascism in France would mean* the suppression of the toiling masses economically and politically. It would mean starvation wages for the workers, the abolition of the already meager social legislation, the prohibition of strikes and the suppression of all resistance to the capitalist offensive, the destruction of the trade unions and the dispersal or "coordination" of the workers' cooperatives.

*The victory of fascism would mean* the unrestrained reduction of the salaries of office workers, their dismissal and brutal regimentation. The "National Unity" government has already abolished 5,000 teachers' posts in the secular schools.

*The victory of fascism would mean* that shopkeepers and artisans will be delivered over to arbitrary and ruthless exploitation by the big capitalists, homeowners, trusts, transport companies, M. Mercier, the electrical industry king, and M. de Wendel, the head of the Comité des Forges.

*The victory of fascism would mean* that the peasantry would

be sacrificed to the interests and privileges of the landlords, the capitalist monopolists, the finance magnates; it would mean the complete ruin of the peasant's farm.

*The victory of fascism would mean* that the intellectuals would be subjected to the scorn and abominable attacks to which such great scientists as Perrin and Langevin are already being subjected by the fascists. Auto-da-fé, medieval bonfires, would be lit as in Hitler Germany.

*The victory of fascism would mean* the abolition of all liberties; it would mean a bloody terror, the complete enslavement of the toiling people, the arrest and murder of the active champions of the working class, the beating-up of Communists, Socialists, Republicans and Democrats.

*The victory of fascism would mean* the beating-up not only of Jews, but also of Catholics and Protestants, as we are now witnessing in Germany.

*The victory of fascism would mean* a catastrophe for France and the victory of most unbridled reaction all over Europe.

And, finally, *the victory of fascism would mean* aggression against the Soviet Union.

We desire at all costs to avoid this catastrophe, to save our country, all Europe, the whole world from these horrors. (*Applause.*)

A beginning has been made.

How did we set about it?

How did we do it, Comrades?

#### ***IV. In Defense of the Demands and the Liberties of the French People***

The starting point of our Party's success in the organization of the united front, and of the People's Front against fascism, was the attention paid to the immediate demands of the toiling masses, the defense of their daily interests.

The Party, effectively advised by the Communist Interna-

tional, endeavored to formulate a number of special demands for each category of toilers.

We have fought, and we are fighting, against the reduction of wages and salaries, for the forty-hour week without reduction of wages, for collective wage agreements, for real social insurance guaranteeing against all risks at the sole expense of the employers and the state.

We have fought, and we are fighting, for work for the unemployed, for their registration on the unemployment relief rolls, for the increase of allowances paid the unemployed, for the organization of soup kitchens, and for the free distribution of coal, clothing and milk for children.

In our Communist municipalities we gave all we could to the unemployed. In Ivry, for example, a municipal truck delivers to the door free milk for the little children of the unemployed. (*Applause.*) The older children receive free meals in the school lunchrooms. Such examples, brought to the attention of the workers, especially in the Paris region, have contributed considerably to our successes in the recent elections.

We have fought for the protection of the workers' children and the young workers. Our Young Communist League, under the direction of the Central Committee of the Party, has worked out a program for the defense of the young toilers which has become the basis for the youth united front.

We have fought, and we are fighting, for the defense of the minor officials, the railway men, and postal employees against the emergency decrees, against layoffs and dismissals.

We have fought, and we are fighting, for the defense of the rights of the ex-servicemen and the war victims against the reduction of their pensions.

We have fought, and we are fighting, for the interests of tenants, shopkeepers, artisans and peasants. We have demanded the reduction of rents and leaseholds, the reduction of taxes, and the organization of immediate aid to all the victims of the crisis.

We have supported the peasants who demonstrated against



the lowering of the prices for their products; we have proposed a debt moratorium for them; we have demanded crisis relief for them; non-interest-bearing loans, and the free distribution of seed and fertilizer.

We have fought, and we are fighting, against the high cost of living, to draw the working women into the battle against the big middlemen, but taking care not to line up the consumers against the peasants or against the small tradesmen, but bringing them together against the common enemy, big business.

We have formulated certain demands, but we have not hesitated to take over those that were launched by other organizations, even those hostile to the Communist Party, provided these demands correspond to the desires of certain categories of toilers, and correspond to the interests of the working class. The success of our policy of demands cannot be a better brought out than by quoting the following passage from a Paris newspaper, *La République*, dated July 21, 1935:

"The Communists are perfecting their tactics every day; these tactics are simple, but they have an undeniable power of attraction; they systematically base themselves upon the discontented. If there is a discontented person anywhere, they hurl themselves upon him: 'Comrade, the Communists are with you.' Are the ex-servicemen affected by the emergency decrees? 'Comrades, here are the Communists.' Are government officials affected? 'Comrades, here are the Communists.' The Communists are behind the farmers, the sharecroppers, the peasants in general, behind the tenants. And since all France is discontented, there they are, the attorneys for the country."

We have done more than formulate the urgent demands of the toiling masses. We have indicated the means of financing them: we have proposed reducing the war and police budgets, recovering the advances made to the big banks that dominate the government. Above all, we propose an extraordinary and progressive levy on capital.

Our whole campaign is conducted under the slogan: "*Make the rich pay.*" And we did not merely carry on a campaign, but we gave an example of how it could be done, to the extent that the control of big municipalities enabled us to do so. The state allows municipalities to levy a progressive tax on premises used for commercial and industrial purposes. In Paris this tax is set at the fixed rate of 3 per cent. In Ivry, in a Communist municipality, we levied the same tax in the following fashion: 1 per cent for annual rents below ten thousand francs, for small merchants; 2 per cent for medium annual rents, ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 franc; and 6 per cent above 20,000 francs. This tax provided our local budget with 1,275,000 francs; and it is the money paid by the industrialists of Ivry that has enabled us to give milk to the children of the unemployed. (*Applause.*)

The whole press has spoken of our financial program. On several occasions Premier Doumergue polemized against the Communists in radio broadcasts, criticizing our financial proposals. The Central Committee issued a poster: "The Communist Party Replies to M. Doumergue", which had an unprecedented success and, by its content and its deliberately moderate tone, produced a deep impression among the petty middle class elements.

The Party endeavors to reply to all the questions of the day, to offer its solutions to all current problems: the Central Committee worked out only a few days ago a "plan of financial readjustment". It headed this plan with its proposal for a levy on big fortunes, as well as various measures against the rich. It added the seizure of the Bank of France by the state, and state control of private banks. Owing to the financial crisis and speculation in the franc, control of the Bank of France has become a pressing issue.

Long ago Marx emphasized the interest of the financiers and bankers in state budget deficits. For the bankers, the deficit and state loans are at once an object of speculation, a source of their profit, and a means of dominating the state, of holding it at

their mercy under the constant threat of bankruptcy. Premier Deladier, Radical, declared at a congress of his party that:

"Two hundred families have become the undisputed masters, not merely of French economy, but of French politics."

He merely repeated what Lenin wrote at one time:

"... the French Republic is a financial monarchy; it is the complete domination of the financial oligarchy; the latter controls the press and the government."\*

The regents of the Bank of France belong to these two hundred families. They are the owners and the directors of the big banks, the mines, the blast furnaces, the railways. The Communist Party proposes the abolition, pure and simple, of this regency council, the master of credit and money, and the veritable holder of power in the country.

The effectiveness of our proposal is underscored by the anger of the reactionary and pro-fascist newspapers.

One of the factors of our success in organizing a wide anti-fascist front in France has been the consistent position of our Communist Party on the question of bourgeois democracy, as well as the utilizing of the revolutionary traditions of the French people. Fascism and bourgeois democracy are two forms of the dictatorship of capital. It does not follow, though, that the masses of the people are indifferent to what economic or political forms of enslavement they are subjected to.

Fascism is bloody terror against the working class, the destruction of workers' organizations, the dissolution of the trade unions, the suppression of the Communist Parties, the mass arrest of militant workers and revolutionaries, the torturing and assassination of the best sons of the working class. Fascism is the unchaining of bestiality, the return to the pogroms of the Middle

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\* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. V., "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," p. 49, International Publishers, New York.

Ages, the annihilation of all culture, the reign of ignorance and cruelty; it is the hideous war to which Hitler and Mussolini are leading.

Bourgeois democracy is a minimum of precarious, contingent liberties, unceasingly reduced by the bourgeoisie in power, but none the less offering the working class, the toiling masses, opportunity of mobilization and of organization against capitalism. In his report to the Seventeenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, after having shown that "the idea of storming capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses", Stalin said:

"This, as a matter of fact, explains the fact that the ruling classes in the capitalist countries are zealously destroying, or nullifying, the last vestiges of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy which might be used by the working class in its struggle against the oppressors." \*

Stalin then showed, in the passage cited yesterday by Comrade Dimitroff, that fascism was not merely a sign of the weakness of the working class, but a sign of the weakness of the bourgeoisie as well.

Stalin has given us the key to the problems facing the Communist Parties, and ours in particular. He shows us, first of all, that fascism does not result from the mere desires of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie must ensure or retain for itself a mass base for the exercise of its class rule. It is *obliged* to resort to fascist methods solely because of the extreme aggravation of all the contradictions in the capitalist system.

Then Stalin shows us the importance of a resolute struggle to retain for the working class, and for the laboring masses in general, democratic liberties—the vestiges of bourgeois democracy that can be utilized against the capitalist enemy and its fascist tool by the exploited and the oppressed.

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\* Stalin, Report of Central Committee to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. See *Socialism Victorious*, p. 11, International Publishers, New York.

The working class of France is aware of these observations by Stalin, the leader of the world proletariat. Taught and guided by the Communist Party, the working class of France is likewise aware of what great possibilities of mobilizing the middle classes are offered by the defense against fascism of the liberties to which the people of France are so profoundly attached. Comrade Dimitroff rightly said that we must not close our eyes to the growing reactionary limitation of bourgeois democracy, to the process of fascizing the state, to the necessity of fighting step by step to defend every democratic liberty, even the most insignificant. In this we profit by the favorable objective conditions, beyond a doubt.

