

**TWELFTH PLENUM OF THE E. C. C. I.**

**THE WORK OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTIES**

of France and Germany and

**THE TASKS OF THE  
COMMUNISTS**

in the Trade Union Movement

**SPEECH BY O. PIATNITSKY**

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O. PIATNITSKY.

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# The Work of the Communist Parties of France and Germany and the Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Union Movement

SPEECH BY COM. O. PIATNITSKY.

**I**N the period between the XI and the XII Plenums, the sections of the Comintern, and therefore the Comintern as a whole, achieved considerable successes, not only in regard to securing an increase of votes at elections and increase in the membership of revolutionary workers' and Communist organisations, but also in regard to leading economic struggles and revolutionary battles. Compared with the sweep of the revolutionary labour and peasant movements, however, and bearing in mind the unexampled betrayal of the interests of the working class by the Social-Democrats and the leaders of the reformist trade unions and other anti-revolutionary trade unions; having in mind also the strength of the capitalist attack upon all the gains of the workers, and the very standard of living of wide masses, compared with all this, we must say that all the sections of the Comintern are lagging very much behind the possibilities created by the industrial and agrarian crisis, and the whole situation which we describe as the end of stabilisation.

I will deal with only two sections in my remarks, the C.P. of France and the C.P. of Germany, and also several general questions affecting all sections.



## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF FRANCE.

Bearing in mind the importance of the problems confronting the C.P. of France, due to the significance which French imperialism has for the revolutionary labour and peasant movement of the whole world (for France is strangling Germany, her own colonies, is surrounding the U.S.S.R. with her vassals, — Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Poland,—with the aim of intervention, etc.), we must say that the C.P. of France has made no progress; on the contrary, it is lagging behind more than other sections. This does not contradict the fact that the C.P. of France has carried out a number of campaigns successfully — the struggle against the air manœuvres, the preparations for the Anti-War Congress, the campaign carried on by *Humanite* against the Whiteguards, etc. But the lagging behind of the C.P. of France is seen in the whole work of the Party and the Red trade unions, notwithstanding the constant assistance it has received from the Comintern and R.I.L.U.

From the middle of 1930, during the whole of 1931 and to the middle of 1932 the Presidium, the Political Secretariat and the Political Commission concerned themselves more with the problems of the C.P. of France than with those of any other section of the Comintern. I want to briefly enumerate the meetings we have had in the E.C.C.I. to discuss questions of the C.P. of France. March, 1930, — the meetings of the French Commission, which were attended by sixteen comrades; not only from the Centre but also from the districts. The result of these meetings was the extensive and detailed resolution adopted by the Presidium on June 16, 1930. I will have

occasion to quote from this resolution. On August 30, there was another meeting, attended by leading comrades, at which the insurance campaign was discussed. The Communist Party of France nearly missed this campaign which centred around the Bill which provided for various forms of insurance for the workers (except for the unemployed). The socialists had introduced an Insurance Bill which provided for limited insurance, for which the working class had to pay, and the communists, instead of retaliating by introducing their own Insurance Bill containing communist demands in the sphere of insurance, not only failed to develop a big campaign in support of communist demands, but took up an attitude towards the Socialist Insurance Bill which we were unable to understand in a Communist Party, on so important a question affecting the workers. The C.P. of France opposed insurance, on the plea that the employers would transfer the cost of insurance to the workers in any case by raising the price of commodities.

The next meeting took place on November 20, 1930, at which the trade union question was discussed. In February, 1931, a meeting was held at which trade union unity was discussed. The initiative on this question was taken by the *minoritaires*,—a small reformist opposition in the Red trade unions. This group not only succeeded in winning over a number of Red trade union organisations, but caused demoralisation in the ranks of the Unitary General Federation of Labour (C.G.T.U.). Neither our Party, nor the trade unions were able to take up a correct position on this question. Instead of taking the

initiative on the question of trade union unity, they proclaimed that unity was only possible within the framework of the C.G.T.U., that they could not create a united trade union organisation with the traitors of the Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.); and failed to understand that they were creating difficulties in approaching the workers who still follow the lead of Jouhaux and Co. with statements of this kind. Our opponents took advantage of such statements. On this question we had to draft a document jointly with the French comrades and the C.G.T.U. One might have thought, that after this document was adopted and published, the C.G.T.U. would have taken the right road on the question of trade union unity. But the manner in which this document was commented on, in the press, and speeches of trade union officials, at meetings of the trade union organisations, showed that this was not so.

In April, 1931, during the XI Plenum, a very important meeting was held. Questions concerning the work of the Party and its leadership were discussed. Unfortunately these same questions have to be raised now, although a year and a half has since passed. In June, 1931, a meeting was held with delegates of the French Red Trade Unions. In July, the R.I.L.U. called the leaders of the minority here to discuss all the questions of principle on which they differed from the Red trade unions with them. The R.I.L.U. had to examine the whole of the tactics of the *minoritaires*, to explain the counter-revolutionary significance of their actions, and indicate the methods by which their fatal influence in the ranks of the Red trade union movement could be destroyed.

Later, in October, 1931, a meeting was held



on the "group" of Barbe, Celor and Co., which had retarded the development of the C.P. of France for a number of years.

End of October,—another meeting prior to the Red Trade Union Congress.

Beginning of December, — at the time of the meeting of the Central Council of the R.I.L.U., Com. Monmousseau's report on the Congress of the C.G.T.U.

In 1932, at every meeting of the Political Commission, some question or other connected with France was discussed.

In January, 1932, a meeting took place to discuss the preparations for the VII Congress of the Party. After that, in the course of 1932, the Party Congress was discussed four times, then the elections, the election campaign, the work of the parliamentary fraction,—six times, the trade unions were discussed three times, work among the peasantry (the agrarian programme) was discussed twice, organisational work twice, questions concerning the Party leadership twice, the national question, non-party organisations, work among women, the municipal election campaign and questions of agitation and propaganda. In the majority of cases, French comrades were present when these questions were discussed.

#### DEFECTS IN THE WORK OF THE C.P. OF FRANCE.

You see, therefore, that the Comintern and the R.I.L.U. have devoted a great deal of attention to the French Party and Red trade unions; and this is not accidental. As I have said already, the rôle of the French Party at present is a very important one. In the resolutions and documents that were adopted, not only was criticism levelled



against the mistakes of the Party, but they showed what to do; and how to do it. In the decisions of May-June, 1930 the following questions were dealt with: the immediate demands of the proletariat; opposition to the so-called "Lefts," who are of the opinion that the "fight for beefsteaks" is a thing of the past; for the proper conduct of mass work; for quickly removing the gap between the Party and the masses; for the correct application of the tactics of the united front and a correct approach to the socialist workers (against the formula that "all members of the Socialist Party, including the rank and file workers, are bloodhounds of the bourgeoisie"); against the Party bossing the trade unions; work among foreign workers.

The main points in the resolutions adopted, as a result of the work of the commissions, indicated the following unfavourable characteristics of the C.P. of France: decline in membership, fluctuation in membership; drop in the circulation of *Humanite*, incorrect work with the *Humanite* Defence Committees; opportunist, and particularly sectarian distortions of the tactics of the united front; the question of the immediate demands of the working class.

I consider it necessary to quote a passage from the resolution adopted on June 16, 1930. In this resolution we read the following:

"In view of the rise of unemployment and of the prospects of its growth in the future, the Party must immediately adopt measures to set up, through the medium of the unitary trade unions, unemployed committees or councils, for the purpose of maintaining constant contact between the employed and unemployed workers.

The C.P. of France must fight strenuously in defence of the demands of the unemployed; unemployed insurance to be paid for by the state and the employers, providing for full pay to all industrial and agrarian proletarians, irrespective of nationality and without bureaucratic formalities. Very close attention must be paid to the defence of economic and political interests of immigrant and colonial workers. To counteract the efforts of the bourgeoisie, the authorities, the socialists and the C.G.T. to stir up the French workers against the workers of foreign origin and to foment national strife (which actually did take place under the leadership of the socialists a year and a half later,—O.P.), etc., our Party must unite the French and foreign workers in a single indomitable *bloc* of class solidarity and joint struggle against the exploitation of States and their agents."

This resolution was solemnly adopted by the whole of the delegation of the C.P. of France present at the meeting. The C.P. of France solemnly signed a pledge to secure the following results by December 25, 1930: 55,000 members; 200,000 circulation for *Humanité* and 500,000 members of the Red trade unions. Had they carried out this pledge, I would not have to speak about the C.P. of France to-day. All the directives, the solemn promises undertaken by the French delegation which I have enumerated, and many other decisions of the organs of the E.C.C.I. and R.I.L.U. and the decisions of the Central Committee of the C.P. of France, remain on paper. The Party and the trade unions have not increased their membership; on the contrary,

they have lost members. At the last elections the Party lost to the socialists,—listen to this, comrades,—220,000 votes. In 1928, the Socialist Party obtained 1,700,000 votes; at the last elections it obtained, at our expense,—1,900,000 votes. And the C.P. of France lost 71,000 votes to the renegade W.P.P.\* (Sellier and Co.). In 1932, the C.P. of France obtained 790,000 votes as against 1,067,000 obtained in 1928.

I cannot refrain from mentioning a characteristic fact. Before the elections we discussed the election programme and the election campaign with the French comrades here. All the comrades present, by no means unanimous in their work in leading the Party, were unanimous in stating that the Party was going to lose votes, and many votes, at the election. And it was in the belief that they were going to lose votes that they returned to fight for the workers' votes. They told us that they were going to lose from 400,000 to 500,000; and we said to them: don't dare come here without having obtained 1,500,000 votes.

They came here, not with 1,500,000 votes, it is true; but they showed a "gain" of 200,000 votes over their own expectations (laughter). Well, it is a gain. Two hundred thousand workers' votes are not to be sneezed at.

The Party has not waged a struggle against the Socialist Party and the W.P.P. in spite of the fact that the E.C.C.I. very urgently called the attention of the Central Committee of the C.P. of France to the need for waging this struggle. I will quote you a short passage from the resolution which I have already quoted:

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\*Parti Ouvrier et Paysan — Workers' and Peasants' Party.—Ed.



"Inadequate, weak, belated, slow and disjointed campaign to expose the renegade opportunists and the W.P.P. The correct organisational measures that were adopted in the struggle against the renegade opportunists were not properly and clearly explained to the members of the Party, and the masses of the workers, to enable all the workers to understand the necessity for such organisational measures. Generally speaking, there has been a lack of energetic, systematic and mass counter-attack against the united attack of the W.P.P., socialists, the C.G.T. and the government. At the same time *Humanite's* reply was weak and inadequate (failure to apply point 5 of the resolution of the Political Secretariat of March, 1930).

"The C.P. of France must thoroughly understand the great danger that threatens the working class in France from the socialists, W.P.P. and opportunists, who are conducting a wide campaign to again deceive the proletariat, and urban and rural toilers to consolidate the capitalist system and the bourgeois-imperialist régime."

One would think that the warning was sufficiently serious. Nearly two years have passed. The results can be seen from the elections.

France is still thoroughly imbued with parliamentarism; the wide masses still heed the deputies and their speeches. The C.P. of France had a small fraction, if I am not mistaken, ten members at first,—of whom, two were members of the Political Bureau. The Political Bureau paid no attention to the work of the fraction. What

was the result? The Naval Estimates were passed unanimously.

You can imagine what effect this had upon the masses. Not a single one of our deputies was present in the Chamber when the vote on the Naval Estimates was taken. Our fraction did not oppose the Bil introduced by the socialists, which was directed against the foreign workers, and proposed that the number of foreign workers permitted to be employed in industry be limited to 10 per cent. of the total employed. Only two of our deputies were present in the Chamber when this Bill was discussed and voted upon. The socialists introduced a Women's Suffrage Bill in the Chamber. Our people did not react to this in any way. One deputy, who was present in the Chamber, abstained from voting. We discussed this matter in the leading body of the Comintern, and of course, we could not but deal with this in a manner it deserved.

