

THE REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME

IN THIS issue of 'International Communist' we follow up the discussion on the question of the revolutionary programme already opened in IC 2/3, in IC 4, and in our Manifesto [IC 6]. We publish an article on the Workers' Government question from the Internationale Kommunistische Liga of Austria, and two documents from the Communist International's programmatic discussions.

The Workers' Government article is not an I-CL document, and we do not necessarily agree with every nuance in it. Nonetheless it is in our opinion an admirably clear critical exposition of the early debates on the Workers' Government (part of which we reproduced in IC4). Its main limitation is that it tends to rest within the bounds of an academic analysis of texts. But analysis of texts as rich as those of the early Communist International is far from being a bad starting point for communists today.

The first of the two documents reproduced from the Communist International is an excerpt from a resolution at the Third Congress where the method of **transitional demands** is defined. For vulgar Trotskyism transitional demands are often seen as ingenious political devices thought up by Trotsky in 1938. As a result, the formulas and forms of the 1938 Transitional Programme are treated as if endowed with almost-magical qualities, and the method of transitional demands is supposed to be inextricably linked with economic catastrophism.

In reality the method of transitional demands was the summing-up of a rich experience of revolutionary struggle. The Third Congress resolution summarises ideas sketched out or given pioneering application in Lenin's "The Impending Catastrophe and how to combat it", in Rosa Luxemburg's "Spartacus Programme" and speech to the founding Congress of the German Communist Party, and (in a less developed way) in Leon Trotsky's "Results and Prospects". It explicitly takes issue with the "Lassallian theory of the concentration of all the energies of the proletariat on a single demand, in order to use it as a lever in revolutionary action". "It is impossible", declares the resolution, "to direct the struggle against mere capitalist blows, which are coming thick and fast, into narrow doctrinarian channels".

The Third Congress resolution is, of course, placed within a perspective of acute instability of capitalism. Yet the Third Congress was the Congress which began to re-evaluate revolutionary strategy in light of the defeat of the post-war revolutionary assault in Europe and the evident limited revival of capitalism. Transitional demands were not mechanically linked to economic catastrophe.

The other document reproduced from the Communist International is the Bukharin-Thalheimer debate on programme at the Fourth Congress of the CI. A CI programme was eventually adopted only in 1928, by which time Stalinism was dominant, and the main value of that programme was that it evoked Trotsky's brilliant "Criticism of the Draft Programme of the Communist International". The beginnings of the CI's programme discussion, however, before the Stalinist dusk fell, contain much of great value. The Fourth congress debate was very brief (there was only one speaker apart from Bukharin and Thalheimer: Kabatchiev, whose contribution was of no great interest), but a book of discussion material was published around the same time. The book exists in French and in German, but not, as far as we have been able to find out, in English; we may be able to publish excerpts from it in future numbers of 'International Communist'.

Bukharin, in line with the undialectical schematism which had led him to oppose the right of nations to self-determination and then to form a 'Left Communist' faction in the Bolshevik Party around the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, declares that a communist programme should not include partial demands. Thalheimer, taking up the arguments deployed by Lenin in the debate on the revision of the Bolshevik Party programme, shows that the programme must not only state fundamental principles, but also be a 'guide to action' for the party's daily agitation. Both speakers give concise and biting assessments of the programmatic and theoretical contrast between the Third and the Second International.

C.R.

Partial struggles and partial demands

**from the Theses of the Third Congress of the Communist International
1921**

The development of the communist parties can only be achieved through a fighting policy. Even the smallest communist units must not rest content with mere propaganda and agitation. In all proletarian mass organisations they must constitute the vanguard, they must teach the backward, vacillating masses how to fight, by formulating practical aims for direct action, and by urging the workers to make a stand for the necessities of life. Only in this manner will Communists be able to reveal to the masses the treacherous character of all non-communist parties. The Communists must prove that they are able to lead in the practical struggle of the proletariat, and by promoting these conflicts, the Communists will succeed in winning over great masses of the proletariat to the struggle for the dictatorship.

The entire propaganda and agitation, as well as the other work of the Communist parties, must be based on the conception that no lasting betterment of the position of the proletariat is possible under capitalism; that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie is a pre-requisite for the achievement of such betterment, and the rebuilding of the social structure destroyed by capitalism. This conception, however, must not find expression in the abandonment of all participation in the proletarian struggle for actual and immediate necessities of life, until such a time as the proletariat will be able to attain them through its own dictatorship. Social-democracy is consciously deceiving the masses when, in the period of capitalist disintegration, at a time when capitalism is unable to assure to the workers even the subsistence of well-fed slaves, it has nothing better to offer than the old social-democratic programme of peaceful reforms to be achieved by peaceful means within the bankrupt capitalist system. Not only is capitalism, in the period of its disintegration, unable to assure to the workers decent conditions of life, but the social-democrats and reformists of all lands are also continually demonstrating that they are unwilling to put up any fight, even for the most modest demands contained in their programmes. The demand for socialisation or nationalisation of the most important industries is nothing but another such deception of the working masses. Not only did the centrists mislead the masses by trying to persuade them that nationalisation alone, without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, would deprive capitalism of the chief industries, but they also endeavoured to divert the workers from the real and live struggles for their immediate needs, by raising their hopes of a gradual seizure of industry, to be followed by "systematic" economic reconstruction. Thus they have reverted to the minimum social-democratic programme of the reform of capitalism, which has now become open counter-revolutionary deception. The theory prevailing among a portion of the centrists, that the programme of the nationalisation of the coal, or any other industry, is based on the Lassallian theory of the concentration of all the energies of the proletariat on a single demand, in order to use it as a lever in revolutionary action, which in its development may lead to a struggle for power, is nothing but empty words. The suffering of the working class in every country is so intense, that it is impossible to direct the struggle against mere capitalist blows, which are coming thick and fast, into narrow doctrinaire

channels. On the contrary, it is essential to make use of all the economic needs of the masses, as issues in the revolutionary struggle, which, when united, form the flood of the social revolution. For this struggle, the Communist Parties have no minimum programme for the strengthening of this reeling world structure of capitalism. The destruction of this system is the chief aim and immediate task of the parties. But in order to achieve this task, the Communist Parties must put forward demands, and they must fight with the masses for their fulfilment, regardless of whether they are in keeping with the profit system of the capitalist class or not.