France is a country of old bourgeois democracy, the classical country of the bourgeois revolution. The working class has participated in several revolutions; the Paris Commune was the first example of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The French peasant regards with abhorrence the descendants and the successors of the old feudal lords. He detests the squire, the priest, and the ex-nobleman. He knows that the Great French Revolution gave him the land. In 1848 the peasant did not understand the Second Republic, and he threw himself into the arms of Louis Bonaparte because, ever since the beginning of the February Revolution, the big bourgeoisie, the financial aristocracy, had burdened him with new taxes, encumbered him with mortgages, and thus threatened his possession of his plot of land. Subsequently, under the Third Republic, the French peasant, who still is the most numerous element in the population of our country, enjoyed certain advantages. Up to very recently the bourgeoisie had handled him with care. Universal suffrage gave him the illusion of being the sovereign of the country. *In fact, he was and remains the arbiter of the situation.* The French peasant is a republican. *That is not a phrase.* It sufficed that the fascist agitator Dorgeres be unmasked as a royalist for the peasants of the Blois region, though very dissatisfied with the government, to defeat him in a parliamentary by-election.

Our Communist Party has not hesitated to make use of the

revolutionary traditions. In a letter of September 21, 1890 to Joseph Bloch, Engels writes:

*"Among these [conditions] the economic ones are finally decisive. But the political, etc., ones, and indeed even the traditions which haunt human minds, also play a part, although not the decisive ones."\**

Up to recently the bourgeoisie had made use of these traditions against the working class to justify and consolidate its rule. Now the revolutionary traditions are becoming an additional weapon in the hands of the working class in its struggle against the bourgeois state in its fascist form. We draw from the past to prepare for our future.

In the name of the working class we claim the intellectual and revolutionary heritage of the Encyclopædists of the Eighteenth century, who paved the way for the Great Revolution of 1789 with their works and with their writings. We show that their materialist doctrine, made more profound, developed, and enriched by the genius of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, has become dialectical materialism, Marxism-Leninism: the theory and the practice of the revolutionary proletariat, the great builder of socialism, already the master of power in one-sixth of the globe.

We show how the Communist proletarians, following Lenin's recommendation, try *"to assimilate the treasures of knowledge accumulated by all humanity"*. (Lenin's "Speech to the Youth".) And we do this at a time when the bourgeoisie, and fascism in particular, are trying to throw us back into the barbarism of past centuries, are foresaking the work of the Encyclopædists, are refusing to teach the theories of Darwin, are burning the works of Marx, and are fostering credulity, superstition and brutalization.

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\* *The Correspondence of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, pp. 475-476, International Publishers, New York.

In the name of the working class we claim the heritage of the Jacobins' audacity and revolutionary energy.

Lenin often said: "The Bolsheviks are the Jacobins of the proletarian revolution." He wrote:

"The bourgeois historians see in Jacobinism a downfall. The proletarian historians regard Jacobinism as the greatest expression of an oppressed class in its struggle for liberation. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution; they repelled in an exemplary fashion the coalition of monarchs formed against the republic. . . .

"It is natural for the bourgeoisie to hate Jacobinism. It is natural for the petty bourgeoisie to fear it. The class-conscious workers and toilers have faith in the transference of power to the revolutionary oppressed class, for that is the essence of Jacobinism, and it is the only escape from the present crisis, the only way of stopping economic disintegration and the war." \*

We glorify the memory of the Commune of 1793 and of the Paris Commune of 1871. As against the chauvinism and fascism and the patriotism of the munitions merchants we proclaim our love of country, of our people.

We express our pride in its past of centuries of struggle against enslavement and oppression. And we, the great-grandsons of the sans-culottes of 1792, of the soldiers of Valmy, deny the aristocrats—the descendents of the emigrés of Coblenz, who returned to France in the train of the foreign counter-revolution, M. Colonel de la Rocque, president of the Croix de Feu, whose great-grandfather was in the army of Condé and of the king of Prussia—the right to speak in the name of our country. We denounce them as the traitors of yesterday and of tomorrow, ready, like their sires long ago, like the Russian whiteguards of today, to bear arms against their own country in order to maintain or recover their privileges and their profits.

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book II, p. 278, International Publishers, New York.

The National Conference of our Party in Ivry which was held more than a year ago, in June, 1934, boldly orientated the Party along this line, in accordance with the thesis developed so brilliantly yesterday by Comrade Dimitroff. We have used this language from the tribune of the Chamber, and in our meetings. We have developed the same idea in our posters, our articles, in all our agitation.

Moreover, we are fighting with even greater energy for the self-determination of the people of Alsace-Lorraine, for the independence of the colonial peoples of Northern Africa and Indo-China, whom we support with all our strength in their struggle against the yoke of French imperialism.

In Algeria, under the influence of our policy, the Arab workers, sustained and encouraged by the European toilers, replied with huge counter-demonstrations to the demonstration of the Croix de Feu. In France itself we have been able to come to an understanding with numerous groups and persons against the Régnier decrees that strike at the whole Algerian people.

The reactionary press thundered against the presence of the tricolor alongside the red flag at the head of the July 14 demonstration. The reactionary bourgeoisie understands quite well that this is the symbol of the alliance of the petty bourgeoisie with the working class, an alliance which it fears more than anything else in the world. We do not intend to let fascism have the flag of the Great Revolution, nor the *Marseillaise* of the soldiers of the Convention. (Applause.)

When our Comrade Duclos read the declaration of the Communist Party at the Buffalo meeting, the morning of July 14, he explained what the *Marseillaise*, the hymn of the past, and the *Internationale*, the hymn of the future, mean for us. The audience arose and sang a stanza of the *Marseillaise* and a stanza of the *Internationale* in honor of the representative of the Communist Party. (Applause.)

Since last year we have addressed ourselves to the soldier sons of the people and to the republican officers. We expressed our hope that they would not let themselves be involved against



the people and that they would know how to foil, if necessary, the plot which the reactionary and fascist officers and generals are preparing against the people's liberties and against the country. On July 14, in the meeting of the People's Front, the Radical deputy, Rucart, vice-chairman of the Army Committee, spoke in terms which I should like to be allowed to quote, so much do they harmonize with the thought expressed yesterday by our Comrade Dimitroff.

"The Republicans know that they can count upon the loyalty of the army—the expression of public force, the army composed of the sons of the whole people—to give the lie to all those who may endeavor to make of it a tool for the ambition of one man or for that of a minority faction. In the armies of the land, the sea and the air—officers, non-coms, soldiers and sailors—they salute the national forces constituted for the defense of liberty."

We present ourselves to the masses of the people as the champions of the liberty and the independence of the country, as the representatives of the present and future interests of the people of France. The very tone of our campaigns, of our speeches, articles, and posters, expresses this consciousness of the historic mission of the working class, organized and led by its revolutionary party.

It was this policy that has enabled the French Communist Party to initiate, stimulate and effectively influence a mass movement of considerable extent. Elements of the working class, passive up to now, have been aroused to political life. Considerable sections of the petty bourgeoisie have been carried along into the struggle against fascism. Naturally enough, there are special, diverse, often contradictory interests among all the social elements and strata united under the emblem of the People's Front. It follows that the Party must know how to achieve the material demands of all strata, to influence the whole movement, ideologically and politically, and organize it, by considering it

from the standpoint of the proletariat, which represents the interests of the whole toiling people of France. It is not sufficient to formulate demands—that is the first step. We must—we realize this—obtain even minimum successes by mass action.

What is more, we must formulate slogans and proposals that raise the movement higher. We are the Party of the proletariat, of the most exploited as well as the most homogeneous and therefore the most revolutionary class, the class that expects its complete liberation only from a total transformation of society. The Communist Party—party of the working class—armed with Marxist-Leninist theory, is alone in a position to pursue a consistent policy, which has proved itself so magnificently in the Soviet Union. The same is not true of our allies. The trading and rural petty bourgeoisie hates capital, and the bankers, the holders of credit, above all; but it believes in the eternal existence of its property, and even in the possibility of increasing it. The representatives of the free professions, the medium and upper ranks, civil servants, have illusions and prejudices of another sort. They believe present-day society can be improved gradually and peacefully. Among all these elements there sometimes is a grain of chauvinism in their anti-fascism. To them fascism appears essentially under the aspects of Hitler and the Nazi bands. The parties and groups based upon the middle classes inevitably reflect the latter's illusions and prejudices. They cannot pursue a consistent policy. They frequently vacillate. We try to show them that the success of the anti-fascist movement, of the People's Front, can only be guaranteed in so far as the non-proletarian laboring masses group themselves around the working class.

How can this march of the petty bourgeoisie towards the positions of the working class be facilitated? Through showing by deeds that the working class is able to direct the general struggle and by proving its own strength. That is how Comrade Manuilsky replied to this question in his speech closing the Eleventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

"To win allies to the side of the proletariat is only possible . . . by demonstration of the strength of the proletariat and of its vanguard—the Communist Party." \*

It is undeniable that the masses of the people in town and country, the middle classes, and the peasants, in particular, play a very important historic role. But this role is never an independent one, however; they either fall under the influence of the big bourgeoisie, of capital, and become the tool of its policy, or they ally themselves with the working class.

In the first case, the results are an increase in the exploitation and the oppression of all the toilers—in our age, fascism. That is what was proved by the experience of France in 1848-52, of Germany from 1918 to 1933, and of Spain since 1931.

In the second case, the results are the end of the exploitation and oppression of the people, the flourishing of democracy and of the people's liberties. That is what is brilliantly proved by the experience of the Soviet Union.

Finally, our Communist Party must "employ a wealth of organization" to unite and consolidate the anti-fascist people's movement.

In spite of real progress, organization still remains our weak point. There are thousands of united front committees. The Amsterdam movement alone, under the attentive direction of Barbusse, has grouped around itself 2,000 committees. But that is still quite inadequate. Moreover, many committees have been constituted merely at the top by the meeting of representatives of the participating organizations. The Party's efforts must aim at the democratic election of the committees at the bottom in the factories, in meetings in the villages, and in the urban districts. Experience has already taught us that in this field we must call upon the initiative of the masses, who have already found the most diverse forms for coming together.

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\* D. Z. Manuilsky, *The Communist Parties and the Crisis of Capitalism*, p. 107, Moscow.

## *V. The Organization of the People's Front*

Comrades, in actively pursuing the mass policy that I have just outlined, in interesting itself in the demands of all the sections of the laboring population, our Party has succeeded in effecting the triumph of the People's Front throughout the country. We have been able to extend in considerable measure our influence among the working class and the small tradesmen of the middle classes.

When the Central Committee brought up the question of the united front and when it drew up the latter's program in October, 1934, we could not have imagined that its success would be so immediate.

First of all, we informed the Socialist Party of our intentions. Then, without waiting for a reply, which was long delayed, we raised the question in a big central meeting the day after our interview with the representatives of the Socialist Party.

The Party carried on a sustained campaign in the press, by posters, in meetings, and from the tribune of the chamber. On the eve of each of the two last congresses of the Radical Party, in Nantes in October, and in Lyons in March, the Communist Party organized big meetings where representatives of the Central Committee outlined our conception of the People's Front, addressing themselves particularly to the Radical delegates.