In 21 Departments in France, the Communist Party has majorities in 164 municipal councils. In these, we have a total of 2,373 municipal councillors. In 264 municipal councils we have minorities, with a total of 696 municipal councillors. In all countries the municipal councils play an important rôle; but this is particularly the case in France. There the municipal councils enjoy considerably more powers than those in any other country. Some municipal councils are working well; they have shown that they can do something for the workers, and that they can organise the working class. But generally in this respect, almost nothing is being done. Taken as a whole, the municipal councils, in the majority of cases, are not utilised by our Party for the purpose of

extending their contacts with the masses. The fact that the municipal councils play an important rôle in France is shown by the work of the renegades who deserted us (the W.P.P.). How do they operate? They pay heed to the demands of the masses, formulate them in their proposals, and introduce them in the municipal councils. More than that; they sometimes formulate the demands of the Red trade unions, while our municipal councillors "sit around and flap their ears," as Comrade Doriot, a member of the Political Bureau, put it.

During 1929, 1930 and 1931, there were 3,210 strikes in France, which affected 1,994,000 workers. In the first six months of 1932 there were 391 strikes affecting 114,000 workers. Our Red trade unions led very few strikes. Either they entered the strikes late, sometimes a long time after the strikes had started, or, in other cases, they led these strikes very badly.

In 1931, out of 260 strikes, of which we have information, 37 were successful, 69 ended in a compromise and 109, *i.e.*, 50 per cent., failed. Did not these strikes fail because our Red trade unions were not able to approach strikes properly and lead them?

If we compare Poland and France we will find that conditions in Poland are much worse than in France. In Poland there are no well organised and strong Red trade unions as is the case in France. The terror is raging in Poland ever so much more than in France. Nevertheless, in Poland, the number of successful strikes led by the Communist Party is larger than in France. The workers in France have fought many strikes.



In all the recent strikes the workers displayed stubbornness and persistence. Several strikes developed into big political events, with barricade fighting. The failure of so many strikes in France, is due in no small degree, to the fact that the Red trade unions, which have a membership of about 300,000, are not able to expose the manœuvres of the reformists and Social-Democrats, to establish the united front from below before and during strikes, etc.

How can our unions be expected to grow if they are unable to approach strikes properly?

I will quote a single fact. Last January there was a big movement among the miners in the Pas-de-Calais against wage cuts. In that district there are 180,000 miners; 15,000 belong to the Red unions and 60,000 to the reformist unions. But we have more pit delegates than the reformists; we have 60 and they have 48. We quite properly advanced the slogan: Prepare to strike on February 1. The reformists replied: We want a referendum. The question they put to the vote in the referendum was: Strike or negotiations? What should we have done? We should have said to the workers: We will take part in the referendum, but at the same time we must prepare for the strike and vote for a strike. Did we have an opportunity to expose the reformists? We did. They did not say what they wanted, what they were going to strive for, or why they wanted to negotiate. We could have said to the workers: If the reformist leaders are willing to call a strike they would say,—we will negotiate, but we will insist on all the workers' demands being met, we will fight to prevent the wage cut; since they do not say this, it shows that they want

to compromise with the employers. Take part in the referendum and vote against the reformists! But we said, boycott the referendum. What was the result? The result was that 60,000 voted for negotiations, — for the negotiations formula was such an elastic one that it could be taken to mean anything— 2,000 voted for a strike and about 100,000 did not vote at all. How did our Red trade unions regard this result? They said: There you are, we have won a victory; after all; a large number of workers did not vote, that shows that we have influence. But the strike was disrupted. This matter was discussed at the Political Bureau. I must say here, to our shame, that the representative of the R.I.L.U. who was in France at that time, spoke in favour of the boycott. The Political Bureau discussed this question and endorsed the boycott. In spite of the fact that the tactics of the Red trade unions were wrong, the workers nevertheless, became convinced that they, the Red Unions, championed the interests of the workers, for, unlike the reformists, they wanted to fight.

The Red trade unions have pit and railway depot delegates elected by the workers. These delegates are full-time officials and they could be made very good use of. But they do about as much as our municipal councillors, who sit around and flap their ears when questions affecting the workers are being discussed. No use is made of them. They could serve as organisers and agitators, and carry out the slogans and the line of our Party and Red trade unions.

Now about unemployment. I have already shown that we uttered a warning about unemployment long before it appeared in France by

quoting to you the resolution of June 16, 1930. *Vie Ouvriere*, the organ of the C.G.T.U. states that, according to official statistics, the number of workers working short time in France on July 1, 1932, was 5,618,800, that is 51 per cent. of the total, and 2,300 were totally unemployed. Only a very small number of unemployed workers get any relief, I think 150,000 or 160,000. The rest receive nothing. France is spending colossal sums on armaments. The broad masses are opposed to war; they have demonstrated this. The Party could develop a broad campaign for unemployed insurance, for an increase in the number insured, etc. Very belatedly, the C.P. of France started a campaign and began to organise the unemployed; but the work has now come to a stop. And who, taking advantage of our inactivity, has begun to carry on work among the unemployed? Fakery and philanthropists.

I will read to you a statement published by *Vie Ouvriere* on April 8, 1932: In Montpellier the Communist Party and the C.G.T.U. carried on no work among the unemployed, and the unemployed themselves (I emphasise, *themselves*) elected a committee, the leaders of which pursued a non-revolutionary, pernicious policy. There were representatives of the C.G.T.U. union on this committee, but they, instead of fighting for the leadership of the unemployed and politically exposing the bad leaders, began to rake up all sorts of scandals about their family life, and then resigned from the committee on the plea that it was disgusting to work with such leaders. Let us hope that this is an isolated case. I am afraid, however, that this is the way the work among the unemployed is often carried on.



How can such a situation be accounted for? There are lots of people in the Party and trade union leadership, and they are quite able fellows. I will enumerate some of them : Thorez, Semard, Duclos, Marty, Ferrat, Monmousseau, Doriot, Cachin, Gitton and many others. Each of them separately does an enormous amount of work ; but the results do not amount to much. Why? Because there is no collective leadership, no team work. The leadership of the C.P. of France puts you in mind of Krylov's fable about the swan, the crab and the pike, all pulling in different directions. As a matter of fact, the C.P. of France has no centre to lead the Party organisations and all the Communists properly, no matter where they are working. Here is an example of this leadership. I will quote several passages from the speech Comrade Doriot delivered at the meeting of the Latin Countries Secretariat :

"While the overwhelming majority of the workers (railwaymen) demanded the introduction of the English week, the C.G.T.U. union opposed this. I then laid their pamphlet before the Political Bureau. I raised the question at a meeting of railwaymen, and the secretary of the union spoke for three quarters of an hour trying to prove that the proposal for an English week is a trap laid by the employers. How could the workers understand that, since the introduction of the English week was not to involve a reduction of wages?

"What did Sellier do at depot 18? He wrote a small pamphlet and sent it to all the railwaymen ; he took four or five demands that had been rejected by the C.G.T.U. union and

sent them to all the workers employed on the railways in preparation for the election. Is it surprising then, that after this all the railwaymen voted for Sellier?

"Cachin and I once attended a meeting of municipal workers that was called in connection with a reduction of wages. . . . The Union secretary delivered a speech in which he dealt with the U.S.S.R., the impending war and the radicalisation of the masses, and Cachin and I had to deal with the questions of conditions of labour, wages, etc. This scandalous state of affairs still exists. I know trade union secretaries who do not know the demands of the categories of workers whose interests they are supposed to defend."

And here is the last passage from his speech, which deals with the leadership in a very important region, the Paris Region. This is what a member of the Political Bureau says:

"There is no doubt that the leadership of the Paris Region is totally unsatisfactory. . . . Apart from Semard, it is like a 'coffin,' which does not utter ten words in a year."

And so on, in the same strain.

If anyone outside the leadership had expressed this criticism, one could understand it. But it was uttered by a member of the Political Bureau, Comrade Doriot. I am sure that he knew all this before he arrived here. He even says that he laid the pamphlet issued by the C.G.T.U. union against the 40-hour week, before the Political Bureau. Comrade Doriot, you are a member of the Political Bureau; are you not responsible for this state of affairs? Why did you not raise this question on the Political Bureau? If the trade

union is not handling so important a question as the English week, which affects hundreds of thousands of workers, properly, then it is the duty of the Political Bureau to take up the question and compel the Party fraction in the union, which is led by Party members, to change their tactics on this question. But what happens? The Party leadership finds fault with the Red trade unions on every petty question, frequently decides questions for them, sometimes speaks in their name in the press. But where is the Political Bureau when an important question affecting the interests of hundreds of thousands of workers arises, when it is necessary to rectify or cancel a decision which is harmful to the Red trade unions and the Party?

It is said that the Political Bureau took a decision on this question, but that decision was not carried out. But there are members of the leadership of the C.G.T.U. on the Political Bureau! You have to work in a district in which railwaymen and municipal workers live. The good decision of the Political Bureau should have been carried out. The fact that it was not carried out, shows that individual members and the whole leadership are working badly. It gives us a striking insight into the manner in which the leadership is working. When we say that the C.P. of France has not a good leadership,—and we said the same thing last year—the members of the Political Bureau take offence. They say: What do you mean, we have no leadership? Look how many days I have spent at meetings, how many days I have been here and there, etc. Of course, you put in a lot of work, and that is a good thing. But does leadership mean doing the



work that the trade unions, the mass organisations, the local Party organisations should do? Of course not. That is not leadership, it is pettifoggery. Leadership means discussing big questions to give a lead to the Party, it means controlling the carrying out of this lead and giving instructions as to how it should be followed. It is not at all necessary for every member of the Political Bureau to journey to address meetings six times a week. Provide good material, draw up points for speakers. I think that in the districts there are comrades who are as good speakers as yourselves. You give the lead; react to all economic and political questions that affect the interests of the workers and all the toilers. I think it would be a good thing if, before they leave here, the French comrades had a talk with the Polish comrades to learn from them how they had recently managed to organise such good team work on their Political Bureau that they are able to work well and achieve success. That would be very useful. Comrade Doriot says: A good decision was adopted, but it was not carried out. I can confirm the statement that your decisions remain paper decisions.

In March the Party Congress was held; not a bad Congress. Many proletarians were present, many spoke, and we thought that a turning point had been reached at last in the Communist Party of France. Unfortunately the decisions adopted at the Congress were soon forgotten. This, for example, is what we find in the materials of the Latin Countries Secretariat:

The election campaign caused the Congress to be entirely forgotten. The leadership of the Party had no information as to whether the Party organisations had discussed the decisions of the

Congress. The decisions passed by the Plenum of the Central Committee held in the beginning of July have not been discussed by a single Regional Committee to this day. Similarly, to this day (end of August) there has not been anything in the Party press about the Congress of the Young Communist League.

Only very recently the *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* carried an advertisement asking for orders for a pamphlet containing the resolutions of the Congress. The resolutions of the Congress have not even been published in *Humanite*. The French comrades have an organ like *Humanite*, which plays a bigger rôle than any other newspaper in the Communist International except *Pravda*, but the Party does not use it as a means of informing, leading and giving instructions to the Party.

I will quote another fact taken from the materials of the Latin Countries Secretariat :

After the Japanese bombardment of Shanghai *Humanite* published the directives of the Central Committee without any comment. Three weeks later it was discovered that the Party organisations had not reacted in any way to those directives. So *Humanite* once again published the directives, and once again it failed to add a single line by way of comment or explanation.

One might think it was a private firm's advertisement. And on an important question like this too !

*Humanite* carried on an excellent campaign in connection with the Gorgulov case and the slanders concerning the alleged shootings on the Dnieper. The French workers immediately reacted to this campaign by increasing the circulation of the paper. In February, the paper had a circulation of 167,000 ; on May 6 and 7 the circu-

lation rushed up to 269,000. That shows that it correctly felt the pulse of the wide masses of the workers. And when the campaign came to an end the circulation dropped almost to the level at which it stood in February. That shows that the Party failed to consolidate the influence the newspaper had acquired during the Gorgulov campaign.