What the Communist Parties have to consider is, not whether capitalist industry is able to continue to exist and compete, but rather, whether the proletariat has reached the limit of its endurance. If these communist demands are in accord with the immediate needs of the great proletarian masses, and if they are convinced that they cannot exist without the realisation of these demands, the struggle for these demands will become an issue in the struggle for power. The alternative offered by the Communist International in place of the minimum programme of the reformists and centrists is:— the struggle for the concrete need of the proletariat, for demands which, in their application, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, which organise the proletariat, and which form the transition to proletarian dictatorship, even if certain groups of the masses have not yet grasped the meaning of such proletarian dictatorship.

As the struggle for these demands embraces ever-growing masses, and as the needs clash with the needs of capitalist society, the workers will realise that capitalism must die if they are to live. The realisation of this fact is the basis of the will to fight for the dictatorship. It is the task of the communist parties to widen, to deepen and to co-ordinate these struggles which have been brought into being by the formulation of concrete demands. Every partial action undertaken by the working masses for the attainment of partial demands, every serious economic strike, mobilises at once the entire bourgeoisie, which as a class places itself upon the side of the threatened part of the employing class, to prevent even a partial victory of the proletariat (mutual employers' aid in Czechoslovakia, bourgeois strike-breakers in the English coal strike, the fascisti in Italy, etc.). The bourgeoisie mobilises also its entire machinery of State in the fight against the workers (militarisation of Labour in France and in Poland, emergency laws during English coal miners' strike, etc.). The workers fighting for partial demands are automatically drawn into the fight against the entire bourgeoisie and its machinery of State. As the part struggles of isolated groups of workers are gradually merging into a general struggle of labour *versus* capital, so the Communist Party must also alter its watchword, which should be — "uncompromising overthrow of the adversary". In formulating their part demands the communist parties must take heed that these demands, based on the deeply rooted needs of the masses, are such as will organise the masses and not merely lead them into the struggle. All concrete watchwords, originating in the economic needs of the workers, must be utilised to focus and stimulate the struggle for the control of production, which must not assume the form of a bureaucratic organisation of social economy under capitalism, but of an organisation fighting against capitalism through the workers' committees as well as through the revolutionary trade unions.

It is only through the establishment of such workers' committees, and their coordination according to branches and centres of industry, that communists can prevent the splitting up of the masses by the social-democrats and the trade union leaders. The workers' committees will be able to fulfil this role only if they are born in an economic struggle, waged in the interests of the masses of workers, and provided they succeed in uniting all the revolutionary sections of the proletariat, including the communist party, the revolutionary parties, and those trade unions which are going through a process of revolutionary development.

Every objection to the establishment of such part demands, every accusation of reformism in connection with these part struggles, is an outcome of the same incapacity to grasp the live issues of revolutionary action which manifested itself in the opposition of some communist groups to participation in trade union activities and parliamentary action. Communists should not rest content with teaching the proletariat its ultimate aims, but should lend impetus to every practical move leading the proletariat into the struggle for these ultimate aims. How inadequate the objections to part demands are and how divorced from the needs of revolutionary life, is best exemplified by the fact that even the small organisations formed by the so-called "left" communists for the propagation of pure doctrines have seen the necessity of formulating part demands, in order to attract larger sections of workers than they have hitherto been able to muster, or else they have been obliged to take part in the struggle of wider masses of workers in order to influence them. The chief revolutionary characteristic of the present period lies in the fact that the most modest demands of the working masses are incompatible with the existence of capitalist society. Therefore the struggle, even for these very modest demands, is bound to develop into a struggle for Communism.

Drafting the programme of the Communist International

From the 'report' of the Fourth Congress of
the Communist International

1922

Bukharin (Russia): Comrades, the fact that we have placed so important and difficult a question as that of an international programme on the agenda of the World Congress is in itself the best evidence of our mighty growth. We may express our perfect confidence that the Communist International will also solve this problem, whereas in the camp of our adversaries of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals we observe complete theoretical impotence. (Comrade Clara Zetkin: Perfectly true.)

Generally we may distinguish three phases in the development of the Marxian theory and its ideological construction. **The first phase was the Marxism of Marx and Engels themselves.** Then followed the second phase, which was the Marxism of the Second International. At the present time we have the third phase of Marxism, the Bolshevik or Communist Marxism, which is to a large extent reverting back to the original Marxism of Marx and Engels.

This was the child of the European revolution of 1848, and therefore possessed a highly revolutionary spirit.

This revolutionary character of the Marxian theory is explained by the fact that the doctrines of Marx and Engels were evolved at a time when the whole of Europe was in the throes of revolution and the proletariat as a revolutionary class was entering the arena of world history. Then followed a different period with a different ideological tendency. Following the revolutionary epoch of the middle of last century, an entirely different historic epoch in the development of the capitalist system set in. It was the epoch of the gigantic growth of capitalism. This

growth was chiefly based upon the colonial policy of the bourgeoisie, and the stupendous development of continental industry which was chiefly stimulated by the exploitation of the colonial peoples. This created a certain community of interests between the continental bourgeoisie and the continental proletariat which was the basis for a great psychological and ideological tendency manifesting itself within the working class and, ergo, within the Socialist Parties.