A long public discussion started with the Socialist Party. In the meantime the workers and the lower middle-class elements acclaimed the People's Front. The slogan of the People's Front and its content triumphed among the masses during the recent municipal elections. Our bourgeois fascist opponents themselves no longer employ any other expression to designate the huge anti-fascist movement which is gradually operating under the influence of our policy.

At the end of May, the Party decided to extend the People's Front still further, and to address itself to the parties of the Left with a view to action against the fascist leagues, to have a motion introduced in Parliament demanding that the government dis-

arm and dissolve the fascist leagues. The Communist fraction, consisting of nine deputies at the time (out of the 615 in the Chamber), took the initiative of calling a meeting of the Left Parliamentary groups. Upon invitation, the Socialist Party associated itself with our initiative. The Radical Party, the Republican Socialist Party, the Socialist Party of France (Neo-Socialists), the group of Left Independents, and the Pupist groups (composed of renegades from our Communist Party), replied to our call. The meeting took place on May 30. The discussion began on the declaration made by the representative of the Communist Party:

"We Communists," we said, "want to fight fascism. The municipal and cantonal elections show that the majority of the country is against the so-called National Union policy, which is paving the way for fascism. This majority can find expression here, in the Chamber itself, as the groups that have replied to our invitation constitute a majority of the Chamber. *If this majority wishes to put into effect a program striking at the rich and the speculators, relieving the poor and unemployed, we Communists will support this measure. If this majority wishes to defend democratic liberties, not in words but by taking effective measures, such as the disarmament and the dissolution of the fascist leagues and the arrest of their leaders, we will support these measures.* Such a policy would, moreover, create the best conditions for the maintenance of peace, and it would have our support, not merely in Parliament, but throughout the country."

The impression produced was tremendous. Our declarations were repeated in public session, from the tribune of the Chamber.

That very evening the Flandin government was overthrown.

We had given the Radical deputies a little more courage.

Afterwards, the Left groups met again, always at the initiative of the Communists. A discussion started regarding the eventuality of a Left government. It was our Communist Party that was the driving force at these meetings, putting questions, making it clear that it had no intention of participating in a Left

government, but stating that it was always ready to support measures favorable to the laboring masses. The Socialist Party and the Radical Party were led to define their respective policies.

In the meanwhile the Bouisson government had been formed. But the pressure of the masses, reflected in the attitude of the majority of the Radical deputies, elected by peasants, was such that Bouisson was overthrown the day he came before the Chamber.

And the sessions of the Left delegations were resumed.

The Socialist Party submitted as the basis for its agreeing to collaborate with the Radical Party a program of socialization, which I shall return to later and which the Radical Party rejected. Then our Party made the following declaration, which was published in *l'Humanité*.

"The Communist Party notes that on two occasions the Chamber has taken a stand against the plenary powers which would imperil democratic liberties and would aggravate the situation of the laboring masses.

"These votes express the country's desire, notably expressed in the municipal and cantonal elections, to put an end to the so-called National Union policy, to which the most legitimate interests of the working class and of all those who toil have been sacrificed.

"The Communist Party, whose fundamental program includes the socialization of the means of production and exchange, which will be realized by a Workers' and Peasants' Government, believes that it is possible and necessary at the present time to pursue a policy of positive action, based upon a wide People's Front.

"The Communist Party, reaffirming its previous declarations regarding its eventual attitude towards a Left government, recalls that it is ready to support, within the Chamber and throughout the country, every measure suited to safeguard the franc, to suppress speculation energetically, to protect the interests of the laboring population, to defend democratic liberties, to disarm and dissolve the fascist leagues, and to maintain peace."

In the meantime, the Laval cabinet had been formed. The Communist Party had played a prominent role during the two cabinet crises. With its outcry of indignation, the reactionary and fascist press underscored the success of our tactics.

At this moment the Amsterdam-Pleyel Committee took the initiative of calling the people's demonstration of July 14. It obtained the participation of numerous groups and organizations, among them both the General Confederation of Labor and the Radical Party. The Executive Committee of the Radical Party, specially convened for this purpose, voted for it unanimously, except for one vote, after having heard the report of its president, Herriot.

And now? The Party has influenced considerable masses of the middle classes, drawing them towards the Left, towards the working class. Based upon the drive of the masses, the Communist Party has contributed to the overthrow of two successive cabinets. New problems arose before our Party. The question arises of an eventual united front government or a government of the anti-fascist People's Front.

Of course, parliamentary combinations analogous to those of Brandler in Saxony in 1923 are out of the question for us. Nor does this mean a "labor government" of the kind we have witnessed, or are still witnessing, in England and in various Scandinavian countries, and, even less, coalition governments as in Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Spain. It is not a question of managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie. What is involved is fighting fascism, barring its road to power at any price, basing ourselves upon the urge of the masses and upon extra-Parliamentary action.

We Communists are fighting for Soviet power, for the dictatorship of the proletariat. We know that this is the only way to put an end to the crisis, to poverty, to fascism, and to war forever. But we also know that *at the present time only a minority* of the working class, and above all, only a minority of the people of France share our convictions *and are fighting with the firm desire to establish Soviet power*. That is why Soviet power cannot be the immediate goal of our present struggle. But although we

are in a minority, we can and we must lead the majority of the country, which today is already determined to avoid the establishment of a fascist dictatorship at all costs. We can and we must convince the masses, in the struggle and on the basis of their own experience, of the necessity of attaining a Soviet Republic.

The discontent that is accumulating and making itself felt in numerous demonstrations against the emergency decrees can explode and lead to the overthrow of the Laval government. The development of the People's Front and its constant reinforcement can cause it to become the successor of the National Union governments.

A new cabinet crisis will mean the beginning of a serious political crisis. Laval is said to have told Herriot: "If I resign owing to the opposition of the Radicals, the Parliamentary recess will end the dictatorship of the Croix de Feu." The Communist Party, moving spirit of the People's Front, can cast a decisive weight in the scale of events. If the People's Front lacks cohesion and boldness, a political formation still more reactionary may follow the Laval government, the government of National Union; it may even be succeeded by a fascist dictatorship. We must keep in mind the steps which led along apparently legal roads from the Mueller government to the Hitler government, via Bruening, von Papen and Schleicher.

If, on the contrary, under the conditions of revolutionary crisis, the Communist Party launches, propagates, popularizes and gets adopted, in time, a minimum of measures of a transitory nature that can "*shake still more the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie and augment the forces of the working class*" the drive of the mass movement can impose a People's Front government, which our Party would support and in which, if necessary, it might even participate.

The anti-fascist battle would become fiercer, since the reactionary and fascist assault would be brutal and immediate. But the People's Front and the Communist Party would have occupied new positions, which we would have to utilize to prepare for



the establishment of Soviet Power, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This is no doubt a bold policy, which demands much firmness and prudence. Our Party can put a policy of this sort into effect. It no longer runs the risk of confusing itself or of being confused with the other parties. In severe struggle, by fifteen years of battle, we have conquered our place in the political arena. It is not merely the Communist Party, its members and its militants, as well as its sympathizers, that are conscious of the Party's unique role and of its own goal which it is pursuing in an absolutely independent fashion, but the allies and the opponents of Communism now acknowledge, each in their own fashion, our specific proletarian and revolutionary character, and they take into account our own strength and our own activity.

In particular, we owe this independence to the application of the "class against class" tactics that has caused us to appear on an absolutely different plane, distinct from all other parties, including the Socialist Party. Our action of February 9, 1934, was guided by these principles of independence.

Adopting an absolutely independent mass policy strictly conforming to the interests of the proletariat, our Party regarded it as its duty to fight energetically for the establishment of the unity of action of the working class itself.

## *VI. The Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class*

The Communist International has never stopped fighting to have the working class desire for unity realized. It has not stopped demanding the fighting unity of all proletarians. For many years it has addressed itself in vain to the Labor and Socialist International with a view towards organizing the united front in all countries.

On March 5, 1933, the Communist International asked the Communist Parties to approach the Socialist Parties with a view to realizing the bloc of all toilers everywhere against the menacing

progress of the fascist offensive, and to ensure aid for our brothers of Germany.

On October 10, 1934, the Communist International directly approached the Socialist workers and their leadership, proposing the urgent organization of joint action on behalf of the workers and peasants of Spain, who were being violently attacked by reaction, the fascists and the monarchists.

On October 15, 1934, there took place the Brussels interview, where Cachin and I, on behalf of the Communist International, met with the representatives of the Labor and Socialist International, Vandervelde and Friedrich Adler. When we pressed the leaders of international Social-Democracy to give a favorable reply to our loyal and earnest proposal, they asked us this question: "Is this a maneuver on a grand scale or is this a change of line by Moscow?" We replied as was fitting. Our Comrade Cachin said:

"I am sorry to hear you talk of maneuver. . . . We are in a Europe which is two-thirds fascist. If tomorrow fascism should establish itself in Spain [the battle of the Asturias was at its height] what strength, what power will fascism not acquire, and will not fascism in France derive tremendous encouragement therefrom? How much more dangerous will fascism everywhere become? And so to imagine under the circumstances that we should dream of maneuvering would, indeed, at the present time, be entertaining a very poor opinion of us.

"The danger is there, our houses are on fire; the working class is everywhere endangered in most tragic fashion." \*

And I added:

"I will tell you quite frankly, Citizen Adler, that this is neither a new line nor a maneuver on a grand scale on Moscow's part. There has not been and there will not be any change in the policy of the Communist International. . . . We

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\* *Verbatim Report of the Negotiations Between the Second and Third Internationals*, London, 1935, pp. 15-16.

regard what we have done as correct. I even add that we consider that the experiences of the Bolsheviks, in contrast to the experiences of the Socialist Parties in other countries, appear to us more than conclusive, I would even say decisive."\*

Comrades, you know the results. The delegates of the Second International postponed their reply until the meeting of the conference of their International, which met in Paris in November. This postponement was tantamount to a refusal. And at this conference the delegates could not agree on the tenor of their reply to the Communist International. They had to confine themselves to withdrawing—as they themselves put it in their letter—their resolution of March 18-19, 1933, prohibiting their parties from establishing the united front on a national scale. Henceforth, they wrote, each Socialist Party remains free to act as it sees fit.

We had achieved the first great success. Must it again be recalled that in April our Communist International once more turned to the Labor and Socialist International, requesting that the May First demonstrations be organized in common against fascism and war. This time again in vain.