Can the Party lead without a press, and particularly a legal press? Of course not, especially the French Party, whose local organisations are very loose and whose organ has such a wide circulation. Of course it cannot. *Humanite* must become the Party's mouthpiece, it must reflect the life of the Party. And yet, it seems to be divorced from the Party and sometimes it breathes a spirit that the Political Bureau hardly wants. Read the last issue of *Humanite*, which was shown me to-day; it contains an article praising a speech delivered by Nichol, the Swiss "Left" Social-Democrat. *Humanite* writes about Nichol's speech at the Anti-War Congress in such a way that one would think that it almost marked a new era in Social-Democracy. And yet, this speech was delivered only for the purpose of deceiving the masses. Nichol is the leader of the Social-Democratic organisation in the French part of Switzerland (Geneva). He belongs to the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland, which is affiliated to the II International. By his "Left" speeches, articles and manœuvres Nichol is preventing the creation of a strong Communist Party in Switzerland, in the Geneva district, and *Humanite* not only does not expose this but does not even treat the speech critically. Why? Because *Humanite* is divorced from the Party, be-



cause there are two quite separate centres in the C.P. of France: The Political Bureau and the Editorial Staff of *Humanite*. How many times has it been decided that a member of the Political Bureau be put on the editorial staff of *Humanite*? This, like many other decisions, has not been carried out.

In the majority of cases local Party committees exist merely on paper. They are not active. The only difference between our local Party committees and those of the Socialist Party is that during election campaigns the latter develop very considerable activity, they revive, while many of our local Party committees, during the last election campaign, put the whole burden of the work on the shoulders of the deputies.

In the report of Comrade Alloyer, the Organisation Secretary of the Central Committee of the C.P. of France, for May, it is stated that in April, when the election campaign was at its height, fewer factory papers were issued than in previous months, particularly in the Paris Region. The extent to which the Party organisations were divorced from the campaign may be seen from the case of District No. 2 of the Paris Region, in which the campaign was conducted entirely by Comrade Duclos and several other comrades from another district.

In a circular letter issued by the Paris Regional Committee of the C.P. of France on April 19, 1932, it is stated that the Party Committees did not guide the election campaign and that "the political guidance was given mainly by bodies other than the regular Party organisations, from the cells to the Bureau of the Regional Committee." That shows that we have not achieved

in France, what we have recently achieved in other countries, where the Parties really perform miracles during election campaigns. The question therefore arises, what do the Party organisations do? Are there any local Party organisations?

#### DEDUCTIONS.

1. A collective, active leadership must be created in the C.P. of France and in the C.G.T.U. that works as a team.

2. Serious attention must be devoted to the creation of local Party and trade union organs to carry out the line of the Party and of the C.G.T.U. and be closely linked up with the masses through the medium of factory cells and factory sections of the trade unions. It goes without saying that first of all the composition of the Regional Committees, which will have to do all this, must be changed.

3. The methods of guiding the work of the Party fractions in the Chamber, in the municipal councils and in the workers' mass organisations must be changed, in accordance with the decisions of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. on Communist fractions.

4. The methods of mass work must be changed.

5. Members must be boldly promoted to leading positions in the Party and in the trade unions.

6. The Editorial Staff of *Humanite* must consist of good Party men, strongly linking it with the Party leadership and making it the mouth-piece of the Party.

7. Measures must be taken to secure the fulfilment of the decisions of the organs of the E.C.C.I. and of the Party.

I have dealt with the French question eighteen

months after the E.C.C.I. had exerted every effort to organise the leadership of the C.P. of France and to change the state it is in. The Party organisations of the C.P. of France are loose. The C.P. of France could win broad masses if it had good local Party organisations, if the Party cells displayed initiative, if the District Committees displayed initiative, if it had good Regional Committees, if it had an energetic Political Bureau that worked together and really led the Party. Can all this be acquired? Certainly it can. But to do so the Plenum must say to the leading French comrades with all its authority: the present state of affairs in the Party must be brought to an end. We consider it advisable to put all this to the Plenum, so that it or the Presidium of the Plenum, may elect a commission to go into the questions connected with the state of affairs in the C.P. of France. It was not my task to enumerate the successes which the C.P. of France has achieved in the period between the XI and XII Plenums. That is for the French comrades.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY: SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS.

The Communist Party of Germany has achieved numerous successes. The Party has a great power of attraction for the masses of the workers. During the past eighteen months the Party has made several hundred thousand new members. At the last elections it obtained, under very difficult and confusing conditions, 5,300,000 votes. The Party has displayed ability to regroup its forces and manœuvre. You know, for example, that the leadership of the Party opposed



taking part in the referendum on the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag. A number of the Party newspapers published leading articles opposing participation in that referendum. But when the Central Committee of the Party jointly with the Comintern arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to take an active part in the referendum, the German comrades, in the course of a few days, roused the whole Party. Not a single Party, except the C.P.S.U. could do that. That shows that the Communist Party of Germany is able to manoeuvre. A large part of the membership consists of capable workers. A large section of the members of the Party is fighting heroically against the National-Socialists in the streets, and in this way is creating the possibility of establishing an anti-Fascist united front. At the last factory council elections the Party and the Red Trade Union Opposition was able to put up 18,000 candidates. In view of the mass unemployment and victimisation that prevail in Germany, these candidates were candidates for dismissal, for being thrown on to the streets. No other Communist Party in the capitalist countries could mobilise such a large number of members under such conditions.

The C.P. of Germany is compelled to work under very severe conditions. The Versailles system has given rise to incredible chauvinism. Unemployment, wage cuts, the ruin of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, the bankruptcy of banks from which the small depositors suffer most, the bankruptcy of cities, especially the small ones, those with working class populations, etc.,—all this is attributed by the chauvinists to the Versailles system.

## THE TACTICAL MISTAKES OF THE C.P. OF GERMANY.

The Social-Democratic Party and the reformist trade unions in Germany are the strongest, and more capable in manœuvring than any other in the world. Before the war, the Social-Democratic Party enjoyed great prestige among the masses, because it created strong, centralised trade unions, mass workers' organisations, waged the economic struggle, fought for reforms, and indeed, did win something for the masses. That this is so, is proved by the fact that it was able to commit all its acts of treachery during the war without, or almost without, suffering damage. The free unions committed their acts of treachery against the workers, jointly with the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party. Notwithstanding this, the membership of the free unions rose from 3,000,000 before the war to 9,000,000 immediately after the war. The Social-Democrats had the enormous majority in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils and this enabled them to betray the revolution.

Only a small minority of the workers, only the revolutionary workers, realised that the revolution had been betrayed. But the overwhelming majority of the workers knew the other sides of the Social-Democratic Party, they knew what it had "given" them as a result of the revolution. They knew that as a result of the revolution the Social-Democrats were able to "secure" an eight-hour day, obligatory collective agreements, factory councils established by law, which supervise internal factory regulations and the dismissal of workers, social insurance, including unemployment insurance without workers' contributions, freedom of the press, assembly and association,

guaranteed by the law. The wide masses of the German workers did not know, and many do not know now, that the Social-Democrats "gave" them, and "secured" from the bourgeoisie concessions, to save the capitalist system in Germany from the socialist revolution; for the October Revolution in Russia exercised enormous influence upon the revolutionary events of 1919-20. The Social-Democrats realised that the shooting of the leaders of the revolutionary workers alone would not be sufficient to weaken the influence of the revolutionary workers of Berlin, Hamburg, Central Germany, the Ruhr and the Rhine, upon the mass of the workers who supported the slogans of the socialist revolution. Even now the wide masses of the workers do not know that after the revolution, the Social-Democratic Party itself worsened all the social legislation (introduced workers' contributions to the insurance funds, reduced unemployment benefits), suppressed revolutionary labour newspapers, dissolved revolutionary labour organisations, etc. And now it is helping to abolish collective wage agreements and all the gains of the German working class. The "free" unions are working hand in glove with the Social-Democratic Party, and are only able to retain their influence over the workers by paying out relief to their members. In 1930, income from membership dues in these unions amounted to 265,000,000 marks, out of which 110,000,000 marks were paid in relief to members, of which 77,000,000 marks were paid in unemployment relief. This was in addition to what the unemployed received from the state unemployment insurance fund.



The Communist Party of Germany has been the only Party that has fought against the *Notverordnungen*, i.e., the Emergency Decrees, but this struggle did not spread to the broad masses and this enabled the Social-Democrats, the free unions, and the "Nazis," who had an enormous press at their disposal, to hurl demagogic charges against the Communist Party to the effect that it was not fighting against the *Notverordnungen* (this is what the Social-Democratic Party declared in one of its manifestoes), or that the Communist Party of Germany was supporting the *Notverordnungen* government (this is what *Angriff* the organ of the "Nazis" wrote).

The Communist Party of Germany was unable to counteract the Social-Democrats and the "Nazis" with a widespread explanatory campaign among the broad strata of the workers and office employees. In the overwhelming majority of cases this struggle was an abstract struggle. Instead of popular explanation they used abuse: "Zoergiebel!" "Beat up the Fascists, wherever you meet them!" This had a very serious effect upon our influence on the masses of workers. Moreover, in spite of the fact that, taken as a whole, the line of the Communist Party of Germany was a correct one, tactical mistakes were committed.

When, in the autumn of 1929, Hugenberg declared the *Volksbegeren* (the collection of the necessary number of signatures required by law to authorise a referendum), against the Young Plan, this campaign was not taken seriously by our Party. All the parties were opposed to the referendum and in spite of that Hugenberg, and the "Nazis" (national-socialists, fascists) in

December, 1929, received 5,800,000 votes. If you compare the number of votes obtained by both parties, the "Nazis" and the National Party in this referendum with the Reichstag elections in 1928, you will see that in spite of the campaign waged by all the parties against the referendum, they received 600,000 votes more than in 1928. Moreover, they got the reputation of being the only defenders of Germany against the Young Plan.

What did our paper, the central organ of the Communist Party of Germany, write in connection with the call of the nationalists and fascists for signatures and votes against the Young Plan? On November 5, 1929, *Rote Fahne*, in a leading article entitled *Fascism's General Call* wrote as follows:

"Beat up the fascists, wherever you meet them!—This is our slogan which strikes terror into the hearts of the fascist scabs and the lackeys of Borzig. Beat up the fascists, wherever you meet them! That is the fighting slogan of the revolutionary proletariat. Only by open political mass struggle, only in the bolshevik way, can we smash fascism."

The fascists demagogically opposed the Young Plan; and we called for them to be beaten up. Could the petty-bourgeoisie be expected to understand this to mean anything else, than that we are the champions of the Young Plan? And it was not only the petty-bourgeoisie that understood it in this way. The victory of the "Nazis" in the Reichstag elections in 1930 can be partly explained by this mistake. Had not our Party, with the assistance of the E.C.C.I. proclaimed its programme of national and social emancipa-

tion, it would not have received so many votes, it would not have obtained such a victory, as it did in 1930.

Take another tactical blunder: "The Brüning government is the government of the fascist dictatorship. In a leading article in its issue of December 2, 1930, entitled *The Fascist Dictatorship*, *Rote Fahne* wrote:

*"The semi-fascist Brüning government has taken a determined step on the road towards the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany. The fascist dictatorship is no longer a menace—it is a fact. We are living now in a fascist republic. The Brüning Cabinet has become a fascist dictatorship.*

The E.C.C.I. took action on the very first article that appeared in the *Rote Fahne* and in the beginning of December, 1930, pointed out that:

*"The estimation given in Rote Fahne of December 2 and 3 to the effect that a fascist dictatorship already exists in Germany is politically incorrect. The Emergency Decrees issued with the support of the Social-Democrats and the reformist trade unions against the toilers represent a step on the road to the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, but is not yet a decisive step. That depends upon the power of resistance of the working class."*

When the E.C.C.I. sent this message, comrades Thälmann and Neuman were on the road to Moscow, and so did not get it. Of course we showed it to them, as soon as they arrived. Comrade Neuman defended the point of view expressed in *Rote Fahne*. I do not know whether



he wrote those articles in *Rote Fahne* or not. Comrade Thälmann did not agree at all with the formula given in *Rote Fahne*. In his article he referred to the initial form of the fascist dictatorship. We had to battle three days with Comrade Neuman to convince him that his point of view was wrong. We said: If this is the fascist dictatorship, and if its laws have not affected the standard of living of the working class, if the latter has not yet felt the weight of the Emergency Decrees, the workers might think that the *fascist dictatorship* is not as bad as it is painted by the communists. And if afterwards measures will be taken one after another to introduce the fascist dictatorship (and that is inevitable) will the working class believe our Party again? They will say: They shouted when there was no fascist dictatorship; they misled us; we did not know that worse was to come; now it has come and we are disarmed.