Then came the second phase in the development of Marxism, namely, the phase of Social-Democratic Marxism, the well-known Marxism of the Marxist theoreticians. The struggle between the orthodox tendency and the reformist tendency, the great struggle between orthodox social democracy represented by Kautsky on the one hand against the Revisionists as represented by Edouard Bernstein on the other. I support the thesis that in this struggle, which took place a long time before the war, so-called orthodox Marxism, i.e., the Marxism of Karl Kautsky, surrendered to Revisionism in the most fundamental theoretical questions. This we failed to notice. Now we see clearly and distinctly, and thoroughly comprehend the underlying reasons of this phenomenon. Let us for instance consider the question of the impoverishment theory! You are all aware that Kautskian Marxism argued this question in a milder form than that stated by Marx himself. It was asserted that in the epoch of capitalist development the working class suffers a relative deterioration of its condition. Marx, however, in his theory analysed an abstract capitalist development which leads to a deterioration of the condition of the working class. What did Kautskian Marxism do? It limited the term working class to the continental working class. The condition of these strata of the proletariat went on improving, but Kautskian Marxism did not realise that this improvement in the condition of the continental working classes was bought at the price of the annihilation and spoliation of the colonial peoples. Marx was speaking of capitalist society as a whole.

Then take, for instance, his varying opinions on the general strike in his book on "The Social Revolution," where Kautsky asserts that if we are in a position to make the general strike then we need no general strike. If not—we do not need one either. What does it mean? It means nothing but pure opportunism, which we did not quite notice before, but which we see quite clearly now.

Let us take the third theoretical question, namely, the theory of the State. Here I shall have to speak at somewhat greater length. On the outbreak of the war we thought that Kautskianism had suddenly betrayed its own theories. This is what we thought and wrote at the time. But we were wrong. We can now quite calmly admit that we were wrong. Quite the contrary happened. The so-called betrayal by the social-democrats and the Kautskians were based on the theory which these theoreticians had already maintained before the outbreak of the war.

What were their statements about the State and the conquest of political power by the proletariat? They represented the case as though there was some object which had been in the hands of one class, and later passed into the possession of another class. This was also the way Kautsky saw it.

Let us now take the case of the imperialist war. If we now consider the State as a homogeneous instrument which changed hands in passing from one epoch to another, i.e., as almost a neutral thing, then it is perfectly conceivable that we should protect this instrument on the outbreak of war when the proletariat has the prospect of conquering the State in this manner. During the world war the question of protecting the State was brought to the forefront. This idea was thought out to its logical conclusions, and it was quite a logical consequence of this theory when Kautsky raised the question of national defence and answered that question in the affirmative.

The same with the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even in debate with the Revisionists, Kautsky never developed this question. He almost failed to say a single word upon this most important question and most important problem during the whole of that controversy. He said something to the effect that this question would be solved by future generations. That was his way of "stating the problem."

Comrades, when we examine these mental excursions and attempt to discover in them the sociological equivalent, we must declare that we have here an alleged Marxian ideology that was based on the aristocratic position of the continental workers, whose improved condition was secured by the spoilation of the colonial workers.

They are unable to analyse the revolution, they cannot produce an analysis that would furnish the basis for practical revolutionary decisions. They are evasive when they say: There is no logic in the events of our time.

Let us take for instance the theory of the crisis. With regard to this theory, Kautsky asserts that in our present theoretical consideration of the development of the capitalist system, we should admit quite frankly that the theory of crises should assume "more modest dimensions" in our argument. What does it mean? It means that Kautsky asserts that the capitalist world has become more harmonious in recent times. This assertion is naturally the embodiment of pure stupidity. The facts prove the opposite. We now find complete vindication of the theses and the theory of crises. They have been proven up to the hilt. We can even maintain now that the war itself was a specific form of economic crisis, and it is this specific form that we should theoretically conceive and theoretically analyse.

Let us now proceed to the theory of the State. This theory of the State has now been transformed by all the theoreticians of the Second International without exception into a direct plea for a bourgeois republic. In this respect there is absolutely no

difference between the bourgeois liberal scholars and the social democrats. On reading the writings of Cunow, for instance, we find that some of the bourgeois professors, like Franz Oppenheimer and others, notably those of the Gumplovitz school, are much nearer to the Marxian position than he. Cunow in his book claims the State to be a sort of universal welfare institution, a good father to all its children, whether of the working class or of the bourgeoisie. So the matter stands. I once said that this is a theory that was represented by the Babylonian king, Hamurabi. And this is the theoretical level of the representatives and principal sages of the Second International.

But there are theoretical betrayals which are even more flagrant and ignominious. I refer to the conception of Kautsky with regard to the proletarian revolution and to the coalition government. To write such stuff one has indeed to lose the last vestige of theoretical consciousness. Take for instance Kautsky's theory about the revolution. Do you know what is his latest discovery on this question? (1) The bourgeois revolution has to act by violence. (2) The proletarian revolution, precisely because it is a proletarian revolution, must not employ violence, or as another of these gentlemen has said, violence is always a reactionary force. We know what Engels has written about the revolution, in an Italian article entitled "Dell Autorita." He wrote: "The revolution is the most authoritative thing in the world; for revolution means an historic event, when one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part of the population by means of bayonets, guns and rifles." Such was the conception of revolutionary Marxism. And now we hear what the miserable Herr Kautsky has to tell us: "Bayonets, guns and other means of violence are purely bourgeois means. They have not been invented by the proletariat, but by the bourgeoisie. The barricade is a pure bourgeois institution." (Laughter.) In this way one could argue almost anything. Kautsky might, for instance, say: "Before the bourgeois revolution the bourgeoisie fought with ideas; consequently this is a purely bourgeois method. It would follow then that we must discard all ideas." Perhaps Kautsky has discarded all ideas now. (Laughter.) It would be really ridiculous to adopt such a method of reasoning.

Now we come to the question of the coalition. Here we reach the apex of all the discoveries of Kautsky. Kautsky believes himself to be the representative of orthodox Marxism. Marx maintained that the spirit of his teaching consisted of the doctrine of the proletarian dictatorship. There is a passage in Marx which reads: "The class struggle was known to many others before me, but my teaching consists of the knowledge that the development of capitalism leads inevitably to the dictatorship of the proletariat." This was the way Marx himself conceived his theory. This is the sum and substance of the Marxian doctrine. Now listen to what Kautsky writes: "In his famous article on the criticism of social-democratic programme,

Marx wrote: 'Between the capitalists and the communist society intervenes the revolutionary stage of transition from one into the other. This has its corresponding period of political transition, when the State can be nothing else but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.' " So said Marx.