Nevertheless, the united front was gradually being organized in France.

In the twelve years since 1923 we addressed the Socialist Party twenty-six times. Each time we met with a refusal, sometimes even a rude one. The first earnest step was realized in July, 1932, with the Amsterdam Congress. At the Amsterdam Congress, the French delegation included numerous Socialists officially delegated by sections and even by federations. In spite of reprisals and expulsions aimed at the Socialist comrades, a fraternal contact was established in the Amsterdam Committees.

In March, 1933, when we turned to the Socialist workers and to their leadership on the basis of the letter of the Communist International, we did not receive a direct reply, but Blum tried

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\* *Ibid.*, p. 19.

in a series of articles to keep his party from the united front.

But international events, especially events in Germany, were already influencing the state of mind of the Socialist workers.

February 6, 1934, furnished the decisive impetus. The Socialist workers threw themselves into the fight alongside the Communist workers, participating in the action begun by the Party in Paris and in the provinces.

On May 30 we addressed ourselves to the Permanent Administrative Commission of the Socialist Party, asking it to organize a joint struggle for the liberation of Thaelmann. For the first time we had an interview with Blum and Zyromski. After thinking it over for several weeks, the leadership of the Socialist Party once more rejected the united front. But in the meanwhile, the Socialist Federation of the Seine had accepted a number of proposals of our regional committee. It agreed to organize and to participate in a joint demonstration against the Croix de Feu on July 8. Since then the initiative of the Communists has been meeting with more and more favor among the Socialist workers. The Socialist National Council, which met on July 15 to vote on our public proposal for a pact of joint struggle against war and fascism, was compelled to accept it.

You know the contents of the pact. It concerns the organizing of joint struggle against fascism. We had proposed that the action against the emergency decrees should, over and above the ordinary methods of agitation and public demonstration, include the preparation and the calling of strikes. We had proposed that the Communist Party and the Socialist Party together should address the two trade union federations, the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U. The Socialist Party refused. In order to conclude the pact, we had agreed to a concession in the matter of limiting criticism, taking our line from the letter of the Communist International dated March 5, 1933. We subscribed to the following text:

"During this common action, the two parties will reciprocally abstain from attacks and criticism of the organs and the

militants loyally participating in the action. However, each Party, outside the joint action, retains its independence to develop its own propaganda without insulting or outraging the other Party, and to ensure its own recruiting of members."

The pact gave the working class of France a great deal. It reinforced the impetus towards trade union unity; it made it possible to draw the middle classes in more effectively. But what must be underlined is that before, as well as after the signature of the pact, our Party never for a moment forgot that the essential content of the united front is action.

We took the initiative for the action of February 9, 1934. Then, on February 10, 1935, we, by *ourselves*, the Communist Party, decided to invite the Paris proletariat to honor the memory of its dead of February 9, 1934. We later invited the Socialist Party to participate in our demonstration.

We likewise took the initiative on May 19, 1935, on the occasion of the traditional demonstration at the Wall of the Communards, organized under the direction of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. But the Socialist Federation of the Seine wanted to pledge us on May 19 to a counter-demonstration against the Croix de Feu. We replied: "Here is our decision. If you want to go to the Wall of the Communards on the 19th, well and good; you will have your place in the procession. If you do not wish to, we shall go to the Wall without you." And the Socialist Federation of the Seine had to abandon its project and join in our parade. Two hundred thousand toilers were at the Wall under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Parallel to the organization of the united front from below, we bent our efforts to develop the struggle for trade union unity. The major step in the organization of the unity of the working class in France must be the realization of the trade union unity.

We have also been able to advance along the road to trade union unity thanks to the united front, in spite of the bitter opposition by the reformist Confederation of Labor, and particularly by some of the most reactionary of its leaders, allied with

the Neo-Socialists. Seven hundred united trade unions have been formed. The railwaymen's unions have been unified on all rail systems, with the exception of two. United local unions and united departmental unions have already been established.

The leadership of the General Confederation of Labor has had to agree to resume discussions with the representatives of the Unitary Confederation of Labor with a view to the realization of trade union unity.

The Communist Parties now bear a very great responsibility in view of the crisis of the Socialist International, in view of the decline in the latter's influence and membership. The Socialist workers must not be allowed to fall into disillusion and despair. What is more, we must not allow a part of them to fall under the influence of fascism. It is now a question of leading them into the joint struggle against fascism, even if they are not yet entirely in agreement with us, even if they still harbor suspicions of us, which the joint struggle will weaken or cause to disappear.

To use Blum's expression, we have worked to render the united front "inevitable", and in fact we have rendered it inevitable. By signing the pact certain Socialist leaders thought they would be able to re-establish their authority over the Socialist members and organizations, who had been gradually led to choose between party discipline and the necessary united front with the Communists. But the workers sometimes have the feeling that certain leaders of the Socialist Party are looking for every occasion to provoke or aggravate difficulties, to slow down united action, nay, even to break the united front.

Wherever the leaders of the Socialist Party oppose the united front a loss in Socialist influence is noted. Three precise facts contributed to give this impression.

First of all, there was the discussion of the People's Front. From the very beginning, the Socialist Party was hostile to our conception of the People's Front. At bottom, it has persisted in its position of parliamentary action and most of all fears mass action. But it wanted to give itself a more Left appearance. It

found our program too moderate; it felt that demanding a capital levy was not sufficient. It proposed the *socialization* of the banks and big industry.

We very calmly replied:

"We, Communists, are for socialization; we are for expropriation pure and simple of the capitalist expropriators, but we consider that one condition must be fulfilled in order to socialize, just one little condition: the possession of power, the seizure of power. Now, there is only one method of seizing power that has proved its worth up to now: that is, the method of the Bolsheviks, the victorious insurrection of the proletariat, the exercise of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power. (*Applause.*)

"However, we Communists are not proposing our fundamental program to you Socialists. We propose that you agree with us upon what can be done together this very day. Do not ask us to adopt your program. We can fight together for immediate demands; we can impose a levy on capital. We have a greater chance of having this demand of the capital levy accepted in that it formerly figured in the program of the Radical Party. Moreover, it is a measure that has already been applied in other countries."

After four months of discussion—public discussion carried on in the columns of our newspaper, *l'Humanité*, as well as by the exchange of documents, letters, resolutions—it was found that the disagreement still existed. We continued our efforts. And the Socialist Congress of Mulhouse, under the pressure of the results of the municipal and cantonal elections, had to adopt a resolution in favor of the People's Front.

The second fact: at the time of the criminal assassination of our Comrade Kirov, the proletariat of the Soviet Union and its Communist Party energetically took severe and rigorous measures against the assassins and their accomplices, as it was the duty of proletarians in power to do.

The Bolsheviks have learned and retained the lesson of past

revolutions. They know that the generosity of the Communards towards the Versailles adherents was requited by the ferocious assassination of 35,000 Communards. The Bolsheviks struck the assassins with the sword of proletarian justice, and then these counter-revolutionaries found champions among some Social-Democratic Parties.

Leon Blum wrote a tearful article. His paper *Le Populaire* printed the odious declaration of the Russian Mensheviks. We replied energetically and without delay, sharply accusing the Mensheviks themselves. We recalled Robespierre's historic phrase: "The sensitivity that bewails only the sufferings of the people's enemies is suspect to us." We proclaimed our complete solidarity with revolutionary justice, with the Bolsheviks. We nailed the Mensheviks and their friends to the pillory. And they were silenced.

The third fact: when the Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance was concluded, and especially when the communiqué was published after the conversation between Premier Laval and our Comrade Stalin, the bourgeois press tried to score a triumph over the Communists of France. They noisily emphasized Stalin's statement about "understanding and approving France's policy of national defense", and "*the necessity for the country's putting its material forces upon the level of its defense*". The attack did not come only from the side of the reactionaries but particularly from that of the Socialists.

And this time again it was Leon Blum who was the initiator.

The Trotskyites, the Pupists, as well as Doriot, played their counter-revolutionary role.

The day after the publication of the communiqué, a meeting of the Communists and sympathizers of Paris took place. The speaker of the Political Bureau declared in substance that: (1) the peace policy of the Soviet Union is in conformity with the historic instructions of Lenin, firmly put into practice by Stalin; it corresponds to the interests of the international proletariat; (2) in view of the international situation, in particular the accession of fascism to power in Germany, there is for the moment a



coincidence between the interests of bourgeois France and of the Soviet Union against Hitler and National-Socialism, the principal instigators of war in Europe.

We added: the working class of France and its Communist Party resolutely continue their struggle against the French bourgeoisie; they remain opposed to any "sacred union", opposed to the eventual use of the army against the working class, opposed to the yoke imposed on the colonial peoples by French imperialism. We do not have to support the class policy of the French bourgeoisie. We continue to denounce and to fight at the head of the working class against the enslavement of the people, and against the return to the two-year term of military conscription.

But we Communists of France, who do not judge war in the fashion of the bourgeois, reformist or pacifist parties, take a stand on war as Marxists, declare that in case of aggression against the Soviet Union, we shall know how to rally all our forces and defend the Soviet Union in every way. (*Applause.*)

After this report a resolution was unanimously voted by the audience of 5,000, with only one dissenting vote. The Communists went into meetings and mass meetings organized by the Party in connection with the cantonal elections. They developed the content of the big poster that we had immediately placarded on the walls under the title "*Stalin Is Right*". In this poster we had reproduced and commented on the wise words pronounced by the leader of the international proletariat, our Comrade Stalin.

The proletariat, the toilers of the Red suburbs and the whole people of France approved Comrade Stalin's declaration. The results: in the cantonal elections that took place a week later, our Communist Party made a gain even over the municipal elections, securing 25 out of the 50 seats in the General Council of the Seine. (*Applause.*)

For a long time the Socialist leaders advocated unity as opposed to the united front. But our Party replied: "The united front will prepare for the united party." When, thanks to our efforts and to the masses' support, unity of action began to be

realized and to spread, we ourselves formulated our concept of a united proletarian party.

Last November we proposed to the National Council of the Socialist Party that a national unity conference be called, that joint meetings, open to members of the Communist and Socialist Parties, be held, and that in these joint meetings the problems of immediate action and the question of a single party of the proletariat be discussed.

We renewed our proposal last May in a document entitled: "The Unity Charter of the Working Class."