The incorrect estimation of the situation led to incorrect tactics. What were the tactics, at least, the tactics pursued by *Rote Fahne*? The fascists are the main danger, and the Social-Democrats are the main obstacle. This was at the time of the XI Plenum. In carrying out the campaign against the fascists, they entirely forgot the existence of Social-Democracy. After the XI Plenum, Social-Democracy was correctly described in the documents of the German Communist Party as the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie; but then they forgot the fascists. You must not take this in a literal sense; but during the elections the fight against the fascists was not waged as intensively, as it should have been. The Social-Democrats took advantage of

this and pretended that they alone were fighting against fascism and that we preferred Hitler. This partly explains the results of the presidential elections in 1932 and the Prussian Landtag elections. The Party and the working class were misinformed. Even before the Prussian Landtag elections a report appeared in the newspapers, including the Social-Democratic newspapers, to the effect that the bourgeoisie desired to take advantage of the expiration of wage agreements affecting 5,000,000 workers, to reduce wages. We here discussed at length in what way we could retaliate to the Social-Democratic manoeuvre, expressed in the fact that on the eve of the Prussian Landtag elections they declared: We will fight against, and not permit any reductions in wages. We here, jointly with the representatives of the C.P. of Germany, very carefully drew up a manifesto, in the name of the Communist Party of Germany and the R.T.U.O. to all the workers, irrespective of politics, and to all organised workers, in which it was declared that the Communist Party supports every fight against wage cuts, and calls upon the workers to discuss the question in the factories and to elect bodies to organise the fight. We sent the draft of this manifesto, and waited until it was discussed by the organs of the Party and R.T.U.O. and published. We had to wait a long time. The manifesto was published only *after* the elections. If we bear in mind the response which this manifesto evoked among the wide masses, it will be clear that the Party lost a great deal by the fact that it did not publish this manifesto earlier, during the elections and even before the elections, because this was the first time, for a long time,

that the workers in the factories reacted to a proposal coming from the Communist Party and eagerly discussed our proposal. This was stated to be the case by all the comrades who arrived here from Germany.

#### OMISSIONS IN THE PRACTICAL WORK OF THE C.P. OF GERMANY.

Omissions occurred in the practical activity of the Party in the process of carrying out adopted decisions. A great deal has been said, and many decisions adopted on work in the factories. After a decision adopted by the Central Committee of the German Party *Rote Fahne* created a furore about work in the factories. Every day huge announcements appeared in the paper to the effect that: "Comrade Neuman will address the workers at A.E.G.," "Comrade Remmele will address the workers at Siemens," "Comrade Heckert will address the workers in such and such a factory," etc. What were the results? All our supporters came to these meetings. The other workers did not come. Why? Quite simple. You cannot expect to win the workers with such drum and trumpet stuff as that, in a period of crisis; when every foreman can have his spies at the meeting, who will report to him all those who were there. The carrying out of the decisions about work in the factories was started with a great fuss, and very soon all this talk petered out. Meanwhile, the members of the Red factory councils were left to shift for themselves without any guidance. In the Plenum materials you will find the report of a working woman who is still employed in the Visag works. At Visag's there are five Reds on the factory



council, and six or seven reformists. This working woman tells a terrible story of how these members of the factory council (both reformists and our members) persecuted her—also a member of the council—for carrying out the line of the Party. They transferred her from department to department, and spread the devil knows what sort of rumours about her to discredit her and destroy the influence she had in the factory. She had acquired this influence by putting forward demands for towels, soap, overalls and things of that kind (Visag is a chemical works). The result was that these “Reds” on the factory council so discredited our Party, that the workers went over to the “Nazis.” Do you think this is an isolated case? In very many cases our members of factory councils vote with the reformists in favour of discharging workers. Would it not have been better to reorganise these “Red” factory councils, disassociate ourselves from those who had obviously become reformists, and to help those that were really trying to do something instead of making all the noise and fuss? Now the workers say: The programme and tactics of the C.P. of Germany are all right, but in its practical work it does not differ from the reformist party.

The work in the reformist trade unions is scandalously neglected. The same thing applies to the unemployed. The R.T.U.O., the Red trade unions and the local Party organisations work badly. All this is due to the fact that the C.P. of Germany and the R.T.U.O. have not managed to organise a broad movement against Brüning's and Papen's Emergency Decrees.

A year ago, if you remember, the Danat Bank

crashed. We here eagerly waited to see how our Party would react to this event. The petty-bourgeoisie were terribly frightened; they thought that inflation was coming, or had already come. They besieged the savings banks and the banks. Huge crowds filled the streets. In the factories, the working men and women asked themselves whether wages would be paid. One would think that, at such a moment, the Party would be roused, and give a lead. As a matter of fact, it did not react to this event at all. The only thing that happened was that Comrade Neuman addressed a meeting of active Party members in Berlin on Comrade Stalin's six points; and only at the end of the meeting did he refer to these events. How did the "Nazis" take advantage of this situation? They carried on their agitation in the queues and said: Do you see what the Versailles system, the Young Plan and the Dawes Plan have brought you to? All this is the result of the Versailles system. But we took very little advantage of the situation.

Of course, we cannot compare the collapse of the Danat Bank with the events of the 20th of July. But the Party organisations and the Red trade unions reacted to both events in pretty much the same way. I will quote an official document: "*Rote Fahne* worker correspondents on the situation in the Berlin factories on July 20, 1932," published in *Parteiarbeiter* (Party Worker) of the C.P. of Germany of August, 1932:

*Siemens Werner.* A tool maker in workshop No. —, says: "I was on the watch to see whether any shop would start, and leave the factory in an organised manner, before knock-

ing-off time. Our activists waited uninterruptedly at the window . . . "

*AEG—Brunenstrasse.* "Feeling was in our favour. The whole factory would have stopped work, including the National-Socialists. Both the reformist members of the factory council were opposed to this, and argued that we must wait to see what the leaders decide. They said they could not agree to an unofficial strike . . . "

*Osram Works.* "The majority of workers have no confidence in any party. Concerning the Communists they say: They only talk, but don't do anything. We must exert every effort even if we have to make sacrifices, to get the workers to believe us."

*A.E.G. Transformer Works.* "July 20, 21, showed that we are a Party of agitation but not of organisation."

I will quote you one other official document. The Berlin Regional Conference of the C.P. of Germany discussed a report on the results of the elections and the events of July 20 and passed the following resolution:

"The main reasons for the unsatisfactory results of the elections are: (1) the partial retreat in the face of fascist terror in the factories and in the working class districts (for example, the unhindered dispersion of a workers' meeting by the fascists and the voluntary dispersion of a meeting in the central district); (2) the inactivity of the Party organisations on July 20 when it failed to immediately organise a mass action and mass strikes. In this was revealed the unsatisfactory nature of



*trade union work which enabled the trade union bureaucrats to prevent the strikes from being called; (3) inadequate application of the tactics of the united front in the factories, labour exchanges and working class districts, which particularly affected the results of the elections in various working class districts (Neukolln, Wedding). In addition the proposal made by the Berlin Committee to the Social-Democratic Party to organise join demonstrations helped to create illusions regarding the policy of the Social-Democratic Party and hampered initiative in developing united front actions in the factories, labour exchanges and working class districts; (4) Inadequate work to rouse the initiative in the cells for the purpose of organising a united front against the fascists. (Italics mine, O.P.).*

The last point particularly is right, quite right. The initiative of the Party and trade union organisations in the factories was lacking. Had there been initiative, the outcome may have been entirely different. Not having received instructions from their leaders, some Social-Democrats and reformists in the factories were in favour of a fight, others wavered. Under these conditions, as the conference of *Rote Fahne* worker correspondents showed, had the Communists and the supporters of the R.T.U.O. and of the Red trade unions, in the factories, taken the initiative and downed tools with the slogans: Repeal the Emergency Decrees directed against the working class; repeal the legalisation of the fascist shock troops who are attacking the working class districts and beating up the workers; repeal the prohibition of meetings and demonstrations and suppression of

the press, etc., they would have met with a tremendous response on the part of the workers of all political trends and of no party. Comrade Lensky, who was passing through Berlin on July 20 and rode through the streets on that day, told me that the people were on the streets but there were no leaders. At that moment there were neither police, nor troops on the streets. Incidents like the following occurred on that day: The police went up to the workers and said,—We will not do anything to you to-day. Had there been Party organisations with real initiative it would have been possible to organise demonstrations in various districts and streets. These demonstrations could then have spread to the factories and resulted in strikes.

The C.P. of Germany did quite right to propose to the German Federation of Trade Unions, and the Social-Democratic Party that a joint strike be declared. The Communist Party of Germany did quite right in calling for a strike. Many members of the Social-Democratic Party, members of the reformist trade unions, and German workers were convinced, by experience, that the Communist Party of Germany correctly defined the events and suggested correct methods of fighting, and that the hindrance to carrying out these methods was the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders. But the Party organisations did not respond to the call for a strike. That is a fact,—they not only failed to respond in the Berlin-Brandenburg district; not a single organisation in any other district responded. This is a fact. Was this unexpected? *Ignoring the work in the factories, in the trade unions and the labour exchanges, sliding on the surface of*

*mass work, abstract slogans and unpopular agitation, could not produce any other results.*

The united front. How is that established? On the streets. Owing to the fact that the "Nazis" indiscriminately beat Communists, Social-Democrats, reformists and even non-party workers, it was found possible to establish the united front. This is a very good united front. I have no objections to it. But it came to us from the side, as it were, not in the factories, not at the labour exchanges, or the trade unions. The fact that this united front was transferred to the factories is not due in most cases to our work, but to the indignation roused among the workers by the murders; on the day of the funeral, they organised the strike. That is what took place in a number of towns.

#### TASKS OF THE C.P. OF GERMANY.

Papen's government of the fascist dictatorship is trying to transfer all the burdens to the shoulders of the working class, and smash the Communist Party. That the C.P. of Germany may be able to successfully organise and lead the mighty impending battles of the German proletariat, it must liberate the workers and office employees from the influence of the Social-Democrats, reformist trade union bureaucracy and National-Socialists. To be able to do this it must :

1. Expand and consolidate the united front of the workers, which started in the streets, in the fight against the National-Socialists, and transfer it to the factories, into the reformist trade unions; and the labour exchanges, among the unemployed. This united front must be directed



against the Social-Democrats and the trade union bureaucracy, and used in defence of the economic and political interests of the working class. *Unless the forces of the whole Party are reorganised to fulfil these tasks the necessary change will not be brought about.*

2. To guarantee genuine revolutionary leadership of this united front, it is necessary to mobilise all the revolutionary elements; members of the Party, of the Red trade unions, the R.T.U.O., Red Front Fighters' League, I.L.D., Red sports organisations, women's organisations, etc., in the factories, in the trade unions and labour exchanges, to give them a lead, instructions, and place them under the constant guidance of the Party organisations.

3. To register all the members of the Party, of the R.T.U.O., Red trade unions, sport and other revolutionary organisations who are employed in the factories and organise them there into cells, R.T.U.O. groups, Red trade union groups, and groups of the other revolutionary organisations. For this purpose, it is necessary to review the composition of the street cells and remove all those who are employed in factories from them, — a matter which has been decided a score of times,—and to revise the composition of other organisations, having their base in residential districts but not in the factories.

4. To control the work of all members of Red factory councils. Cells and factory councils must openly dissociate themselves from all those who are not to be distinguished from the reformists in their work, so that the workers may see that the Party bears no responsibility for their reformist work.

Normal relationships must be established in the factories between the Party cells, Red members of factory councils, R.T.U.O. groups and sections of the Red trade unions. The competent Party Committees must render every assistance to the cells, particularly those in big enterprises and ensure them permanent guidance.