And Kautsky, what has he to say? Let me quote him literally: "This sentence we should now modify on the basis of our recent experiences, and on the question of Government we should say: 'Between the time of the pure bourgeois and the time of the pure proletarian democratic State, there is a period of transition from one into the other. This has its corresponding period of political transition, when the government as a rule should take the form of a coalition government.'" (Laughter.)

This is indeed not a form of transition from Marxism to Revisionism, but it is even worse than the purest Revisionism.

I now turn to another question. Having disposed of the theoreticians of the Second International, I wish to say a few words on the new analysis of the present epoch, with particular reference to a point which has not been as yet fully elucidated. I think that the capitalist development as a whole should be considered from the standpoint of the expanded reproduction of capitalist contradictions, and it is from this standpoint that we ought to consider all the processes of capitalist development. We have now reached a stage of development when capitalism is breaking up. To some extent we already consider capitalist development in retrospect, but this does not prevent us from considering all the events of the capitalist epoch, including even the prognosis, from the standpoint of the steady and constant reproduction of capitalist contradictions. The war is the expression of the contradictions inherent in capitalist competition. We ought to explain the meaning of war solely as the expanded reproduction of the anarchistic structure of capitalist society. If this accentuation of the contradictions has already led to the impossibility of continued existence of capitalist society, this standpoint can also serve the purpose of elucidating all the other questions, such as the grouping of the working class, the social divisions of society, the position of the working class and the structure of modern society.

The second question to my mind is the question of imperialism. Political economy in the past, including also the Marxian theory, treated the subject of capitalist contradiction as something peculiar to industrial capitalism. It was an epoch of competition between the various industrialists whose methods consisted of lowering the price of commodities. This is almost the only sort of competition mentioned by Marx. But in the epoch of imperialist capitalism we find many other forms of competition wherein the method of reducing prices is of no significance. The main groups of the bourgeoisie are now in the nature of trustified groups within the framework of the State.

It is quite conceivable that such a form of enterprise, such a construction of competing groups, should resort chiefly to

violent methods of competition. The policy of low prices is almost an impossibility. Thus arise the new forms of competition which lead to military attack by the State.

I would now like to touch upon a third point that ought to be mentioned in the programme, namely, the emphasising of the role of the State in general, and the role of the State at the present moment in particular. We should admit quite frankly that the Marxian theory, and even orthodox Marxism, did not investigate the question of the State quite thoroughly. The role of the State is very important from all points of view, from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie as well as from the standpoint of the proletariat. On the other hand we are to destroy an organisation, and it is therefore important for us to know the situation as it existed previously so that we may create something of economic relations. All these circumstances should urge upon us the necessity of emphasising the question of the State and giving it prominent place in our programme.

I would further urge that we include in our programme something about the monopoly of education by the ruling class. We used to ignore this question in discussing our programmes in the past, but now, when the proletariat is striving for power and for the reorganisation of society, such questions as the training of our officials and administrators, the standard of education of our leaders before and after the conquest of power, must play an important part. All these questions are of great importance, yet they were never discussed before, because they did not appear to us to be practical questions. Now they have become absolutely practical questions, and for this reason we should give more place to this question than we have given before.

I think that in our programme we should touch upon the question of the specific symptoms of the maturing of Socialism within the capitalist society. It is a classical passage in the Marxian doctrine that the germs of the new society are generated in the womb of the old. But this theory has caused so much confusion in the ranks of the Second International that we should state the question more concretely than we did before. I cannot touch upon the question in its entirety, but this much I would like to say: We all know that the proletarian revolution imposes many demands upon us, that the proletarian revolution is at times accompanied by deterioration of productive forces. This is an inherent law of proletarian revolution. But our opponents want to tell us that this is due to the fact that capitalism is not yet ripe for Socialism. This is their main theoretical thesis in which they confuse the maturing of capitalism within the feudal system with the maturing of Socialism within the capitalist society. But we want to emphasise the difference of principle between the two phenomena. The proletariat can become the leader of society as a whole, the real creative genius of society, only after the dictatorship. It cannot be in any other way. This is the cardinal difference between the maturing of capitalism and the development of Socialism that we ought to emphasise.

I would further like to touch upon one more point which has not been sufficiently analysed, even in our literature, namely, the problem of growing into the Socialist state. The revisionist conception was that the capitalist state would gradually evolve into Socialism. We say that it begins only after the proletariat has established its dictatorship. The proletariat should first of all destroy the old bourgeois state and capture the power, and by this means change the economic relations. There is yet another point which has direct bearing on the preceding question, namely, the question of the national types of Socialism, as a form of production, of course. Before the revolution we discussed methods of systematic production, collective economy, etc., without having any concrete idea. Now, particularly after the experiences of the Russian Revolution, we see that we have before us a long period of various national types of Socialist production. Socialism can grow exclusively upon that which is already in existence, and therefore it may be assumed that the various Socialist forms will in a certain sense be the continuation of the previous capitalist forms, but, under a different aspect; which means that the specific features of capitalism of the different countries will find their expression in the specific forms of Socialist production in those countries. Later on, of course, these differences will be obliterated by the onward march of proletarian rule. If we take all this into consideration, we may then pass to the discussion of other questions, such as the question of the new economic policy. This is the eighth point upon which I intended to say a few words here. This new economic policy may be viewed from totally different standpoints, from the standpoint of revolutionary tactics or from the standpoint of economic rationalism. These are two standpoints which do not always appear to be identical. From the tactical standpoint we have already heard the views of several comrades, including Comrades Lenin and Trotsky. I would like to examine this question from the standpoint of economic rationalism.