In the introduction, which gives a brief analysis of the situation, we developed Stalin's thesis: "*The idea of storming capitalism is maturing in the minds of the masses.*"

The principles formulated in our proposal are as follows:

- (a) No class collaboration.
- (b) No "national" unity.
- (c) Transformation of the imperialist war into civil war.
- (d) Defense of the Soviet Union *in all cases and by all means.*
- (e) Support of the colonial peoples.
- (f) Preparation for armed insurrection, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, for Soviet power, as the form of the workers' government.
- (g) Consistent internationalism.
- (h) Affiliation to a single world party of the working class.
- (i) Democratic centralism.
- (j) Nuclei within the factories as the basis of organization.

We ended with a general exposition of the program that the proletarian state would carry out, what it would give the various categories of toilers.

The leadership of the Socialist Party has not yet replied, although our Central Committee asked it to be so good as to let us have its opinion on the question of unity.

The united front has been very useful for the working class; it has enabled it to offer better resistance to the offensive of

fascism, to the offensive of capital. The united front has brought the sections of the petty bourgeoisie closer to the working class. Certain Socialist leaders said: "If we accept the united front, the middle classes will withdraw from the working class." Facts have given the lie to this assertion.

The united front has also strengthened our Communist Party. That was not the essential aim. It was one of the consequences of unity of action. The influence and the authority of the Communist Party have grown. Its membership has grown considerably. The role of the Communist Party as a political factor has grown.

Cadres have been trained. Yes, there have been great difficulty, hesitation, groping. Everything was not all right; everything is not all right yet. But what tremendous changes! How the spirit of responsibility and initiative has grown in our ranks!

We are recording excellent results, not merely for our Party, but for our Young Communist League as well. We set before our League the task of winning the young, of saving them from fascist demagogy, of satisfying their need for activity, of working to create an organization of youth that does not narrowly copy the slogans and the formulas of the Communist Party. Our Young Communist League has increased its membership fivefold; it has played a big part in the Amsterdam-Pleyel movement; it has rallied around its united front platform the Young Socialist organizations and the Republican and secular youth organizations. It has concluded a united front pact with the Young Socialist League, in spite of the prolonged resistance of the Socialist Party.

The labor sports movement has been united. It has gained 10,000 new members and now has nearly 40,000.

The A.R.A.C., the association of ex-servicemen, has developed. It was created by Henri Barbusse and at the beginning had a few thousand members; it now has 20,000. It has obtained admission to the General Confederation of Ex-Servicemen, which comprises two and a half million members. (*Applause.*)

Our election tactics have been inspired by the permanent aim of beating the candidates of fascism and of reaction. In the first ballot we waged an independent struggle. In the second

ballot, on the basis of applying the pact, we voted Socialists for Communists, and Communists for the Socialists reciprocally, with rare exceptions. In the municipal elections we allowed a few joint lists of candidates.

In view of our People's Front policy, we called for votes for Radicals in Paris and in the provinces; we put only the following questions: Will you defend democratic liberties? Will you demand the disarmament and dissolution of the fascist leagues? In Paris we demanded in addition: vote against Chiappe. In a few cases we even set up joint lists with the Radicals.

In Paris we withdrew our candidate, who had topped all the anti-fascists, and we had the Socialist Rivet elected against one of the most prominent representatives of reaction.

Such a policy has made our Party grow in the minds of the toilers. They all see that our Party does not pursue a niggardly policy, but a broad policy guided by the consideration that, once involved in battle, one must choose the means that ensure victory.

Comrades, we hope that our experience will be useful to the toilers of other countries. And I address myself particularly to our brothers of Germany, to the German Socialist workers. I express to them my hope of returning some day soon, as on March 15, 1933, to the tomb of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, desecrated by Hitler's dogs, to celebrate there, alongside Thaelmann, their victory attained thanks to the unity of the working class. (*Applause.*)

We are happy, comrades, to greet the unity of action partially realized by our brothers in Austria and Spain, a unity born in joint battle.

We are proud that our International once again loudly and clearly proclaims that it is ready to engage in negotiations with the leadership of the L.S.I., both to organize a united front and to prepare for the complete unity of the international proletariat.

The situation in France and throughout the world makes it incumbent upon us to be more and more exacting with regard to our own work and successes. Too great weaknesses still exist in

our movement and in our Party, especially in the field of economic struggles and of trade union work, among the peasantry, the women, and generally speaking, in matters of organization.

Although some progress has been effected in the organization of the Party and in inner Party life, it is quite evident that we must do much more. Great slowness, inadequate swing, persists in the work of the Party on all levels.

We must also make a greater effort to raise the ideological level of our Party.

In France, great battles are impending. We have before us the prospect of great class conflicts that our Comrade Pieck portrayed in his closing speech. At this very moment ferment is growing because of the emergency decrees. The 800,000 officials—these bulwarks of the state that Marx talked about in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*—are rising; the petty bourgeoisie is losing confidence in the leadership of the parties of the big bourgeoisie. Demonstrations are frequent, numerous, enthusiastic and militant. The drive toward the united front, toward unity, toward the anti-fascist People's Front, is growing. But there is also the menace of fascism, which is strengthening its organizations and arming its fighting squads. The bourgeoisie is trying to isolate our great Party in order to smash it and break the resistance of the laboring masses.

We bear a great responsibility toward the working class of France, toward the people of our country and toward the international proletariat. We are conscious of this responsibility and of the obligations that it lays upon us.

Strengthening the united front in the political field, and even more so in the economic field, attaining trade union unity, extending and consolidating the anti-fascist People's Front, winning the wide peasant masses, securing the dissolution and the disarmament of the fascist leagues that are plotting against the people and against the republic and are plotting with Hitler against peace, fighting all the forces of reaction, against the church, fighting to purify the army, to defend our liberties, to defend the Soviet Union.

To realize these tasks we must strengthen our Communist Party, taking as our inspiration Stalin's words:

"The victory of revolution never comes by itself. It has to be prepared for and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory." \*

We want to accomplish these tasks. We want to respond to the hopes that Lenin placed in our working class and in the Communist Party of France when he wrote us in 1920, asking us to join the Third International.

We want to be worthy both of the revolutionary past of the people of France, of the fighters of the glorious Commune, and of the example of the Bolshevik Party, the builder of the new socialist world.

We want to spare our country the shame and horror of fascism, to contribute to the liberation of our brothers bowed under the yoke of fascism, to fight with all our heart, with all our strength, for bread, for liberty, for peace, for the defense of the Soviet Union. We want to go further, to the victory of the Soviets, which we shall achieve under the banner of the Communist International, under the invincible banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

We know that the battle will be hard, but we are sure of victory.

*(Loud and prolonged applause turning into an ovation. The delegates rise and sing the "Internationale". The German delegation shout a mighty "Rot Front".)*

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\* Stalin, Report of Central Committee to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.; see *Socialism Victorious*, p. 16. International Publishers, New York.

**FOR PEACE! FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE  
SOVIET UNION!**

*Abridged Speech Delivered at the Seventh World Congress  
of the Communist International*

By ANDRE MARTY

## I. THE TWO POLES OF WAR AND PEACE IN EUROPE

I SHALL begin by reminding you that on the eve of the last imperialist war we in France used to compare Europe to a powder magazine in which maniacs were walking around with lighted torches, in Jaurès' words. Today the whole world is the powder magazine, and it is the fascist criminals who are walking around with lighted torches.

In our opinion, four essential factors characterize the international situation at the present time:

1. *The unprecedented economic crisis*, which for seven years has held the imperialists by the throat, by that very fact compelling them to increase their efforts to conquer new markets.

2. *The coming of fascism to power in Germany*, with all that this event implies in the way of chauvinist incitement and intensified preparation for war.

3. *The development of the Soviet revolution in China*, and parallel with it, Japan's predatory war in China, also aimed at the Soviet Union.

4. *The final and irrevocable victory of socialism in the Soviet Union*. Hence a constantly growing contradiction between the two systems: socialist and capitalist.

And thus it is that *hotbeds of war*, some of them already aflame, are appearing all over the imperialist world which is in full decline.

They can be characterized as follows, in fact:

In Europe, it is German imperialism which is obviously the major fomenter of war at the present time.

In Africa, it is Italian imperialism against Ethiopia. The competition for this latter country plays the same role at the present time that was played by the competition for Morocco on the eve of 1914.



In Central and South America, the imperialist bandits are engaged in a bitter struggle which is from time to time settled by the guns of the smaller countries.

In Asia, where the cannon of Japanese imperialism, the chief fomentor of war, have already been thundering for three years, the great imperialist pirates—the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy—would have dismembered the vast country of China, were it not for the formidable power of the Soviet Union for peace, were it not for the might of the Chinese Red Army.

I shall comment upon only one very limited point in these manifold contradictions and threats of war, *viz.*, that concerning Europe, and more particularly, the most advanced capitalist countries of Europe. For example, I shall not deal in particular with the Balkan problems.

### *Hitler Fascism—The Major Fomentor of War in Europe*

1. The Treaty of Versailles satiated—for a time—certain victor imperialisms, particularly France and Great Britain. But as a result, German imperialism, “this young and powerful bird of prey”, has been made even hungrier: it was, in fact, deprived of big industrial regions, such as Alsace-Lorraine, Upper Silesia, Danzig, etc.; all its colonies were taken from it. The marked monopolist development of Germany after the war, the growing contradictions between its productive capacity and its possibilities for exporting capital were bound to activate its imperialist and annexationist tendencies.

At the present time the tremendous means of production of a country possessing a powerful industry compel German imperialism to make every effort to regain and conquer the markets without which it must suffocate. And that is what it is doing.

2. On the other hand, these very bandit treaties of 1919, which intensified Germany’s imperialist ambitions still more, offered the fascists an excellent argument for fanning a frantic

chauvinism. They ascribed all the misery and all the frightful suffering of the German proletariat and the German toilers to Versailles and French imperialism.

How easy it was for the fascists to excite the national hatred of the masses of the people when Germany had to pay over tremendous stocks of raw materials and such precious means of production as wood and coal, when it delivered locomotives, railway cars and ships! How easy it was to whip up the chauvinist wave when the starving German toilers, whose children were deprived of the barest necessities, saw milch cows, fruit trees and poultry turned over to the conquerors!

The Hitler fascists are compelled to want war, because they are the most reactionary agents of German imperialism, and because they must satisfy the intense nationalist current that they have themselves evoked, developed and intensified. Peace means the death of Hitlerism. That is why they are again raising the question of the partition of Europe and of the world. That is why they are insolently celebrating the sixty-fifth anniversary of Krupp at the present time. That is why they glorify the "merits" of this "cannon king", this king of slaughterers. That is why Germany's enormous production apparatus is entirely devoted, at the present time, to the frenzied preparation of monstrous massacres for which its general staff asks only a few months of preparation. That is also why the terror is being redoubled against the revolutionary proletarians of Germany, against our heroic sister Party, against all resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, in order to safeguard the rear.