5. All Communists belonging to reformist, Catholic and Red trade unions must be registered, and formed into Communist fractions in all sections of these unions. *Communist fractions must also be established in the R.T.U.O.*

6. To bring about a decisive improvement in the mass work among the working men and working women in the factories, in the trade unions, and at the labour exchanges it must be given a concrete interesting content (deal with the smallest questions interesting separate groups of working men and working women, which are to be linked up with current political questions and the ultimate aims of the Party).

7. For this purpose super-centralism (*everything from the centre*) must be destroyed. *The greatest initiative of the cell and local, district, city, county and regional organisations of the Party must be widely developed.*

The Central Committee must pay strict attention to the work of instructing the Party organisations, and organise constant supervision, not only of the fulfilment of decisions, but also of their work; as the leadership of all the links of the Party organisation, starting from the cells, to see whether they are successfully fulfilling their tasks.

8. The Central Committee, and the District Committees, must pay strict attention to the

content and circulation of Party, trade union and factory papers. Real, not formal, guidance of these papers must be established.

This permanent guidance and control must be increased in regard to the illegal newspapers, magazines and pamphlets.

9. Strict attention must be paid to the work of the Young Communist League. The National-Socialist storm detachments contain a large number of young workers. The Party, the trade unions, and all the revolutionary mass organisations, particularly the German Y.C.L. must take all necessary measures, principally the method of waging an ideological struggle in the ranks of the storm detachments, to win these young workers away from the "Nazis."

10. The Party, from the cell to the Central Committee, must prepare for passing to an illegal condition, because the Papen fascist government may make a sudden attack upon the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the Party must go underground prematurely. On the contrary it must fight for its legal existence by every means in its power and organise mass resistance to attempts to smash, or suppress, the Party and the revolutionary organisations.

11. Finally, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany must promote tried members of the Party, who have shown their worth in practical work, to leading positions in all links of the Party on a wide scale.

All these measures must be carried out in the shortest possible time so that the Party organisations may be able to carry out the task of fighting against fascism, Social-Democracy, the trade union bureaucracy and the capitalist offensive,



which confronts them, through the medium of Communist fractions in all mass workers organisations. By carrying out the measures enumerated, the Party will not only be able to declare a mass strike at the necessary moment, but also to translate it into real life.

I now pass to the third portion of my remarks.

A correct definition of the situation at the moment is of great importance.

Our decisions, which have now been tested in practice, have proved to be correct. But how have the decisions of the organs of the Comintern, the R.I.L.U., and of the Central Committees of the Comintern sections themselves, been fulfilled? (a) regarding the work within the reformist, catholic, yellow, fascist, and other anti-revolutionary trade unions; (b) regarding the obligation of all members of the Party to be members of trade unions; (c) regarding the work among the unemployed; (d) regarding the transfer of the centre of gravity of party and trade union work to the factories; (e) regarding the improvement of the methods of mass work by the lower party and revolutionary organisations; (f) regarding the improvement of the methods of leadership of the party organisations by the party organs; (g) regarding the work among the women; (h) regarding the work among the youth; (i) regarding the fluctuation.

*Regarding work within the reformist and other anti-revolutionary trade unions.* Despite the fact that conditions of labour have greatly deteriorated, wages have been cut; a large percentage of trade union members have remained without work; and the reformist and other non-revolutionary trade unions failed to organise resistance to this degradation, our influence has not grown in these trade unions from

the XI to the XII Plenums. This is a fact. On the contrary, our Red trade unions and trade union oppositions have not grown, and we have not captured positions in the reformist, catholic, yellow and other unions. We are marking time in this work. By our failure to carry on day-to-day regular activities within the trade unions, to speak at all conferences, meetings and congresses; to appear with proposals at all the sessions of these trade unions, we help the reformists. The C.P. of France still refrains from working in the reformist trade unions. The C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia has a couple of thousand members in the reformist trade unions, but no body provides them any leadership. In England and Germany, where the need for working in the reformist trade unions is the greatest, because they are very strong there, things are exceedingly bad. In America something is being done in this respect (among the needle workers and furriers), but far from sufficient. Things in Poland and in China also are not particularly good.

To avoid work in the reformist trade unions some—the sectarians and “left” phrasemongers—either invent themselves, or seek and find in the articles and speeches of some of the leaders of the Communist and revolutionary movement a whole arsenal of little “notions” such as : “the reformist trade unions are a part of the State apparatus,” “The reformist trade unions are fascist strike-breaking organisations,” “Not only the upper layer, but also the rank and file of the social-democracy and reformists are reactionary,” “You cannot change the social-democratic officials and the reformist machine men” (without any sub-division into, lower and upper groups), or, for instance, “To urge the trade union bureaucrats to a struggle is opportunism,” etc. Yet

experience has shown us how it is possible to *force* the trade union bureaucracy, by revolutionary means, to fight.

Take the textile workers' strike in England. It began in Burnley. Fifteen thousand workers started out at night, for the neighbouring town of Nelson, where the Weavers' trade union executive has its headquarters, to demand an extension of the strike from the leaders. And only very recently in Kreuznach, Germany, after our comrades working in the reformist trade unions had carried out a big campaign ; they won a majority in certain unions, and this majority applied to the trades council, and forced the trade union bureaucracy to call a conference of workers against fascism. In the trades council, nineteen voted for, and seven against. Despite the desperate resistance of the trade union bureaucracy, this conference was held.

"The stronger the reformist trade unions, the stronger is capitalism, and vice-versa." This claim is being made generally, without any sub-division into varying countries. And what about the United States ? In America the reformist trade unions are very weak, but capitalism is strong. Obviously, you cannot take such a sweeping view. This may be said about Germany or England, especially when the Labour Party was in power, but it is wrong to apply this to every country indiscriminately.

"You cannot capture the trade union apparatus" (without indicating that what is meant is the central apparatus). But how is this to be applied to those organisations which have actually been captured ? In Germany there were, in 1930 (I do not know how things are to-day) 207 local trade union organisations in which the Communist Party had a majority ; while Comrade Thalmann reported from Czechish sources



that there, the entire Motor-Drivers' Union has been captured !

"The reformist trade unions are a school of capitalism, the social-democratic and reformist trade union bureaucrats are Zorgiebels."\* "The members of the social-democratic and reformist trade unions are small reactionaries and Zorgiebels." It is interesting to note what a certain social-democratic worker said on this score in the Baden-Pfalz district, at a united front conference of chemical workers called by the revolutionary trade union opposition. He said: "You must distinguish between our members and our leaders. When you say, for instance: 'the reformists have betrayed the workers' this sounds like a generalisation, and the trade union leaders then tell us rank and file members: 'see how the Communists denounce you.' In reality the rank and file members do not want treachery, but want a struggle." At the end of his speech he made the following plea: "I very much wish that our colleagues, the Communists, would deal with us as gently in the factories as they do at this conference." Is this an isolated case?

"The reformist trade unions do not conduct strikes, and betray those strikes which break out." This is also said without any concrete indication of just which strikes have been betrayed. Many comrades, who sincerely desire to work in the reformist and other trade unions fear to stand up—at the meetings, conferences, etc.—in these organisations with resolutions, with criticism of the trade union bureaucrats, and with the demand to struggle, for they do not want to fall into opportunism or become "disciples of capitalism." Of course, there are very many Communists, especially among the factory committee

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\* The bloody Social-Democrat Police President.

members, who are Red in name only, and reformists in reality, who do all the dirty work of the reformists. This is a fact. There are also, in the ranks of the Communist Party, a good many who think in the same way as Brandler and the former conciliationists thought, when they were against the organisation of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition ; and demanded that only the reactionary leaders should be egged on. But how should they be egged on ? In their conception this meant, "to egg on in such a way as to conduct no independent struggle, so that *we would dance to the tune of the trade union bureaucrats.*" There are people of this kind. I have not attempted to estimate which predominate : adherents of the "lefts," or the rights ; but it is a fact that at present all these notions and the so-called "left" theories, merely impede the work in the reformist trade unions, and, at the same time, hamper the struggle against the Right rascalities and their perpetrators in the trade unions. The honest revolutionary workers who fear, and do not want, to commit opportunist errors, prefer not to join the reformist trade unions, or not to carry on any work within them. For this reason all of these "theory-ettes" must be cast aside and uprooted.

What does it mean to work inside the reformist trade unions ? It means to agitate, to propagate, to move resolutions, to show, by our work, that we do better than the reformists, and that the reformists have no monopoly of the routine work, that we, too, are able to work, and to achieve results ; to work in the trade unions is to criticise the trade union bureaucrats for their mistakes, to show how to act in each individual case, and why the trade union bureaucrats do not act so, to submit proposals to the

leading bodies and demand a vote on them, even knowing beforehand that they will be rejected. But we must see to it that our resolutions should be made known to the masses of the trade unions, and to the workers in general. And then the workers will learn that we have a correct line, that we are doing something. And in order to do all this, it may be necessary to take some measures to egg on the trade union bureaucrats. How is it possible otherwise to work in the reformist trade unions, unless we "egg on" these fakers by submitting our resolutions, and seeking to have them carried into effect. Comrade Thalmann told me last time he was here, that a trade union meeting was held in Chemnitz or Dresden, I do not quite recall, and our people went there and moved resolutions and speeches, and as a result, the trade union bureaucrats received five votes and we received 300 or 400. How else is it possible to work in these trade unions ?

Now ! What about the capture of the apparatus ? We have the decision of the X Plenum (the resolution on the economic struggle and the tasks of the proletariat, section 6, point 4), I will read it :

"At the same time it would be a harmful opportunist illusion to think that we can, under the present conditions, capture the reformist trade union apparatus, even if the trade union membership support us. But this does not, by any means, lead to passiveness of the Communists and revolutionary opposition at the elections of the trade union leadership. On the contrary, the struggle for driving out of the trade unions all the trade union bureaucrats and capitalist agents, the struggle for each trade union office, especially the struggle for the lower trade union representatives must serve as a powerful weapon for exposing the



role of the social-fascist trade union bureaucracy and the struggle against it."

What do our "lefts" do? They take the first part of this decision—its first principle that the trade union apparatus cannot be captured. Of course, we cannot capture the All-German Federation of Trade Unions, the central apparatus. If there were such members of the Party who think that we could capture the whole apparatus, say, of the German Metal Workers' Union, which has a membership of 800,000, this would be displaying opportunism on their part. We shall never capture it. Only when a truly revolutionary situation is created, such as existed in 1923, when the membership of the social-democratic party left it in masses; when the trade union members left their organisations in masses; only at such a time, and provided we do not work as we did in 1923, but create a revolutionary bastion within the reformist trade unions, will we be able to attract a considerable section of the membership and complete lower organisations to our side. But under ordinary conditions we will not capture the entire apparatus, this is clear.

But why do the "lefts" cast aside the second part of this paragraph, where it is clearly stated that it is necessary to fight for each elective office. And what is the trade union apparatus? It is not the furniture, not the technical personnel, but the elected leadership. Can we fight for these elective offices, especially in the lower apparatus? We not only can, but must, fight for them.

But how will our members work in the reformist trade unions, if it is wrong to egg on the bureaucrats, because this is opportunism? If the lower apparatus cannot be captured, beginning even with the trade union delegate? What are they to do in the trade

union at all, and what stimulus will they have for their work? At this Plenum we must put an end to these "left" notions. It is necessary to declare war upon them. This does not mean that the right danger, as the main danger, no longer exists. But, in this field, there are little "left" notions which are being grasped, which are proclaimed by cowards, who do not want, who fear to work in the reformist trade unions.

Those retreating before the difficulties of work in the reformist trade unions are opportunists. None of them want to work in the trade unions. By this, they leave only the inexperienced members of the Party in the trade unions without leadership, giving a monopoly of the activity within the trade unions to others, which is no different from the work of the reformists, and discredits the Party.

And we shall not move one step, especially in the countries with strong reformist trade unions, unless we begin to seriously and decisively work in the reformist trade union movement. There is no other way. And we must resolutely adopt this path.

It is precisely because we have not worked in the reformist trade unions, that the trade union opposition is dwindling.

What are the functions of the trade union opposition? It must work within the reformist trade unions. It must organise the unorganised, together with the organised.