I maintain that the proletariat of every individual country, after gaining political power, will be confronted by the important problem of economic organisation, the problem of proportion between the forms of production, which the proletariat should organise upon a rational plan. This is the most important economic problem with which the proletariat will be confronted. If the proletariat fails to fix this proportion aright, if it undertakes too much, it will eventually be confronted by the situation in which the productive forces will not be developed, but rather hampered, and lead to a gigantic administrative machine, with too many officials and functionaries to take the place of these small producers, small peasants, etc., in their economic functions.

The new economic policy is on the one hand a specific Russian phenomenon, yet on the other hand it is also a universal phenomenon. (Quite true!) It is not exclusively a strategic retreat, but it is also the solution of a great problem of social organisation, namely, the proportion between the various

branches of production which we should nationalise, and the branches of production which we are not able to nationalise. Could we, for instance, proceed right away with the organisation of the American farmers? Of course not! For such strata the free economic movement should remain. The same would be the case in Germany. Do you believe that the victorious proletariat would at once be able to organise a communist basis all the bourgeois economies, particularly in Bavaria? Of course not! But this problem is also connected with yet a different problem. It happens that in a revolution the principle of economic rationalism clashes with another principle that is of equal importance to the proletariat, namely, the principle of the pure political expediency. Of this I have frequently quoted examples. For instance, if for the purpose of erecting barricades you saw down telegraph posts, it stands to reason that you are not thereby increasing the productive forces. (Laughter.) The same thing happens in a revolution. Here we get the unrational thing, which is economically inexpedient, but which from the standpoint of the political struggle and the triumph in the civil war is quite a means to an end. These two standpoints, economic rationality and political expediency, are not at all identical, frequently they come into collision. The prime consideration, however, should be political expediency, if only for the reason that it is impossible to build up Socialism without previously establishing the proletarian State.

I now come to the fourth sub-section, which I designate as the new universal tactical problems.

Firstly, quite briefly, on the question of the colonies. For this question we must devote more space in our programme than we have done hitherto. (Quite right.) We are now making the attempt to write an international programme. We must therefore deal with this question far more exhaustively than has been the case hitherto.

The second tactical problem is that of National Defence. This problem was to us Communists quite clear from the outbreak of the war, and our attitude was almost a flat rejection of the national defence, but now we see something modified and more complex. The essential complicating factor in this question is the fact that in one country we have a proletarian dictatorship, and the existence of a proletarian state changes immediately the whole situation.

When the bourgeoisie speaks of the national defence, it means the defence of the bourgeois state; and when we speak of national defence we mean the defence of the proletarian state. It ought therefore to be stated clearly in our programme that the proletarian state should and must be protected not only by the proletariat of this country, but also by the proletariat of all countries. This is the new situation of the question where it differs from the situation at the outbreak of the war. The second question is: Should the proletarian states, for reasons of

the strategy of the proletariat as a whole, conclude any military alliances with the bourgeois states? Here there is no difference in principle between a loan and a military alliance. And I maintain that we have already grown so big that we are in a position to conclude a military alliance with a bourgeois state for the purpose of destroying some other bourgeois state with the help of the bourgeois ally. What would happen later on, under a certain readjustment of forces, you can easily imagine for yourselves. This is a question of purely strategical and tactical expediency. In this manner it should be stated in our programme.

Under this form of national defence, i.e., the military alliance with bourgeois states, it is the duty of the Comrades in every country to aid this alliance to victory. If in its subsequent phase of development, the bourgeoisie of such a country should be overthrown, then other questions arise—(laughter)—which it is not my duty to outline here, but which you will readily conceive.

Next we should make mention of a technical point, of the right of Red Intervention. This is to my mind the touch-stone for all Communist parties. There is a widespread outcry about Red militarism. We should make it plain in our programme that every proletarian state has the right of Red intervention. (Radek interposes: You are the Honorary Chief of a regiment, and that is why you talk like this! Laughter.) In the Communist Manifesto we were told that the proletariat should conquer the whole world. Now this could not be done with our bare hands. (Laughter.) This has to be done with bayonets and rifles. For this reason the spread of the system on which the Red Army is based is also the spread of Socialism, of the proletarian might, of the revolution. This gives the basis to the right of Red intervention under special circumstances which makes the technical realisation of it possible.

Now I have done with the various problems, and I will now pass to a general survey of our problem. The programme of the national parties' should consist at least of two parts:

(1) A general part which is suitable to all parties. The general part of the programme should be printed in the membership book of every member in every country. (2) A national part, setting out the specific demands of the labour movement of the respective countries. And possibly also (3), but this is really not a part of the programme—a programme of action which should deal with purely tactical questions, and which might be altered once every fortnight. (Laughter.) Some Comrades want us to define in our programme also the tactical questions, such as the capital levy in Germany, the tactics of the United Front, or even the question of the workers' government. Comrade Varga said it would be mental cowardice to protest against it. (Radek interposes: Quite right!) Nevertheless, I maintain that the desire to settle these questions is nothing but the outcome of the opportunist proclivities of the respective Comrades. (Laughter.) Such questions and slogans like the United Front or the workers' government, for instance,

or the capital levy, are slogans that are based on very shifting ground. This basis consists of a certain depression within the labour movement. These Comrades want to make this defensive position of the proletariat a plank on the programme, which would make it impossible to assume the offensive. Against such a proposition I will fight with all means at my disposal. We will never allow the adoption of such planks in our programme. (Radek, interposing: "Who is the "we"?) We, that is, all the best elements of the Communist International. (Laughter and cheers.)

Comrades, I think that in the theoretical part we should include the following sub-sections. First a general analysis of capitalism, which would be of particular importance to the colonial countries. Then we should have an analysis of imperialism and the decay of capitalism, and, further on, the analysis of the epoch of the social revolution.

In the second part of the programme we ought to have a sketch of the future Communist society. I take it that a picture of the Communist society in the programme would be necessary in order to show what Communism really means and the difference between Communism and the various transitory stages.

The third part should contain the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the struggle of the proletariat for power.

The fourth part should be devoted to general strategic questions, not such questions as the workers' government, but such basic questions as, for instance, the attitude towards social democracy and the trade unions.