*Against Whom Are the Hitlerite Preparations  
Primarily Aimed?*

It is true that Austria remains one of the points most coveted by Hitlerism; it is true that fascist Germany has not decided to allow French imperialism to digest Alsace-Lorraine, Morocco,

Syria and the Cameroons in peace. It says so, and it is making its preparations.

But the chauvinistic fascist propaganda that cries out, "A people without room", adds "Room in the East". "Towards the East," declared Hitler in *My Struggle*. "Towards the East," declared Rosenberg in London. The East means not the gigantic landed estates of the Prussian landowners, but the Soviet Union. It is there above all that Hitler fascism sees the easiest field of expansion. *It hopes thus to kill two birds with one stone*: first, to gain new markets, new points of support; and second, to strike at and crush the land of the proletarian revolution, the land of socialism, the Soviet Union. Thus, in this war against socialism, it hopes to be able to group the greatest number of imperialist powers around it more easily.

### *The Socialist Beacon*

Now, what does the Soviet Union represent? In May, 1922, Lenin said that:

*"Today, it is chiefly through our economic policy that we influence the world revolution. . . . In this sphere, the struggle has been carried into the world arena. Once this problem is solved, we shall certainly and definitely conquer on an international scale."*

It was indeed the policy of expropriating the expropriators that even in 1919 attracted the sympathy of innumerable toilers towards the Soviet Union. Today, this current is powerful in another way. It is impossible to prevent the workers and the toilers of the capitalist world from asking why there is poverty in their country, and well-being in the Soviet Union. It is impossible to prevent them from realizing that it is the overthrow of capital's regime that is at the bottom of the difference between the two systems. It is impossible to prevent even the intellectuals and the scientists from turning towards the Soviet Union, since they see

the unprecedented advance of science and culture in the Land of the Soviets and their own miserable condition in the capitalist countries, except for those engaged in war research.

Finally, at a time when oppression of the colonial peoples is constantly growing in ferocity, the free federation of 185 peoples in the Soviet Union is the hope of millions of colonial slaves.

Thus, the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. constitutes a gigantic magnet whose power of attraction upon the toilers of all the world is steadily growing. It is by far the most powerful explosive that the romantic revolutionaries of long ago could ever have dreamed of to blow up the regime of exploitation and hunger.

A few more years and the mere portrayal of the well-being and the joy of life in the new socialist world, the mere propaganda by pictures and by delegations of toilers come to visit the Land of the Soviets, will evoke forces that no dike of the old imperialist world will be able to hold back any longer.

The imperialists of the whole world know this, particularly their most chauvinist and most reactionary elements, that is to say, the fascists. That is why these vultures, these hired slaughterers of big capital, are animated by the most savage hatred of the Soviet Union. That is why the most fiendish among them, the Hitlerites, see in the destruction of the Soviet Union a way out of their catastrophic economic situation, the satisfaction of the needs of German imperialism, as well as the destruction of their most dangerous enemy, the Land of the Soviets, whose very existence is a constant appeal to millions of proletarians crushed under their bloody and bestial fascist dictatorship. That is why Hitler Germany is the principal fomentor of war and the instigator of armed warfare against the Soviet Union in Europe at the present time.

## II. THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL FIGHTS FOR PEACE

I should like to demonstrate how and why the Communist International and the Soviet Union are formidable strongholds of peace.

*The Communist International is fighting for peace and intends to employ all its forces to maintain it.*

Why?

1. *Because war involves slaughter and nameless sufferings for the toilers, and profits and monstrous super-profits for capitalism.*

For the workers and peasants 1914 to 1918 meant twenty million dead, thirty million maimed, ruin and devastation of their homes. But for the Krupps and the Schneiders, the Bethlehem Steels and the Vickers—billions in surplus profits never before attained. In the United States, for example, the Du Pont Company (explosives) figured its war profits in 1918 at \$246,000,000, or 1130 per cent of the pre-war profits! Numerous scandals throughout the world, especially in France, Germany and the United States, have sufficiently proved that during the last World War, while soldiers guilty of fraternization were shot, the exploiters—for whose interests they were sent to the slaughter—sold “the enemy” the raw materials and the machines it lacked to continue the war against their own country!

And, more recently, did not the Senate Inquiry Committee in Washington prove in 1934 that Skoda—controlled by Schneider—furnished large quantities of arms and munitions to Hitler to establish his dictatorship? Did not the same Inquiry Committee show the Aircraft Company, the Du Pont Company, etc., at work supplying Hitler with large deliveries of airplanes and explosives?

Do we not see at the present time the Suez Canal Company cynically calculating that the transit of 120,000 Italian soldiers to Ethiopia yielded it £90,000 in additional profits? This explains the interest of its shareholders in having the largest possible num-

ber slaughtered in Ethiopia so that as many troops as possible may pass through the canal, causing dividends to rise.

2. *War is necessarily military dictatorship over the whole country.*

*Over the whole country and not merely in a few regions as in 1914-18. It has been well established, in fact, that the war of tomorrow will be a world war. Employing aerial gas bombardment of big industrial centers, it will abolish the old distinction between civilians and the military, between the front and the rear.*

Hence, imperialist war would mean the *destruction of the vestiges of democratic liberties*, wherever they still exist; it would mean the *suppression of the rights of association, of free assembly, of freedom for the labor press*, already so restricted. It would mean the destruction of all workers' organizations and a free field for the fascists. It would mean a tremendous increase in the exploitation and oppression of the working class, and requisitions at low prices in the countryside. It would be a regime of forced labor for the colonial peoples. To an extent a million times as great as in 1914-18, it would mean the atrocious rule of the gallows, of torture and murder by the fascist gangs.

That is why we Communists, *stubborn defenders of whatever is left of democratic liberties*—these positions conquered in bitter struggle by the working class, which allow the working class to defend its interests better—are likewise stubborn defenders of peace.

As for the countries of fascist dictatorship, war there would be veritable slavery for the toilers, aggravating still more the frightful regime they are subjected to, and exhausting them in war production to the ultimate limits of human endurance.

3. *Who paid and who is paying the costs of the imperialist great war of 1914-18?*

Those who were sent to the slaughter by the bourgeoisie and by the abominable treason of Social-Democracy—the toilers, victors or vanquished—are still paying today all the costs through their reduced wages and crushing taxes.

Even those whom the bourgeoisie wanted to win over, the

*ex-servicemen*, these victims with mangled bodies, with burned lungs, with blinded eyes, now see their meager pensions cut still more in all capitalist countries.

Whereas the capitalists, on the contrary—"victors" and "vanquished"—whose dividends sky-rocketed during the four years of slaughter, have invested gigantic sums in new modernized enterprises, and are making exorbitant profits from them in spite of the crisis.

In short, the poor have sacrificed everything, and are paying the expenses of a war that served only the interests of their exploiters. The rich have made enormous profits in this gigantic enterprise of destruction.

Imperialist wars are profitable only for the exploiters, for the capitalists; they bleed, they annihilate the proletarians, the toiling masses of all countries.

That is why the Communists are the most stubborn fighters for the defense of peace—"because they have no other interests than those of the working class".

#### 4. *Can the Communists want an imperialist war?*

For many years, however, the Social-Democrats have accused us of wanting a war between the imperialists, or even against the Soviet Union, *in order to have the revolution grow out of it*, as they said. As if the Communist Parties *throughout the world* did not have energetic campaigns to their credit in their struggle against imperialist war!

As if the Communist International, issued from the struggle against war and against anti-Soviet intervention, had not fought vigorously and successfully for peace during the course of its glorious past! Particularly in 1923, when the occupation of the Ruhr brought Europe to the brink of war, and when the Second International rejected our proposals for a fighting united front! The Social-Democrats have leveled this slander against us. As if our French Communist Party had not achieved brilliant successes in the struggle against imperialist war!

Our French Party has in its ranks many of those who all through the last slaughter, and particularly in 1917 and 1918,

participated in and led the great revolutionary strikes and the great military mutinies of those red years.

As if our French Party did not count the following as its most glorious pages, precisely in this field of struggle against war at the directives of the C.I.: 1921, with the struggle against the call to the colors of the conscript levy which "*had to seize Germany by the throat*"; 1923, against occupation of the Ruhr, and for the fraternization of the French soldiers with the German proletarians; 1925, with the general strike of October 12 against the war in Morocco and in Syria, and the support of the peoples of those countries in their fight for freedom; and 1927-28, with the struggle against the French reactionaries' threats of war.

These facts answer the self-seeking libels of those who supported their own imperialism at each of those periods. They answer the lies of those who claim that we want war, by calling to mind what our Party did to have the French soldiers sent into the Ruhr and the Rhineland fraternize with the toilers of Germany against their militarists and their warmongers, resulting in the arrest of our Political Bureau, with Marcel Cachin at its head, for "endangering the external security of the state".

In no country of the world have the Communists spared their strength, their liberty, or their lives in this struggle against the threats of imperialist war.

### *The U.S.S.R.—a Force for Peace*

Some renegades, with the miserable Doriot at the forefront, are trying to injure the Soviet Union by repeating exactly what Hitler says against it. They accuse it of wanting war.

As if the Soviet Union could be anything else than a force for peace!

Lenin quoted this phrase of Clausewitz's: "War is the continuation of politics by other means." Now, what can the policy of an imperialist state be? Evidently the policy that is fixed by the only law ruling it, the law of the quest for profits, *i.e.*, the policy of imperialist expansion which fatally leads to armed conflicts.



Now the quest for profits does not exist in the Soviet Union, because it is the land of socialism. If a capitalist country had constructed one-hundredth part of a Magnitogorsk or a Turksib, the speculators would have made millions! That is why the U.S.S.R., by its very economic and social structure, cannot want any expansion, any war.

Capitalism has disappeared in the Soviet Union. The general aims of its policy are fixed in a clear and precise manner both by the Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and by the Congress of Soviets. They are published, broadcast over the radio, printed in millions of copies. And our great Comrade Stalin does not let an occasion pass for calling them to mind. He himself sees to it that they are realized. These aims are the steady raising of the well-being of the whole toiling population, the building of classless society, the advance towards Communism, with our old motto as its highest goal: "To each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities."

That is why the Soviet Union, all of whose forces are concentrated upon these basic goals, cannot help wanting peace, which assures it the opportunity of continuing its tremendous social transformation, unique in the history of mankind.

By its socialist construction the Soviet Union aids the world proletariat, aids the colonial peoples. That is why it has become the fatherland of the toilers of the whole world, the free federation towards which so many oppressed peoples are turning, that is why it is so violently hated by the imperialists of all the world.