It must create an organisational basis, to prepare and carry out independent battles, with the aid of the trade union opposition, which works within the reformist trade unions, so that when a strike begins, or a movement is being prepared, the members of the trade union opposition should "jerk up" the bureaucrats from within, should make propositions in

favour of joining and supporting the strike. The trade union opposition has still another task, of no small importance. This is to prepare the organisational basis before the masses come into motion. Take the strike in Belgium, it was started by the revolutionary workers. The tiny Communist Party, which ekes out such a precarious existence, was able to help along in this strike. In some places it even exercised a strong influence over the progress of this strike. And what do you think would have happened in Belgium, if we had had a parallel trade union apparatus, our own strong revolutionary trade union opposition, a mass organisation? Could we not have inflicted on the reformists such a blow in Belgium from which they might not have recovered? And is it not possible to have in all countries to-morrow a situation similar to that which we have in Belgium? For the air is charged with dynamite. Must we have broad mass organisations capable of taking up the leadership of this movement? Yes, we must. And the revolutionary trade union opposition has precisely this function of preparing a ready-made apparatus which is capable of taking up the leadership of the movement at the necessary moment despite the reformist apparatus. And it is not for nothing that all these Brandlers and kidney propose to abolish the revolutionary trade union opposition. This renegade only recently submitted a number of proposals to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., including the proposal to abolish the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany. Then, you see, everything would be O.K. And to our regret, there are still people in this hall who think that the revolutionary trade union opposition represents a barrier to the work in the reformist trade unions. No, the revolutionary trade union opposition must exist, but



we must force it to carry out the functions which correspond to its title. In some places it has succeeded in handling a part of its tasks, and we are conducting independent strikes. But it has completely failed to organise the work within the reformist trade unions. And we must say this quite frankly.

Can it be generally said that the reformists do not conduct any strikes; and betray them in all cases? In fifteen countries—Germany, England, the United States, France, Belgium, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Holland, Japan, India, and China—there were, during three years—from 1929 to 1931—18,794 strikes with 8,515,100 participants (according to incomplete figures) involving a loss of 74,768,700 working days. In nine countries—England, France, United States, Germany, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, India, Japan and China—there were, during the first six months of 1932, 2,968 strikes with 1,534,900 participants. The number of working days lost was 9,463,800 (according to incomplete figures).

Who conducted these strikes? We alone? Or only the revolutionary workers? Representatives of all the Parties are here and can answer this question. I think it will be no exaggeration to say that the reformists conducted strikes too.

Can it really be said that they do not conduct any strikes? Incidentally, about the revolutionary workers. We have seen, especially in England (this is not only a Belgian but also an English phenomenon) that the workers of the reformist trade unions carry on strikes—I have not studied this question and do not know whether they always strike against the trade union bureaucrats, despite them, or force them to declare strikes—but does not the fact that they conduct strikes without us, not as a result of our work,

of our leadership, prove that we are weak, that we do not work in the reformist trade unions. Otherwise, how could it have happened that the revolutionary workers themselves conduct strikes, while we seek to catch up with them, afterwards. This is also a sign of our weakness. Hence, the strikes are conducted by the reformists under the pressure of the *workers*. Hence, it is wrong to maintain generally that the reformists do not carry on any strikes. By doing this we only repel the reformist workers who themselves participated in strikes.

I will cite an example from the minutes of the Politbureau of the C.P. of America, from Stachell's report at the meeting of the Politbureau, in the middle of July, 1932. From March, to the end of July, the Party led only two strikes: the strike of 18,000 beet plantation workers of Colorado, and the shoemakers' strike in New York. The first strike was lost, the second was won. All the other strikes during this period were conducted by the American Federation of Labour (the most reactionary in the whole world); among them were the miners' strike, the building workers' strike, and the strike of the chemical workers.

In 1931, of the 1,820 strikes conducted in five countries (England, United States, France, Belgium, Poland), 480 ended in victory (26.37 per cent.), 431 ended in compromises (23.68 per cent.), 775 were defeated (42.89 per cent.), while the result of 134 strikes (7.36 per cent.) is unknown.

Thus some of the strikes have been won. Apparently the reformists, too, conducted strikes with success. Can it be said that they betray strikes everywhere, in all cases, without exception? No, of course not. The reformists, and the social-democrats generally, unquestionably betray the interests of the working-class. This must be prove

steadily and patiently. But it is necessary that the members of the Party, Red trade unions and trade union opposition, and the revolutionary workers standing close to them, should not limit themselves in the conversations with members of the social-democratic party, of the catholic, reformist and other trade unions to empty and high-sounding phrases, such as : "Your apparatus is fascist," "You are social-fascists," "You betray the strikes," "You are Zorgiebels," etc. It is necessary to agitate, to convince, to prove by concrete examples and verified facts, and what is more, it is necessary to demonstrate in action that we are able to work and carry on a struggle. It is necessary to cast aside all the high-sounding talk, the unconvincing swear words and nicknames, etc., which interfere with the work in the reformist and other unrevolutionary unions. I recommend you to read the English "Daily Worker." The "Daily Worker" now publishes letters from workers. They are highly characteristic. I have read several of these letters. One worker writes :

"Such headlines as 'Infamous Role of Anti-Working-Class Labour Leaders,' 'Maxton the Imperialist' . . . . are far too hysterical and abusive. In regard to the first two, if an I.L.P.er or a Labour Party-ite get hold of the paper, they will think you're mad.'"

Because we do not explain why Maxton is actually pursuing an imperialist policy, why the Labour Party is betraying the interests of the workers, but limit ourselves to screaming headlines, the result of our invective is the very opposite of what we wanted to achieve. Instead of a businesslike agitation and propaganda, based upon verified facts to hand, we merely pronounce loud and empty phrases.

As I have already said, there are still very many



manifestations of right opportunism in the trade union work, but, in most cases, they exist side by side with "left" sentiments, they live in peace with them, mutually support and feed each other, the "left" sentiments are still very strong among the opposition members of the reformist trade unions, and among many Communists. We must fight with equal energy both against the "lefts" and against the right distortions of our line in the trade unions. Then we will obtain these results.

The work within the reformist trade unions is also hindered by the fact that not all the members of the Communist Party are members of the reformist trade unions or of trade unions at all, despite the fact that we have passed scores of resolutions to this effect.

Here you have some figures. In the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia 26,094 members recently filed questionnaires. Among them 14,753, or 56 per cent., are not members of trade union organisations. Is not this revolting? I think that in other parties, as well, things are no better, in this respect. It is necessary to give special attention to this matter. Every member of the Party can and must help us in our work in the trade union. This is no less important than going into the street for a demonstration. And I think that the Czech comrades will do very well to ascertain who these 14,000 members are. It is doubtful that they are small peasants, they are more likely to be industrial workers.

I do not propose any new recipes. The old correct decisions of the IV and V Congresses, and sessions of the Central Council of the R.I.L.U. of the X and XI Plenums of the E.C.C.I. and the decisions of the other bodies, of the Central Committees and regional committees of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, regarding the work within the

reformist trade unions have not yet been carried into effect.

#### THE WORK AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED.

I now pass to the question of the unemployed. At the XI Plenum we debated the question of the work among the unemployed. What is the best character to give the organisations of the unemployed? Should we create a broad movement of unemployed with elected committees and a council of unemployed at its head, or should we create a union of unemployed, i.e., relatively isolated organisations? We also agreed regarding the nature of the work. What have we obtained during these one-and-a-half years which passed between the XI and XII Plenums of the E.C.C.I.? The decisions of the XI Plenum, and of the Prague conference on the work among the unemployed, in which the chief sections of the C.I. participated, together with the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition, have not been carried into effect. Moreover, the influence of the Communist Party has declined, and the work among the unemployed has been further neglected.

How is this to be explained? Has the number of unemployed declined? Have they secured benefit? Are they no longer being evicted from their homes? You know that the number of unemployed has increased in every country. In the following countries in which unemployment insurance exists the situation has grown enormously worse:

##### GERMANY:

(1) The number of unemployed receiving the dole constituted 66 per cent. in 1928 and 19 per cent. in 1932.

(2) The average expenditure per unemployed

person per month amounted to 91 marks 41 pfennigs in 1927, and 46 marks at the beginning of 1932.

(3) The contributions made by the workers increased from 3.5 per cent. before August, 1930, to 6.5 per cent. at the present time (since June, 1932).

(4) The period for which the dole is being paid : up to October, 1931, from 26 to 39 weeks. Now (June, 1932) six weeks.

(5) The expenditure on crisis benefits per month per man amounted to 58.90 marks in 1928, and 35 marks 71 pfennigs in March, 1932.

The following groups have been entirely deprived of the dole : youths up to the age of 21, most of the married women, no sickness benefits are paid to those receiving some other form of allowance, the disability pensions have been cancelled in the case of 400,000 persons (1931) and the war invalid pensions in the case of 350,000 persons.

#### ENGLAND :

(1) Since the end of September, 1931, the dole has been reduced by 100 per cent., the Means Test has been rendered more stringent.

(2) Of the 1,884,074 registered unemployed (February, 1932), 525,537 have been deprived of the dole.

665,008 have had their dole cut.

#### AUSTRIA :

(1) In the middle of 1931 the dole (for the first and second classes) was reduced by 10 per cent.

(2) The period for which the dole to the unemployed up to the age of 25 is paid, has been reduced from 22 to 12 weeks.

#### POLAND :

Under the law of March 2, 1932—

(1) The doles have been cut by 50 per cent.



(2) Parents, brothers, sisters, etc., have been deprived of allowances.

(3) The workers' contributions have been increased from 0.5 per cent. to 2 per cent. (those of the employers from 1.5 per cent. to 2 per cent.).

#### BELGIUM :

The benefits paid by the Government and municipalities have been reduced (in April, 1932) by 30 to 40 per cent. and even by 60 per cent., depending upon the place and population.

The principal methods of the unemployed struggle last year were demonstrations. This year the unemployed display much less readiness to form demonstrations. In Germany for instance, demonstrations have been forbidden. Well functioning committees and councils of unemployed do not exist. The sub-committees attached to the unemployed committees and councils, which it had been decided to create, have not been created. Since the sub-committees do not exist, there is no cultural work among the unemployed, no dining rooms even if for children, no information bureaux where the unemployed might learn whether they have been legally deprived of the dole, etc., there are no centres of work among the unemployed women, youths, among the members of the reformist, catholic and other trade unions, and struggle against overtime and the capitalist rationalisation in the factories. There is no constant struggle against evictions. According to the "New York American" of January 29, 1932, in New York alone 153,731 families were evicted in 1930 and 198,738 families in 1931 (17,000 families per month). Precisely because there is no constant struggle against evictions the workers are moving in masses from their homes to the rubbish heaps, forced to spend the night in hostels, under bridges, on stairs,

sidewalks, etc. Instead of developing the broadest struggle, the workers voluntarily leave their homes. There is no struggle at all. The few cases of struggles against eviction mentioned here are isolated instances.

No work is being done in the queues. I have received letters from, and have been told by comrades who have seen with their own eyes the colossal lines for filthy soup and a morsel of bread in America. In France there are queues, and in Germany you have queues near the labour exchanges. They stand silently, no work is being conducted in the queues. I have been told by comrades who have seen with their own eyes workers in the queues of Berlin wearing buttons of the revolutionary trade union opposition, or of the anti-fascist union, who stood silently and did nothing, carried on absolutely no work in the unemployed queues. Where is there a better field for work than the queues?

The resolution on the non-party mass organisations of unemployed has not been carried out. The R.I.L.U. brigade which investigated the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition in the Ruhr, sent a card here designed for the unemployed. On this card, by which the unemployed person is requested to register, he must sign a pledge to fight against social-democracy, the Centre Party, etc., i.e., the very thing which the E.C.C.I. resolutely rejected last year at the XI Plenum has been carried into effect. The XI Plenum demanded the creation of non-party unemployed organisations. As a matter of fact, even the active members do not know our decisions regarding the unemployed. The same brigade reports that at a conference of twenty responsible instructors of the district, instructors for work among the unemployed, it appeared that only three of the

twenty knew anything about the Prague decisions on the work among the unemployed, that only three had a vague idea of these decisions, and these decisions were not known to the activists.