Because these two questions are not of a fluctuating nature, the strategical and technical questions can be laid down in the programme.

With regard to the national part of the programme, it is not my task to touch upon these problems, for a special investigation will have to be made according to the country and the programme.

I conclude my lengthy report with the hope that we will emerge from the Fifth Congress with an effective, truly revolutionary, orthodox Marxian programme. (Prolonged cheers.)

Chairman: Comrade Thalheimer has the floor.

Thalheimer (Germany): Comrades, I do not wish to repeat Comrade Bukharin's excellent speech to prove the theoretical bankruptcy of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals; I only wish to bring out a few typical examples.

First of all I would like to point out that in his programme, Kautsky rejects even the fundamentals of the Marxian conception of capitalist economics. For instance, one of our basic conceptions is that the regulating law of capitalism is the production of surplus value. Suddenly, Kautsky discovers that capitalism is based upon the needs of consumption. There could be no more absolute, no more fundamental capitulation to capitalist economics than this.

To-day, Kautsky totally agrees with Bernstein on all points. He has accepted all Bernstein's reformistic proposals and declares them to be the true Marxism. I will not discuss these things any longer theoretically, but practically. What is the purpose of these proposals? They go along the well-known paths of Municipalisation, and secondly of Guild Socialism, a new importation. To prove his new theories a la Bernstein, Kautsky, who is usually a very sober thinker, writes the most fantastic nonsense. For instance, take Guild Socialism. The Guild Socialists believe that, without the conquest of political power, the trade unions may introduce Socialism step by step, so to speak, behind the back of capitalism. One need only look at the trade unions and realise their financial situation in the disruption of capitalism to see that this is a pure phantasy. At a time when the trade unions had the greatest difficulty in gathering strike funds, who can expect them to introduce Socialist economy behind the back of capitalism?

Another favourite hobby-horse of the reformists is Municipal Socialism, Municipalisation. Anyone who has any knowledge of the situation in the West knows that the most striking characteristic of the Western countries is the bankruptcy not only of the State, but also the municipalities; and this is the problem of to-day for the municipalities; not the transformation to Socialism, but the defence against the attacks of capitalists who wish to gain control of the municipal industries.

A third point. To render the transformation more easy, it has been proposed to take over capitalist property, and pay compensation. You all know that Karl Marx has said that eventually the English landowners would be bought out. But he did not mean this in the sense that this could take place before the conquest of Power, but only after the proletariat had captured political power. Everyone knows that the first requisite for the reconstruction of the Socialist Society is the liquidation of the tremendous weight of debts which weighs upon industry. This mild method of buying out the capitalists is just as much a Utopia as Kautsky's idea of Guild Socialism or Municipalisation.

A few more remarks to bring out more clearly what Bukharin said on the theoretical capitulation, especially as it appeared in the programmes of the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals and the Görlitzer programme. All that Bukharin has **emphasised and argued here as if he were lecturing to a class of boys**, the dismissal of the impoverishment theory, of the crisis theory, etc.; all this has appeared clearly in the commentaries on the Görlitzer programme.

Comrades Kampfmeier, Bernstein, Stapfer, have shown clearly this capitulation.

Now, with regard to debatable questions, I will deal with the following:—

(1) The basic section—the theoretical explanation of imperialism in connection with the theory of accumulation.

(2) The question of temporary measures, of partial demands before the conquest of power, which I consider as the main question for the preparation of a general programme, as well as the programmes of the individual parties.

(3) A few brief remarks on economic measures after the conquest of power, war and communism, and N.E.P.

(4) The form and construction of the programme.

I will speak at once on the first point, the theoretical explanation of imperialism. There were two main questions which entered here: first, the more important, is imperialism an inevitable phase of capitalist development? The second question is a theoretical explanation of this inevitability of imperialist development.

When we say imperialism, we do not mean only the colonial expansion of the capitalist States, but the special form of expansion under the present imperialist conditions. Comrade Luxemburg formulated this special form of expansion as follows:

"In the Imperialist era, we are confronted with a struggle for the rest of the non-capitalist territory, for its new division, and finally, in connection with this, with the expansion of the capitalist and political basis of power."

These facts have been known for a long time and cannot be contradicted.

So the question presents itself in the following manner: Can capitalism expand without limit, or are there certain necessary theoretical bounds to this growth? Some people have objected to this theory of accumulation as a sort of fatalism, according to which capitalism reaches a point when it breaks down mechanically. What it actually means is something different. It means that capitalism is forced into an imperialist phase which sharpens the class antagonism, that it is forced into the most severe political and social catastrophies. It follows therefrom that it is not this limit which will determine the end of capitalism, but the severe crisis into which imperialism leads it.

This is one side of the question. And now, comrades, let us examine for a moment the opposite position occupied by the staunchest opponents of this theory. Hilferding, dealing with the Marxian theory in his book "Financial Capital," says that capitalism has in it the possibilities of unlimited expansion. As to Bauer—not to miss the Austrian head of the school—he has advanced a remarkable theory, namely, that capitalist development is conditioned and regulated by the increase of the population. This means turning upside down the Marxian theory of population, which says exactly the opposite.

What is behind all this? It is the idea that it is possible to direct imperialism backwards to free trade and its theoretical consequences. The toiling masses must not struggle forward towards socialism, but backward, allying themselves with the corresponding sections of the bourgeoisie, following the same

course. The fullest fruition of this theory was reached in an article by Hilferding, in the beginning of 1922, in which he claims that the period of imperialistic antagonisms had come to an end, and that now the era of imperialistic harmony was beginning.