Yesterday Ercoli called to mind the decisive steps of this peace policy, starting with the appeal by the Second Congress of Soviets, "To All Peoples and to All Belligerent Governments", the very night power was seized, November 7, 1917.

Moreover, has not the Soviet Union often demonstrated its desire for peace? I shall content myself with adding two arguments to those given yesterday by Ercoli. Was not the Soviet Union the first to make a concrete and precise proposal for universal, simultaneous and controlled disarmament in 1927 at Geneva? After this was rejected, did it not again on several oc-

casions make proposals for partial disarmament, always received with sarcasm?

Soviet ambassadors have been assassinated: Vorovsky in Switzerland, Voikov in Warsaw; others have been expelled like bandits, even in Paris. The imperialists arrest Soviet consuls, and Soviet citizens, as, for example, the railwaymen of Manchuria. Armed forces have violated the territory of the Soviet Union on several occasions. What country would have tolerated such provocation? Not a single one! The Bey of Algiers' blow with a fan in the face of an envoy of the French government sufficed as a pretext for putting Algeria to fire and the sword for fifty years. The pretext for France's declaration of war upon Germany in July, 1870, was found in the fact that King William had considered it needless to receive the French Ambassador one evening!

Here then is a proved fact: the interests of the proletariat in power in the Soviet Union lie in peace; it could not be otherwise. And because this is also in the interest of the toiling masses of all the world, the Soviet Union has made enormous sacrifices for the cause of peace, sacrificing even the lives of its best sons.

### III. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND FRANCE

Thus, the major center of war in Europe is among the Hitler fascists—the major force for peace is in the Soviet Union, the land of socialism.

[Comrade Marty then defined the position of the French bourgeoisie in the present situation. His argument may be summed up as follows:

[The French bourgeoisie is not interested in war at the present time. The victory it won in 1918 has enable it to accumulate immense riches, and has ensured it hegemony in capitalist Europe.

[Now, it well knows that it defeated its German rival only after 52 months of war and with the considerable aid of the most powerful imperialisms in the world. It realizes that it would be difficult to resist successfully a fascist Germany powerfully equipped, whose population is half as large again as its own.

[On the other hand, the ruling classes of France realize that there exists a formidable power, the Soviet Union, which has become one of the most highly industrial powers in the whole world, and hence possesses a corresponding military might. This power wants the maintenance of peace and has proved it. Moreover, the proletariat and the masses of the population of France sympathize profoundly with the Land of Soviets, and see in its peace policy a rampart of general security. Thus France turns towards the Soviet Union.

[Comrade Marty continued]:

Is it not logical therefore, that the Soviet Union, which puts the defense of peace above everything, should at once sign a pact of mutual assistance with capitalist France?

### *Should Imperialist Contradictions Be Utilized?*

True enough, the interests that lead French imperialism to peace have altogether different aims than those of the Soviet Union. But why could not the latter support states that are interested in peace for other reasons than itself? We French Communists know very well that the aims of French imperialism do not have in mind the interests of the toiling masses, but merely the maintenance of its power. But we also know very well that the toiling masses of France and of the whole world consider peace one of their dearest possessions, and that is why our Political Bureau took a public stand, from the very start, for the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance.

Certain renegades criticized this pact of mutual assistance, *this understanding between the proletarian government and an imperialist government, which has a definite aim*. As if the interests of the laboring masses required that the U.S.S.R. place itself in "splendid isolation"! Over and over again, Lenin and Stalin explained to us, however, how the Land of the Soviets won out during the years 1918, 1919 and 1920:

1. Because of the absolute devotion of the workers and peas-

ants to their Soviet regime, because of the absolute devotion and the heroism of the workers' and peasants' Red Army.

2. Because of the aid of the international proletariat.

3. Because the imperialists were divided among themselves.

\* Not a worker would ever understand the Soviet Union's pursuing a policy that welds all its enemies into a single block against it. The proletarians understand very well, as Lenin emphasized, the duty of the proletarian state to make use of the contradictions between the bourgeoisies of different countries. And that is why the Soviet Union was perfectly right in signing the pact of mutual assistance with French imperialism.

But here these same renegades declare: "Only the action of the proletariat is a true guarantee of peace." That is correct and that is obvious.

Unfortunately, we are not yet strong enough in the capitalist countries to guarantee peace. Despite the magnificent and heroic struggle of our sister Party, who can guarantee that the German proletariat could restrain Hitler's arm? No one, obviously. Thus, the toilers can only approve the Soviet Union's casting its tremendous weight on the scales to guarantee peace through its pacts with France and Czechoslovakia, pacts open to all, which therefore threaten no one.

No matter how limited the duration of such pacts may be, no matter how doubtful their application by bourgeois states may be in the case of an anti-Soviet war, they are nevertheless important ways of hindering, to a certain extent, a new imperialist world war. And thus they serve the interests of the international proletariat and of the toilers of all countries.

### *Who Is Attacking the Pact?—The Opponents of the Struggle for Peace*

This consistent peace policy of the U.S.S.R. obviously does not satisfy everybody. In France, especially, important capitalist groups have not abandoned hope of resuming the attempt at

colonization, foiled in 1918-20, by overthrowing Soviet power through force of arms. Their fascist agents, those who make the noisiest display of a spurious patriotism, bellow against the Land of the Soviets, at the same time striving to multiply their negotiations with Hitler, from whom they expect material and monetary aid in France. Let me first say that this campaign, inspired by Hitler, indicates how much the pact of assistance is hampering the war policy of the Nazis. And they have already attacked the pact violently.

And along comes the sorry renegade Doriot, who states in an interview with a bourgeois newspaper, *Le Petit Journal*, that:

"It is inadmissible for the policy of a big French party to be dominated by the diplomatic needs of a foreign country. No matter what one it is. [When he says a foreign country, he means the Soviet Union.] I dread this Russian alliance, because I believe that Russia is interested, or thinks it is interested, in war, while we want peace. Peace must be sought for by the most logical means, Franco-German rapprochement."

Doriot thus calls for rapprochement with the horrible executioners of the German proletariat, against the Soviet Union.

The results of such a policy would be the consolidation of the Nazi dictatorship and the establishment of a powerful bloc against the U.S.S.R.; it would mean immediate war. The French fascists, Jean Goy and Robert Monnier, who dined with Hitler and promptly called for a Franco-German rapprochement, did not, however, dare to go as far as Doriot. And here is the man who has the effrontery to want to participate in the organization of a "New Zimmerwald", as he puts it, with a few renegades of his stamp and with deluded Socialist militants. It is easy to see what he is aiming at—he is aiming at the organization of an anti-Soviet bloc.

Truly, it would have been hard for Doriot to slide more quickly down the slippery slope of treachery.

### *Comrade Stalin's Declaration*

But what is there in the communiqué broadcast from Moscow after the negotiations with Laval? First of all:

"The representatives of the Soviet Union and of France were able to assure themselves that their constant efforts in all envisaged diplomatic undertakings clearly aimed at the same goal—the maintenance of peace by the organization of collective security."

This is only the acknowledgement of a fact that I have already explained at length: the Soviet Union's desire for peace, and the desire to maintain peace on the part of imperialist France, because at the moment the latter is not interested in war.

The communiqué continues:

"They [the representatives of the Soviet Union and of France] were completely agreed upon acknowledging—in the present state of the international situation—the obligations of states sincerely attached to the safeguarding of peace. . . . It is particularly incumbent upon them, in the very interest of the maintenance of peace, not to allow their means of national defense to be at all weakened. In this respect, M. Stalin understands and fully approves the national defense policy carried out by France to maintain its armed forces at the level necessary to its security."

### *Revolutionary Defense*

As for the Soviet Union, no toiler can doubt that it is the essential duty of the Soviet proletariat to organize its security. Defense of the revolution is the first elementary duty of the proletariat in power. Ercoli reminded us of what Lenin wrote on this subject long before the imperialist war. Was it not Jaurès himself, a reformist but devoted to the working class, and a sincere enemy of war, who wrote:

"The people that first enter socialism will immediately see the frantic reactionary powers hurl themselves upon it. It would be lost if it were not itself ready to take up the sword, to answer shell for shell, in order to give the working class of other countries time to organize and rise in their turn. . . ." (*Petite Republique*, July 24, 1897.)

*The need for a workers' and peasants' Red Army, armed and powerfully equipped* for modern warfare is obvious to every honest toiler. The bourgeoisie, the French bourgeoisie in particular, is wasting its time in heaping sarcastic comment upon the fact that the Communists of all countries and the French Communists admire the development of the Red Army.

Let us now examine the part of the communiqué that concerns France:

By virtue of the defensive pact of mutual assistance, the Soviet Union lends its great economic and military power to the security of the French people against Hitlerite aggression. The Soviet Union is justified, therefore, in demanding reciprocity from the French government; without it the pact that it signed would be nothing but a fool's bargain for the toilers of the Soviet Union and the whole world.

The overwhelming majority of the toilers of France has understood that quite well. True enough, it cannot be denied that for a short time the French Party was somewhat troubled. But a few days after the communiqué read by Laval in Moscow, an informatory meeting of 5,000 active members and sympathizers of the Party in five Paris regions unanimously (except for one opposing vote and seven abstaining) approved the line of our Central Committee, which vigorously supported the pact and Comrade Stalin's declaration. What is more, the elections to the General Council took place in the Department of the Seine ten days later. Their results were an endorsement of the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. and the policy of the French Communist Party.

It is precisely because of the extent of the anti-fascist trend

in France that there is widespread anxiety in the country in the face of Nazi armaments. The security of the country against the Hitlerite bandits is a dominant preoccupation of the toilers and especially of the middle classes, particularly the very numerous urban petty bourgeoisie, the peasants, and the intellectuals. And this is all the more so because these sections of the population forget or do not know of the existence of a revolutionary proletariat in Germany, of the Communist Party that lives and fights heroically in the face of a frightful terror.

Now these very important sections of the population see that the great Land of the Soviets, whose leaders have been accused of being bloody destroyers, is intervening to guarantee peace with all its economic and military might. The Soviet Union and its governing Party, the Bolsheviki, now appear to them in a different light.

And naturally enough, the French Communists, likewise still often considered as barbarous destroyers, also benefit by this fact.

Hence, the more favorable reception accorded our campaigns and our slogans.

It is obvious that the big bourgeoisie and the French fascists are going to try and are already trying to make use of this situation to endeavor to intensify their nationalist and chauvinist propaganda. It will thus be up to us to redouble our efforts to develop on all occasions both effective solidarity with the German proletariat and the struggle against the Hitler executioners, the allies and counsellors of the French fascists.