And not only our decisions. An instructor of the organisational department in the United States writes :—

“The following fact may serve as an example of how well the Party members read the resolutions. When I was representative of the Central Committee at the recent conference in the Minnesota district, I asked fifty party functionaries who of them had actually read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee in October on the question of the unemployed. Four or five hands were raised to affirm the fact that these comrades had read the resolution.”

The fascists, the social-democrats and the reformists are worming themselves in among the unemployed, in order to smash and split the unemployed movement with their work.

If no work is being conducted among the workers in the factories, because it is difficult to work there, why do they not work among the unemployed? For 50 to 80 per cent. of all the Party members are unemployed. They could surely be organised for this work. It is necessary to achieve a change in the work—among the unemployed.

#### THE WORK OF THE COMMUNIST CELLS AND TRADE UNION SECTIONS IN THE FACTORIES.

The decisions to shift the centre of gravity of the Party and trade union work to the factories mostly remained on paper. I will cite only a few examples :

In the C.P. of Germany the local groups without factory cells increased from January 1, 1931, to April



1, 1932, from 3,395 to 6,470, the street cells from 3,395 to 6,021, the factory cells from 1,524 to 2,210. Thus the local organisations without factory cells, and the street cells have grown tremendously, while the rate of growth of the factory cells was far behind that of the local groups and street cells.

In December, 1931, there were 4,021 groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition and Red trade union sections, while in March, 1932, there remained only 3,896. Instead of growing their number is decreasing. And it is surprising that despite the fact that the Central Committee of the German Communist Party and Comrade Thälmann, in his speeches and articles, are strongly pressing upon the Party in order actually to transfer the centre of gravity of the work to the factories, the results are still miserable.

In the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, 13,887 out of 26,094 members subjected to an inquiry on January 1, 1932, were employed (53 per cent.) and 12,207 (47 per cent.) were unemployed. Of the 13,887 employed members 3,867 or 14 per cent, belonged to factory cells, while 17,247, or 67 per cent. belonged to local groups which had no cells and 4,980, or 19 per cent., belonged to street cells.

What, then, has changed during these eighteen months? Absolutely nothing. We have conducted a struggle in France against the so-called "attached to the cells." Here we take their cell statistics showing these attached. The cell of Fuin in the first Paris district has twenty-five members, of whom one works in the factory, and the others are attached. In the cell of the S.F.R.P.I., Nanter, in the district of Puto, there is not one member who is employed in a factory, all are attached. In the Farman airplane works, one is employed in the factory and seven are attached. This is also called a factory cell. I will not quote the

figures of the other legal parties for things are no better there than in the French Party.

Both in Germany and in the other capitalist countries, the work of the factory groups and cells itself is even worse than the number of cells. Many of them exist on paper only. Of those which do exist, many do not work. In many cases, the Parties or the Party organs themselves hamper work of the cells. One of the R.I.L.U. brigades, of which I have spoken, reports on the Zeiss factory in Vienna. The comrades who live in Vienna and work at Zeiss have practically no time for work in the factory (which employs 3,400 persons). These comrades are used as speakers at the meetings, held along residential lines or are generally transferred to work in the places where they live.

The latest events in Germany have shown how difficult it is to get the factories and mills to strike, when there are no efficient organisations in the factories.

How have the decisions to improve the work of the cells and the groups of the Red trade unions ; of the sub-district, district and city committees of the Party ; of the revolutionary trade union organisations, and the methods of leadership of the lower organisations, by the Party and trade union organs, been carried out ? In every country, and even in many cities, there are individual cells and local organisations which work splendidly, and which, therefore, lead the majority of the workers of the factories, and even of the district. Unfortunately, compared with the amount of poor work and poor organisations, their number is very small. But I cannot agree with Comrade Kuusinen, who said that he looked for examples of good work in a factory for a long time and still could not find any.

I know of quite a number of such examples. It cannot be said that we have no improvement in this respect. I must say that if we take mere numbers, without regard to the moment which we are passing through, without regard to the demands which it imposes upon us, then at this Plenum, I have heard some speeches which greatly rejoiced me. Compare Gottwald's speech at the XI Plenum with his speech at this one !

Is it possible to compare these two speeches ? He came out and spoke about things which have been spoken of in the Comintern, and even done for a long time. But he told us how they worked, and it may be said that through his mouth life itself, real life, spoke here in this hall. It is only a pity that Comrade Gottwald made things appear worse than they are, in reality, among them. He developed the thought that it was necessary to listen to the masses, that it was necessary to take up their slogans, he went too far, exaggerated somewhat, and the picture of how we must really act turned out to be incorrect.

The point is that while listening to these masses, while bringing out what makes them smart, what they want, while fighting for their demands, we must raise their struggle to a higher stage, connecting it up with the current politics, with the ultimate aims of the Party. He failed to say this here. Yet they have good experience, in Brux they have actually done this. They began with an economic strike and went over to a political strike, drawing into it, not only the miners, but the other industries as well. They committed one great error. They hid the face of the Party. In speaking here Comrade Gottwald also attempted to prove that this was a normal thing. It is true that we are against advertising the fact that we Communists are leading, directing, without doing



anything. This is what many of our Parties are frequently doing. But we stand for the Party; whenever it does something and leads the masses, not hiding the fact of being Communists. Such were the defects of Comrade Gottwald's speech. But the speech itself shows that there is already a definite turn towards mass work, and I certainly greet this fact. I was very pleased with this. Comrade Pollitt's speech, likewise, was much more concrete than his past speeches. He spoke this time of concrete strikes. He spoke of work in the reformist trade unions ; something that we did not hear before. In any case, previously we used to talk, while he used to listen (not he alone, by the by), and now he spoke, while we listened with pleasure (laughter). This should be pointed out.

I will not speak of to-day's speech of the Belgian comrade. I have already mentioned the fact that even a little Party, when it begins to do things promptly, achieves great results. I am not sure whether our Belgian Party will succeed in taking advantage of the present situation, in consolidating the successes. I do not know this, I am not quite sure of it, the French Party must help the Belgian comrades consolidate the present degree of influence. I think that the Comintern, too, can help ; and help a good deal, in order that the Party in Belgium might consolidate the influence which it has gained there.

I now pass to some good examples :—

GERMANY. A.E.G. Henningsdorf. There are about 1,500 workers there. The factory section of the Red trade union of metal workers of Berlin reacted to the smallest requirements, and has grown, in a short space of time, from 250 to 315 members. In the preparation for the political twenty-four-hour

protest strike, the section succeeded in getting all but 200 workers to join the strike.

A month later thirty-three workers of the welding machine factory, members of the reformist union of metal workers, carried out passive resistance to reduction of wages under the leadership of the section of the Red union ; the administration made concessions, agreeing to pay for the time spent by the workers awaiting issue of piece work also. The section of the Red trade union then organised passive resistance in the tool department, against the 15 per cent. wage-cut and was successful here also.

Once again the section of the Red trade union successfully organised passive resistance in the press department (135 workers) when the company attempted to cut the piece rates in the production of radio cabinets, with the result that the old piece rate was retained. All this work caused a split among the reformist members of the factory committee (from the materials of the R.I.L.U. brigade, which investigated the A.E.G. Henningsdorf plant).

What does this prove ? It proves that even during a crisis, in the presence of tremendous unemployment, if there is an initiative group, which sees to it that at least the collective agreement should be observed, the workers follow them, even the reformist workers. Whenever we do something in the factories and shops, we can defeat the reformists. It is certainly not a trifle when all the factories around do not strike ; while our Party cell and revolutionary trade union opposition succeed in organising a twenty-four-hours strike, during which only 200 out of 1,500 workers remain on the job. This was a tremendous success, and such successes could be achieved everywhere, if only we worked properly. This example shows us also the necessary method of work, the proper

approach to the workers ; not by shouting, not by general political slogans which do not explain anything, but by concrete work based upon the needs existing in the factories and mills. This is the way to mobilise the workers for political action.

Unless you do this you will not move a single step forward. This is frequently not understood by the leaders, even by those attending the Plenums of the E.C.C.I. Otherwise, they would be treating the work in the factories differently, they would be treating the question of the work in the factory and in the trade unions differently.

ENGLAND. In the Cowlairst factory in Glasgow (2,500 workers, the cell has nine members), the cell put forward the demand that the basis of calculation of piece work should be explained to the workers, also that the workers should control the fixing of piece rates, and that wages should be paid according to collective agreement. After the rejection of these demands by the manager, the cell got several hundred workers to stop work, and attracted the other departments to the movement, forcing the management to make concessions. As a result, the influence of the cell greatly increased, and the next issue of the factory newspaper had to be reprinted (from the report of the organisational instructor in England).

In the Troedyrhiw colliery (South Wales) immediate demands were put forward affecting wages, firewood and better ropes. One good letter from the pit, published in the "Daily Worker," was sufficient to occasion a strike, which ended successfully. The cell then issued a leaflet with new demands (for firewood, for the blowing of the whistle at the end of the day, without delay) and the management immediately gave way (report of the organisational instructor in England).



Now regarding the Lucas factory, about which Comrade Kuusinen spoke.\* The strike took place in a factory employing 15,000 workers. This means something. The C.P. of Great Britain and the Minority Movement gained a very serious victory there, but they failed to utilise it. Instead of immediately issuing the policy to elect a factory committee, create a trade union group, and consolidate the influence, which had been gained, they started a discussion in the "Daily Worker," and in the Party organisations, urging that the workers must not join the reformist union, that a new union should be created, that Minority Movement groups should be formed, etc. While they continued the discussion they lost the influence which they had gained. The English comrades were counselled to stop the useless and futile discussion, and to elect a factory committee. They created a factory committee, but everybody had lost interest in it. The factory committee was not used to organise the work in this great factory, it kept silent, and was inactive, and consequently lost its influence. It was not enough to acquire an influence, it was necessary to consolidate it. Leadership was absent, where it was necessary.

And here are some facts of poor work. Unfortunately, there are more of these than of good work :

A.E.G.—BRUNNENSTRASSE. This factory has been regularly putting off workers. Our group of the revolutionary trade union opposition did nothing against this. The Communist workers, members of the Party, declared that nothing can be done about these dismissals. The workers, therefore, have little confidence in this section of the Red trade union.

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\*See "The International Situation." O. Kuusinen. M.B. W.L.P.

Here, it was clearly revealed that our conduct was no different from that of the reformists. (Report of the R.I.L.U. brigades.)

LEUNA. The trade union group in the factory has made no attempt to utilise every occasion for the development of the struggle. The group does not react to the various events in the factory. Four weeks ago an accident occurred in one of the shops. The group limited itself to a note in the newspaper. Nothing else was done. Nothing at all was done in connection with the movement against Brüning's "Notverordnung"\* last January. The committee of struggle and unity, which had been elected did not react in any way to the wage-cut. (Report of the R.I.L.U. brigades.)

In the Berlin Transport Co. ("Verkehrsgesellschaft") there are thirty-one cells with 285 members, and forty groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition with 1,137 members. In the main shops at Uferstrasse, of the 670 workers, 300 are social-democrats. For a full year the cell, and the group of the revolutionary trade union opposition did nothing but collect dues. Some of the comrades became acquainted for the first time only when general meetings of the cell, and of the groups of the revolutionary trade union opposition began to be called.

The Communist workers debated whether it was possible to distribute the newspaper inside the factory (formerly they distributed it outside the factory); finally, they decided that this could be done. They began to distribute the paper inside the factory. This was noted in one of the shops by a steward of the reformist trade union, who split on our comrade. What was the result? The reformist workers supported our comrade and demanded that the

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\* Emergency Decree.—Ed.

informer should be removed from his post. The cell did nothing, limiting itself to the distribution of the factory paper, and even then, it immediately secured the support of the workers. This fact has also been taken by me from the materials of the investigating brigade. The report of the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany on the "Bochumer Verein" cell says: There are thirty-nine members in the cell out of a total of 5,800 workers; the opportunist tendencies are strong. Despite the worsening of the situation of the workers the cell failed to pursue the policy of partial struggles. Its initiative is very weak, it could not beneficially affect the factory group of the revolutionary trade union opposition (thirty-six people). No concrete struggle was conducted in the factory against the social-democrats, the centre and the Nazis.