I now come to the point relating to the general program and the programs of the individual parties. Here I stand in sharpest opposition to Comrade Bukharin on the question of the demands of the minimum program. Comrade Bukharin takes the position that one must separate the transitory or immediate demands from the program proper. He assigns them to a separate room, on the door of which he affixes the inscription, "Program of Action." Here, one may commit all kinds of iniquities. (Comrade Bukharin, interrupting: But admission is free!) Free admission is all right. Then let us open the door and see what things programmatically admissible we are going to find there. (Interruption: What do you consider admissible things?) That is just the point. We had opposition in Germany to the inclusion of the transitional demand for the conquest of power in the program. In this, some have seen, as Comrade Bukharin has, a certain danger of opportunism. We must, therefore, very carefully examine the question as to how far it is possible to separate the tactical principles from our general principles and aims. I am of the opinion that those who see any guarantee in this division of tactics, principles and aims are in great error, and are exposing us to just those dangers that certain of these which they seek to avoid will be neglected. (Hear, hear.) One need only look at the history of the Second International and its decay to realise that it was precisely this division of the tactical clauses of the program from the ultimate aim which accelerated its deterioration into opportunism. How did this process start in Germany? In the Bernstein Kautsky debates on tactics, the final goal remained. And to-day, when we wish to emphasise the difference between communists and social reformists, we say: We differ in our final aims; we want socialism and communism, while they do not want it. How do we prove this statement? By pointing to the tactics and the road which these people followed and which are quite different from ours. That is the principal point. I claim, therefore, that specific difference between us and the reformist socialists lies not in the fact that we keep our immediate aims to a separate compartment, apart from our program but in the fact that we bring our immediate aims and preliminary demands into the closest relationship with our principles and final aims.

Comrades, the question of these transition demands and the minimum program is not new. This question was already fought out once even on Russian ground, and I think that it will be of interest to read the documents bearing on it. It was in the autumn of 1917 that the question of the Russian Party program was discussed. The question arose then, should the

Russian Party, which was on the eve of assuming power, retain only the maximum program and eliminate the minimum program. I believe that it will be as well to quote Comrade Lenin's statement in this connection. Comrade Lenin said then—you will excuse me if the question is rather long: "Our entire program would be nothing but a scrap of paper if it were not to serve us in all eventualities and in all the phases of the struggle by its application, and not by its non-application. If our program is the formulation of the historic development of society from capitalism to socialism, it must naturally also formulate all the transition phases of this development, and must be able to explain to the proletariat at any time the process of the transition towards socialism. Hence, it follows that the proletariat must not be put in such a position where it would be forced even for a single moment to abandon its program or be itself abandoned by it.

This fact finds expression in the fact that there is not a single moment in which the proletariat having by force of circumstances assumed the power should not be obliged to take some measures for the realisation of its program, which would be in the nature of transition measures of a socialist nature. Behind the assertion that the socialist program may during some phase of the political domination of the proletariat, fail to give any directions for its realisation, colours unconsciously the other assertion—that the socialist program in general can never be realised.

From the general or fundamental part of the program, we shall now go over to the program.

We are going into the battle, i.e., we are struggling for the conquest of the political power by means of our Party. This power would be a dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poor peasantry. When we assume this power, we are not only not afraid to go beyond the limits of the bourgeois order, but we declare, on the contrary, quite openly and precisely that we will go beyond these limits, that we will march fearlessly towards socialism and that our way towards it leads via the Soviet Republic, the nationalisation of the banks and trusts, workers' control, obligatory labour, the nationalisation of the land, confiscation of the big estates, etc., etc. It is in this sense that we formulated a program of transition measures towards socialism.

But we must not brag while going to battle. We must not eliminate the minimum program, for this would be tantamount to bragging. (Hear, hear) We do not want "to demand anything from the bourgeoisie, but we must create everything ourselves, and our work must not be a tinkering within the limits of the bourgeois order."

Such an attitude would be nothing but empty bragging, for, first of all, one must conquer power, and we have not yet done that. In the first instance we must put the transition

measures towards socialism into practice and we must lead our revolution to the final victory of the international socialist revolution. It is only "when the battle is won" that one can put aside the minimum program as useless.

I shall now give you yet another quotation which will be useful for our further discussion of the program. Comrade Lenin continues:

We do not know if we will be victorious to-morrow or a little later. I, personally, am inclined to think that it will be to-morrow (I am writing this on October 5, 1917), and that we might be too late in taking over the power. However, to-morrow is to-morrow, and not to-day. We do not know how soon after our victory the revolution will come in the West. We do not know if after our victory there will not be periods of reaction and of counter-revolutionary victories. There is nothing impossible in that. Therefore, we shall, after our victory, construct "a triple line of trenches" against such eventuality.

As yet we do not know and we cannot know anything about this. No one can know it, and, therefore, it is ridiculous to throw out the minimum program, which is very much needed as long as we are still living within the bourgeois order, as long as we have not destroyed this order, have not laid the foundation for the transition to socialism, have not beaten the bourgeoisie and having beaten it, have not totally destroyed it. All this will come and will probably come much sooner than some of us expect. I am myself of the opinion that it will begin to-morrow, but to-morrow is not yet with us.

Let us deal with the minimum program on the political field. It is intended for the bourgeois republic. We add that we do not confine ourselves to its limits, but that we begin at once to struggle for the higher type—the Soviet Republic. We must do this. We must march towards the new republic with boldness and determination, and I am convinced that we will do so. However, the minimum program must not be thrown out on any account, for the Soviet Republic is not yet with us. Moreover, the possibility of "attempts at restoration" are not excluded, and we must go through with it and remove it. It is also possible that during the transition from the old to the new, "combined types" of government will make their appearance as pointed out in the "Rabochi Put" a few days ago; for instance, the Soviet Republic as well as a constituent Assembly. All this must be outlived, and then there will be ample time to throw out the minimum program.

And, in conclusion, there is the following statement:

"The same is the case on the economic field. We are all agreed that the fear to march towards socialism is tantamount to ignominious betrayal of the interests of the proletariat. We are also all of us agreed that the first steps in this direction must be measures such as the nationalisation of banks and

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trusts. Let us first of all bring into being these and similar measures, and then we can consider further steps, for experience will have broadened our outlook. Practical experience is worth a million times more than the best programs. It is quite possible and even probable that even here we shall not be able to do without "combined types" for the transition period. For instance, we cannot at once nationalise the small industrial concerns, employing a few workers, neither can we put them under a real workers' control. These concerns may be tied hand and foot through the nationalisation of the banks and trusts, but there is no reason for throwing out the minimum program, as long as there are even small relics of bourgeois conditions. As Marxists, who enter boldly into the greatest world revolution and yet take a sane view of facts, we have no right to throw out the minimum program.