For example, in the demonstrations against the swastika flag on German ships we must never forget to demonstrate not merely against the fascist flag, but also for Thaelmann, in order to show the German seamen that it is not they whom we are booing, but the executioners of the German proletariat. (*Applause.*)

The Soviet Union's political line of peace, outlined and applied by our great Comrade Stalin, thus appears not merely as correct, but as aiding in mighty fashion the rallying of the French toiling masses against fascism. It is rendering a new and inestimable service to the international proletariat.



#### IV. THE ATTITUDE OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

The reactionary bourgeoisie, certain Social-Democratic leaders, and the renegades claim that ever since the pact of mutual assistance there is a contradiction between the policy of the Soviet Union, hence the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and that of the French Communist Party, which is voting against war credits and the prolongation of the term of military service, and is fighting against the militarization of youth and of the whole civilian population under the pretext of maneuvers against a gas attack.

What then is the position of the French Communist Party?

We stated it clearly in the appeal that our Central Committee signed this April together with nine other Parties, Sections of the C.I., from which I quote the following sentence:

"In case of counter-revolutionary war against the fatherland of socialism, we will support the Red Army of the Soviet Union in every way. . . . We will fight for the defeat of every power that wages war against the Soviet Union."

That is the line that we will follow in every case, and that is why we supported and are supporting the pact of mutual assistance for the defense of peace.

*We French Communists can have no confidence that the bourgeoisie will apply the pact.*

But just because we are and have been ardent defenders of the pact, we have no confidence at all that the French bourgeoisie will apply it, and still less in the present French Cabinet. Is it not stated in the communiqué issued after the negotiations with Laval that:

"The Soviet and French representatives, moreover, confined their resolution to neglect nothing in the course of their collaboration to forward, with the help of all the governments

supporting a policy of peace, *the improvement of political conditions*, which alone can reestablish between peoples the confidence indispensable for the development of the moral and material interests of European solidarity."

Now, the French bourgeoisie is not improving the political conditions for restoring confidence. Quite the contrary. It does not pursue a consistent peace policy. . . . The agreements it signed at Rome have given fascist Italy a free hand in Ethiopia. The assurances given by France are of such a nature that Italy has just withdrawn two divisions from the French Alpine frontier. Now, peace is indivisible. Who does not understand, for example, that a new world war can grow out of war in Ethiopia? Thus, the French bourgeoisie is not pursuing a peace policy internationally.

And the Communists do not intend to renounce the absolute independence of the working class, which we will never lead into the "sacred unions".

*Moreover, how was the pact signed?*

The French government wanted to satisfy two of the deepest aspirations of the toilers of France: love of peace and love of the Soviet Union. The toilers of France, are, in fact, passionately following everything that happens in the Soviet Union. They attach an inestimable value to everything that comes from the Soviet Union. They thrill with enthusiasm over the successes of socialist construction. They manifest their solidarity on every occasion. After the *Maxim Gorky* disaster, for instance, the workers spontaneously collected money in many factories of the Paris region to build a new airplane of the same type, and sent these sums to *l'Humanite* forty-eight hours after the accident, for transmission to the Soviet government. (*Applause.*)

Great French scientists also admire the Soviet Union. They see that in the land of socialism the scientists, the seamen and the rescuers of the *Chelyuskin*, the explorers of the stratosphere, are national heroes, whereas in France honors and pensions are reserved for fascist colonels, and the foremost radiologists of

Paris hold their consultations in wooden barracks in the hospitals of Paris.

[Comrade Marty concludes from this that a solidarity movement of such extent, which comprises all the sections of the population, has exerted pressure on the governmental circles for collaboration with the U.S.S.R. and for the struggle for peace.]

*But what guarantees have we that the pact will be put into effect, and that the government will not yield to the attacks of the most chauvinist and most reactionary elements, advocates of union with the Hitlerites?*

We have no such guarantees. Moreover, there are many officers who are openly carrying on fascist propaganda in the French army. The soldier-correspondents of *l'Humanite* report such and such a colonel openly calling for joining the Fiery Cross, and such and such officers insulting the Red Army of the Soviet Union in their speeches to the soldiers, and calling for anti-Communist struggle. In a very recent article (*L'Oeuvre*, July 28), the former Air Minister, Pierre Cot, revealed the high army chiefs' fear that in case of trouble officers would draw their units over to fascism, which, he said "would evoke and excuse the shift of other soldiers over to the side of the people. . . . The moral disintegration of the army would follow. . . . In this case all mobilization would become impossible."

What guarantees have we that this army will not be thrown against the workers and peasants in battle tomorrow, as has been the case in Belgium, in Geneva, and in the Asturias? The recent events in Brest and Toulon indicate the contrary. What guarantees have we that it will cease oppressing and martyring the enslaved peoples of the colonies?

None at all. That is why we are voting against the monstrous credits for war, at a time when poverty has never been as great in France for the last thirty-five years.

By means of emergency decrees, the government is squeezing eleven billion francs out of those employed by the state and the big public services, and out of the ex-servicemen, in order to throw the whole sum thus collected into the war budget.

And, nevertheless, it could easily find the necessary credits by the progressive taxation of fortunes of over half a million francs, as our Party demands. This would even follow the traditions of the Great French Revolution, when Thuriot declared in the Convention in 1793:

“Instituting a forced loan from the rich means winning a great victory. Let us force them to devote their wealth to the defense of the Republic.”

[Comrade Marty concludes from this that the French Communists are persuaded that the bourgeoisie is unable to ensure the security of the country. The latter can only be ensured by the general arming of the people, by the fusion of the army with the people.

[Comrade Marty continues:]

That is why our Party has set as one of its most urgent tasks the conquest of the army for the people, both to prevent its use against it and to ensure the application of the Franco-Soviet treaty of peace.

And I shall conclude my exposé with this question of the *conquest of the army for the people*.

In the face of the fascist menace in France—a menace that is growing rapidly—the question: “On whose side is the army?” is the subject of considerable controversy at the present time. The fascists—the *Action Francaise* and the *Croix de Feu* (Fiery Cross), above all—are redoubling their activity to win over the officers and soldiers. And that is one of the most burning questions of the day for the struggle against fascism and the danger of war.

[André Marty set forth, *inter alia*.] On July 7, in agreement with the organizers of the people’s rally of July 14, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France, through its delegate to the anti-fascist assembly of the Paris regions, proposed the establishment of *soldiers’ committees for the defense of the constitution and the Republic*, in order to check the intrigues of the fascist officers and organizations within the army.

And at the anti-fascist rally in Paris on July 14 last, the Radical deputy Rucart, on behalf of all the organizing groups, addressed special greetings to the army, calling upon it not to become "*the instrument of a factional minority and to be the defender of liberty*".

[Comrade Marty then calls to mind the attitude of the Communists towards the capitalist army. The Communists, as Lenin has taught us, and as has been particularly restated by the Thesis of the Sixth Congress of the C.I., are against insubordination, against desertion. They answer the summons to mobilization *even for a reactionary war*. They enter the army, endeavor to learn well the handling of arms there, to struggle there against chauvinist propaganda.]

In the struggle for winning the army for the people, there is a task directly linked up with that: the task of winning the young, whom the fascists and reactionary elements are trying to win from the school age on, by waging a violent campaign against the anti-fascist teachers and professors. Now in France, the great majority of teachers and professors are anti-fascists and union-organized. That is an excellent point of support for all our work of winning the young and hence the army for the people, which we must know how to employ.

Winning the army for the people is the highest guarantee that the French army will not be employed against the people; it is the guarantee that 1918 shall not happen again, when the French army, marching into Germany at the time when the proletarian revolution broke out, dissolved the soldiers' councils, as was the case at Mainz, for instance; it is the guarantee that 1919 will not occur again, with its attacks against the Soviets in Hungary and Russia.

## V. OUR TASK

Such, then, is our position in the face of the present threats of war, and, more particularly, in view of the threats to the Soviet Union.

Of course, we well know that only the final overthrow of capitalist domination will abolish wars. But if we know how to mobilize the masses, we shall be able to retard and prevent an imperialist war, and first of all a military attack upon the Soviet Union.

Preventing this attack, smashing it if it should break out, by assuring the victory of the Red Army, does not mean for the toilers of the whole world, and for those in France particularly, participating in an ordinary anti-capitalist action. The defense of the Soviet Union is the defense of the proletariat's future, of its very life. And that is why we shall do everything we can successfully to assure this defense.

The past gives us the greatest hopes for the future. In the years 1918-20 the toilers of the Soviet Union, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army repulsed the aggression of fourteen imperialist nations. The heroism of the Red Army, of the partisans, of the Red Guards, was admirable. But all of them learned in the struggle the military technique that they had not known. The arms of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army were often archaic, its means of transport primitive, its commissary intermittent. The enterprises behind the front were almost entirely disorganized by the imperialist war and the Civil War. Moreover, industrial equipment was extremely reduced. As for the soldiers, the commanders and the political commissars, like the soldiers of the Year II of the Great French Revolution:

*"They marched along singing, their souls without fear, and their feet without shoes."*

And it was under these conditions that our glorious Red Army defeated enemies ten times its size, a thousand times better armed, the leading armies of the world! Why? Because the tremendous prestige of the October Revolution was shaking capitalism in every country in the world, and as a result, its armies composed of workers and peasants!

And that took place when there were practically no Communist Parties in the capitalist countries! The proletarian revolution, moreover, acted through its prestige rather than by its concrete achievements, which could not yet be manifest. Today the Soviet Union is a formidable power. Today the advance of the well-being of the toiling masses liberated there is unprecedented, undeniable and undenied.

Today our Communist Parties exist in sixty-five countries in the world, Parties many of which have already been tempered in great heroic struggles. Today a mass movement exists around the French Party, the like of which has not been seen since the Great French Revolution. That is why each Party, and the French Communist Party, in particular, faces obligations still heavier than those at the end of the first period of wars and revolutions.

We know that the Red Army will accomplish scientifically and with absolute devotion its duty of defending the country where socialism is being built. What matters, therefore, is that we, in the capitalist countries, be able to accomplish our heavy, our very heavy tasks, as well.

Armed with the decisions of the Seventh World Congress, enlightened and guided by our great Comrade Stalin, we shall redouble our efforts to correct our weaknesses in the shock tempo called for by the present grave situation, in order to be ready to conquer new positions that will assure new victories for socialism!

*(The delegates rise. Stormy applause.)*

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