ENGLAND. The textile workers' strike of 1932 (in the Manchester district). The work at the factory gate was very weak and we had to take corresponding measures. The strike broke out a week before the Party mobilised its forces. It took four or five days of patient work to establish a closer contact with these workers. In no case could we say that, as a result of our work, a strike has been prepared. The Party appeared on the arena after the struggle had already been in progress. (From the minutes of the Politbureau of the C.P. of England, of June 25, 1932.)

I could cite until morning information on all the Parties, so poorly is the work of the cells and of the leadership handled. I will only limit myself to reading one big letter published in the "Daily Worker" (of America). This letter was commentated in the paper. This is progress, but what sort of commentary was it? (laughter). The comment did



not contain the answer to the problems raised in the letter :

June 3, 1932.

Dear Comrades,

I don't know you, I don't know your address even, but am using the Finnish Workers' Federation as a medium for sending you this letter. As you are well aware, the situation in this country is getting desperate. Masses are getting ready to open revolt, unemployment, worry and in many cases open starvation is driving them to that point. But, **THE MASSES LACK LEADERSHIP.** It was a fashion of the Social-Democratic Party tens of years ago, and still is, to make a revolution in theory, and behind closed doors. The Communist Party seems to follow, to a great extent, the footsteps of the aforesaid party, as far, at least, as this locality, the Wyoming Valley, which includes Wilkes-Barre, Pa., is concerned.

In this locality there are between 300,000 and 350,000 people. And to the Communist Party only 200 people belong ! Why ?

When a person goes to sleep he is still living all right. But he is not doing anything—he is just sleeping. That's what the Communist Party local organisation is doing here. It is a grave accusation, I know, but I will herewith prove the same, then you may use your own judgment.

I have tried for a long time to know where the Communist Party headquarters are in this region. Several weeks ago a Finnish comrade took me there. Nobody was in, although it was 10 a.m. I called there again the next day at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. This time there was the secretary and organiser. I had a long talk with the organiser.

I gave him my opinion as to what should be done here, and it was —and still is—**TO ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED**, which the Communist Party here has failed to do. This is a golden opportunity for the Communist Party, if it only realises this fact.

Well, the comrade seemed to be lukewarm to my proposition. I told him one organiser is not enough here, we need hundreds of them, and I'm willing to be one, and I told him I would like to join the Communist Party. He told me that there are some other comrades in my city and that he is going to organise a nucleus here, and he promised to come to see me some day.

However, as I am out of work, have been all this year and almost all of last year and a goodly part of the year 1930, you don't blame me if I'm a bit impatient, and even desperate? I can't spend my time idling any longer. I have to do something! And the only something there is to do is to talk to other unfortunates. And one can meet them anywhere now. I have talked to a good many of them and to different nationalities. A Finnish comrade gave me three copies of the "Noon Hour Talk" pamphlet. I distributed them with the request to pass them to somebody else after it was read.

I called again at the headquarters. I told the comrade what I had done. He said it was all right. He gave me three additional "Noon Hour Talk" pamphlets, besides a couple of dozen leaflets of a coming mass meeting in Luzerne, Pa., where delegates were to be elected to go to the National Communist Party Convention in Chicago. (This was a couple of weeks ago.) I distributed

the leaflets and the booklets and had long talks with different individuals. Within a week I took the names and addresses of five different persons, three of them prospective members of the Communist Party, who were ready to join and also ready to subscribe to the "Daily Worker." I took all these names to the headquarters. As nobody was in, I wrote a note and dropped it in through the hole in the door. I urged them to go after these persons and finish the work I had started. Afterward I saw some of these men and asked if anybody had come to see them. Every time the answer was in the negative. I felt like a salesman might feel who was selling bad stock and had apprehended them. I have tried several times to get into the headquarters, before noon, afternoon, early and late, and nobody was ever in. Make your own conclusions.

The unemployed here are ready to be organised, ready to do anything. We only lack the leader. As they themselves say, is Lenin only a picture here and his teachings only—well—a beautiful theory? Why not strike when the iron is hot? Capitalists fear nothing more now than that the unemployed be organised. Why does not the Communist Party take the leadership? J.N.

I am convinced that this letter expresses the sentiments of more than one person. This is the cry of an unemployed man seeking leadership. And, after this, it is not surprising that for the last five years we have had a total of 9,000 members in the Party no matter how many new members—whether 10,000 or 15,000—were admitted per year, the membership remained stationary just the same.

As if someone has ordered them never to go beyond that figure.



This letter speaks for itself, and needs no comments.

However, I cannot help stating that had the leading organs of the C.P. of the United States, and the revolutionary trade union organisations improved the work of the Party and trade union bodies ; had they organised and led the struggle of the unemployed ; the C.P. of the United States could not only have become a mass Party, but could have actually developed into the leader of the millions of both unemployed and employed workers.

How little is required, in order that the workers should respond to the call of the Party and trade union organs may be illustrated by several facts.

The tailoring shop of Lockwood & Bradley, England, employs 300 workers. Two Party members working there took up the organisation of a struggle for the small demands of the workers (misbehaviour of foremen, etc.). In this way, they succeeded in acquiring an influence in one section of the factory where the workers were not even in unions. Several weeks later, every department elected a representative to the shop committee, led by these two Party members, and its influence has grown from day to day on the basis of the struggle for the everyday demands of the workers.

The Party cell of the "Crypto" factory in London (300 workers) published several demands against rationalisation measures in the shop paper. These demands were vigorously discussed by the workers. The third number of the paper was bought by more than 200 workers. The employer was forced to make concessions, only because of the note published in the paper. After this the paper began to receive notes from the non-party workers, containing complaints, reports, etc. (From the report of the organisational instructor in England.)

"When we arrived in the Ruhr district," writes the head of the R.I.L.U. brigade, "we learnt from our Press that the Hesch factories were being closed for two weeks. I became interested in the matter, and asked the local leader of the revolutionary trade union opposition what had been done by the opposition to mobilise the masses against the closing of the factory. He told me that he knew nothing about it. I received a similar reply from the secretary of the Party committee. On the same day I called together the group of the revolutionary trade union opposition. Twelve active members came, and it was then revealed that the factory had already been closed for four days. No one was able to explain the reasons for the closing of the plant. It appeared that the revolutionary trade union opposition had called a meeting of the workers two days before the closing of the factory. Everybody knew that the factory would be closed. Various matters were discussed at the meeting, but not a word was said regarding the closing of the factory.

Detailed proposals were prepared for the factory committee demanding a general meeting of the workers to discuss the question of compensation for the two weeks during which the factory was to be closed. At the meeting of the factory committee the reformists rejected our demands, but two of their members voted together with us.

The vote stood nine to nine. The meeting could not be called. A leaflet was written, but it was not published in time. Several notes were published in the Press. The workers in the factory began to discuss the question, and this little pressure was enough to force the management to post a notice that these workers (and their number exceeded 1,500) who were not legally entitled to receive the benefits

for partially employed would each get compensation from 10 to 15 marks. Complete blindness regarding the mobilisation of the masses and reacting to what is taking place in the factory." I have already mentioned the source of this report.

The poor work of the lower Party and trade union bodies is only possible because the higher Party and trade union leadership insufficiently, and in many cases poorly leads, while, in a good many cases, it does not provide any leadership at all, does not furnish instructions, or control the work of the lower Party and trade union organisations.

**THE WORK AMONG THE WOMEN.** The work of the C.P. among the women is still very weak. The percentage of women in the factories during the crisis has increased. The capitalist offensive is directed with special force against the women (wages and unemployment benefits have been cut). The working women and the workers' wives feel the effects of the crisis with particular severity. In case of war, the women will take the places of men in the factories and the Communist Parties will have no contact with them. Still, our decisions on the work among the women, especially about the creation of delegate meetings, have not yet been carried out by the sections of the Comintern. This fact must be noted.

**THE YOUTH.** The youth is increasingly replacing the adult workers in the factories during the crisis. The youth has been deprived of unemployment benefit, the wages of the young workers, like those of the women, have been subjected to particularly drastic cuts. The young workers represent an active element, they receive no leadership from the Communist Parties and Youths' Leagues and they therefore go to the fascists. The youth has no strong



traditions of the social-democratic or other parties, so that the work of the Communists among the young workers is easier than among the old workers. The Communist Parties must give special attention to the work among the youth, and help convert the Young Communist Leagues into mass organisations, about which so much was said in the presidium meetings of the E.C.C.I. several years ago, about an improvement in the work, about widening the Y.C.L.'s, about a change in their work. The Young Communist Leagues do not get any assistance from the Parties, most of the decisions have remained on paper.

Is it surprising after all this, that the fluctuation of the membership has not decreased? I will cite only a few figures.

In Czechoslovakia 36,050 new members were enrolled during 1931. Of these only 9,000 remained who pay dues.

In February, 1932, there were 60,000 registered members, though there should have been 85,000 (at the end of May there were 70,000—75,000 registered and 55,000—60,000 dues paying members).

The Red trade unions had at the beginning of 1931 60,234 members. Between May 1, 1931, and January, 1932, 25,425 new members joined the unions making 86,659.

On February 15, 1932, there were 75,000 members, so that about 50 per cent. of the new members had withdrawn.

GERMANY. In the fourth quarter of 1931 there were 246,554 dues paying members, and during the first quarter of 1932 another 94,365 members were admitted.

There should have been  $246,554 + 94,365 = 340,919$  there actually were 287,180 dues paying members. which means that 53,739 people left the Party in three months.

In the other Parties, Red trade unions and trade union oppositions, the fluctuation of membership is just as bad. You cannot get rid of this fluctuation if the Party and the trade union organisations fail to improve their work. The decisions on this question remained for the most part on paper just like those to which I referred before.

#### COMRADE STALIN ON THE TASKS OF PARTY LEADERSHIP.

In 1924, in the Polish commission of the E.C.C.I., Comrade Stalin gave the following definition on the tasks of party leadership :

Finally the question of Party leadership. What is the characteristic feature of the development of the Communist Parties of the West at the present moment? It consists in that the Parties have closely approached the question of rebuilding the Party practice along new revolutionary lines. It is not a question of adopting the Communist programme and proclaiming revolutionary slogans. It is a question of rebuilding the daily work of the Party, its practice in such a direction, that every step of the Party, and everyone of its actions should naturally lead to the revolutionary education of the masses, to the preparation of the revolution. Such at present is the crux of the question, rather than the adoption of revolutionary directives.

"Comrade H. (I omit the name of the comrade mentioned by Comrade Stalin) read here yesterday a whole sheaf of revolutionary resolutions adopted by the leaders of the C.C. of Poland. He read

these resolutions with the air of a victor, believing that Party leadership consists in working out resolutions. He does not even realise that the working out of resolutions is merely the first step, the beginning of Party leadership. He does not understand that the basis of leadership consists not of working out resolutions, but of carrying them into effect, of putting them into action. In his big speech he therefore forgot to tell us the fate of these resolutions, he did not deem it necessary to say whether these resolutions have been carried into effect and in what measure they have been carried out by the Communist Party of Poland. Yet the essence of Party leadership consists precisely of carrying out resolutions and directives." ("The Bolshevik," No. 11, 1924.)

How many more times will we adopt resolutions without carrying them into effect ?

To fulfil the revolutionary tasks confronting the Communist Parties in the revolutionary trade union movements of capitalist countries, and end the lagging behind, it is necessary, not in words but in action :

- (a) To transfer the centre of gravity of the Party and trade union work to the factories,
- (b) To resolutely strengthen the work within the reformist, catholic, yellow and fascist trade unions, to free the working masses who still follow the reformists, from their influence, and thereby improve the work of the revolutionary trade union opposition,
- (c) To strengthen the work of the Red trade unions, and of the Red trade union opposition,
- (d) To take up the work among the unemployed in real earnest.



- (e) To improve the methods of mass work of the Communist Parties, Red trade unions and trade union opposition,

The Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade union movements of the capitalist countries will then succeed in capturing the majority of the working class, and successfully conducting the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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