"If we were to throw it out now, we should only prove that we have lost our heads, even before we could achieve victory. But we must not lose our heads, neither before nor during nor after the victory, for if we lose our heads, we shall lose all."

Comrades, thus wrote Lenin, on October 6th, 1917, at a time when he could say: "The proletarian dictatorship, our victory, is a thing of to-morrow, but we are not yet there, it is still to-day with us." Comrades, looking at it on a world scale, we are certainly justified in saying that the victory of the world revolution is not a matter of to-day. Perhaps, it is not even matter of to-morrow, at least not in the sense as this was said in 1917. If we consider things on a world scale, we are obliged to say that the interval between the present state and the realisation of the proletarian dictatorship on a world scale must be measured by years, and perhaps even by decades, at least if we include in addition to the big capitalist countries also the colonial and semi-colonial countries. For the enormous field which lies before us we must lay out exact land marks, and I am asking myself what kind of land marks and fundamental rules we should have. Comrade Bukharin's chief objection consisted in the assertion that we cannot include concrete everyday demands in the general program, because the latter are only temporary and might change every month or every week. He also said that these concrete everyday demands vary in the various countries, and that we cannot, therefore, bring them under one heading. My answer to this is: We need not bring into the general program nor into any national programs the concrete everyday demands in all their details, but we must give the fundamental tactical rules, the tactical principles and the methods (if you will allow me to say so) from which all these concrete separate demands may be unmistakably drawn.

Comrades, a second important matter relating to the transition period is our relation to bourgeois democracy. I find

in the program submitted by Comrade Bukharin an admirable critical analysis of bourgeois democracy, but do you regard the Communist International as a solid whole, so that it suffices for all its Parties, let us say from India to Soviet Russia? (Bukharin: No! Not by a long way!) First we must have a guide as to the relations of the Communists to the democrats in those countries where bourgeois democracy has not yet been established, that is to say, where the struggle must still be against absolutist and feudal forms of the State. Secondly, we must have some direction for the policy of the Communists in such a situation as that in Germany, in connection with the defence of the republic against monarchist attacks. And, thirdly, we must have some guidance for the Communists in a situation similar to that which prevailed in Germany in November, 1918, when there was an opportunity of breaking up the democracy and establishing a dictatorship. I repeat that all these transitional phases must be dealt with in their general fundamentals, not in detail. And that this is quite possible, is proven by the Communist Manifesto of 1848. Take, for example, the last chapter, which deals with the relation of Communists to other parties, to bourgeois democracy, to the petty-bourgeois, etc. In a few pithy sentences the path is indicated.

I now come, finally, to the construction of the program. I would like to remark here that, on the whole, one can agree with Comrade Bukharin's proposals. We have ceased analysing the capitalist system in our program. We have begun to analyse its imperialistic stage. We have come to the conclusion that this analysis is necessary and must be undertaken.

I believe that it will be necessary to consider the proposition of Comrade Varga, and also to return to preface our program by an analysis of the pre-capitalistic methods of exploitation. If we really want an international Communist program, we shall have to do this.

I agree that it is absolutely necessary that the program should be short, perhaps even shorter than that of Comrade Bukharin. It should also, of course, be as simple as possible. And we also admit that the German program needs improvement.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise that we must make our Communist program invulnerable. But we cannot hope for this if we leave a long stretch of our revolutionary path unilluminated, or, to use another term, if we omit a substantial portion of our road from our chart. (Loud applause.)

Comrades, we are faced with the question whether the Communist Party should have a maximum and minimum program for the period of transition. The Communist Party cannot accept a minimum program such as that of the social democratic parties before the war, because the Communist Party bases itself on the conception that capitalism has entered a severe crisis, which inevitably and rapidly will cause its final disruption. The duty of the proletariat to-day is not adaptation—for this

was the sense of the old minimum program—but to accelerate the downfall of capitalism and the victory of the revolution.

Furthermore, political demands in the minimum program cannot be realised so long as the bourgeoisie maintain their power by a class dictatorship. Even the minimum program cannot be realised because of the economic crisis, the high cost of living and the destruction of capitalism.

The Communist Party believes that capitalism has entered the revolutionary crisis and that we are witnessing the beginning of the proletarian world revolution.

This is why the main task of the proletariat and of the Communist Party is the conquest of political power and the realisation of the Maximum program.

Can the Communist Party have a Minimum Program?

This is the question before the conquest of power—which now seems longer than in 1918 and 1919—may the Communist Party renounce all demands within the limits of capitalism? Of course not. But these demands have not the same significance nor the same importance as in the old minimum program. They are only transitory demands from which the working class will rise to the larger demands of the maximum program. To-day, these demands have revolutionary significance; they are a step in the growth and intensification of the proletarian struggle.

Among these demands some are of a more temporary nature and depend upon the momentary condition of the struggle. They must be put up as slogans (demands of the hour).

The others are more durable. They contain the more important demands for which the Communist Party will fight until the conquest of power; they have a place in the program. But, being of a temporary nature, they do not determine the maximum demands and the conditions of the struggle. On the other hand, since the struggle for their realisation always brings us inevitably to the question of the conquest of power, and the realisation of maximum demands, we cannot give these major minimum demands an independent place in the program. They must be added to the maximum program and come at the end of the maximum demands.

In the program we must give the general lines of our tactics, taking into consideration the principles of the Communist Party and the conditions of the present historical epoch, but we cannot now designate the special application of these outlines at any given moment.

In conclusion, it is true that no programs are worth anything without a real revolutionary movement of the proletariat. On the other hand, it is also true that every proletarian movement, which has no substantial theoretical basis and a clear revolutionary aim, is condemned to impotence, and to be a tool in the hands of the capitalists.