

THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF CAPITALIST COUNTRIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE UNITED FRONT

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THE E.C.C.I. appeal to the workers of all countries concerning the establishment of a "united front of struggle of Communist and social-democratic workers" against the capitalist advance and fascism, published in "l'Humanite" of March 5 and "Pravda" of March 6,* brought great confusion into the social-democratic parties and the social-democratic press.

The Comintern and its sections are not raising this question of the united front for the first time. On January 1, 1922, the E.C.C.I. and the Central Council of the Red International of Trade Unions proposed to the working men and women of all lands to set up a united front of struggle against the capitalist offensive. In this appeal we read:

"The Executive Committee of the Communist International and the Red Profintern, having examined questions of the position of the international proletariat and the world situation in general, have come to the set conviction that the situation demands the amalgamation of all the forces of the international proletariat, the establishment of a united front of all parties, relying on the proletariat, regardless of the differences which exist between them and in so far as they are desirous of making a joint struggle on behalf of the immediate, pressing needs of the proletariat. The E.C.C.I. calls upon proletarians of other parties to do all in their power to influence their own parties in the interests of common action . . .

"The Communist International calls upon all Communist workers and all honest workers in general, wherever they may be, in their workshops or in their meetings, to unite together as one family of toilers, capable of defending itself and of offering resistance to all attacks of capital, in every critical moment. Forge an indomitable will for proletarian unity, which will wreck every attempt to disunite the proletarians, from wherever it may come. Only if your proletarians will give each other a hand in the workshops and mines, will it be possible to force all those parties which rely on the proletariat and make their appeals to it, to amalgamate in a common defensive struggle against capital. Only then will they be compelled to break their alliance with the capitalist parties."

When, after the war and under the influence of the October Revolution the tide of the revolu-

tionary movement rose high in the most important capitalist countries, and when in the vanquished countries—Germany and Austria—proletarian revolutions broke out, accompanied by the setting up of soviets of workers; soldiers' and sailors' deputies, the social-democratic parties and leaders of the reformist trade unions, in attempts to save their bourgeoisie, not only betrayed the interests of the working class, but physically destroyed the revolutionary workers and their leaders (Germany). Collaboration with the bourgeoisie on the part of the social-democratic parties and the trade union leaders evoked considerable indignation among the working class members of these organisations.

In Germany (already during the war), in Austria, Hungary, England, America and other countries, the revolutionary workers, members of social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions, and the syndicalists, began to form Communist parties. The majority of the members of the German Independent Party, of the French Socialist Party and of the Czechoslovakian social-democratic party, spoke at their congresses in favour of affiliation to the Communist International. The minority in these parties, who did not agree with the Congress decisions of their parties, were left to continue their existence as social-democratic parties. Thus a split occurred in the trade unions in France, Czechoslovakia and other countries. Because of the collaboration of the social-democratic parties and trade unions, with the bourgeoisie, a split occurred in the working class in all countries of the capitalist world.

In 1921 the bourgeoisie of the large capitalist countries had so much recovered from its post-war, revolutionary catastrophes, thanks to the assistance rendered by the social-democratic parties and the leaders of reformist trade unions, that it began to take away from the proletariat all the gains it had won during this period.

Immediately after the war, when the bourgeoisie was hard pressed by the workers, both the social-democratic party and trade union bureaucrats, while annihilating the revolutionary workers and deceiving the broad masses, pretended that they had won from the bourgeoisie the eight-hour working day and social legislation (including unemployment insurance in Germany, England and Austria). Since, before the war, social democracy and the trade unions had participated in the

* "Daily Worker," March 8th.

struggle around the daily interests of the workers, the treacherous rôle of the social-democrats and trade union bureaucrats during and after the war was not, at first, obvious to the broad masses of workers. In reply to the E.C.C.I. appeal of January 1, 1922, both the Second and the Second-and-a-half Internationals, pressed to it by the masses, took part in a joint conference with the Communist International in April, 1922, on the question of forms of struggle against the capitalist offensive. The agreement which was arrived at at this conference was openly violated by both the Second and the Second-and-a-half Internationals. Thus many workers became convinced that the parties of the Second International and the sections of the Amsterdam International do not wish to form a united front in the struggle against the bourgeois offensive.

During the relative stabilisation of capitalism, the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats took part in the introduction of capitalist nationalisation at the cost of increased exploitation of the workers, and in the preparations for armed intervention against the Soviet Union. They led the campaign against the Soviet Union, and acted on behalf of the bourgeoisie as the main source of the calumnious inventions which served as a cover for preparations for intervention. They drove the Communists and revolutionary workers out of all mass organisations where the social-democrats held the leadership. The doctrine of Marx, which is the cornerstone of the class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, was waived aside by the social-democrats and trade union bureaucrats, who introduced in its place collaboration with the bourgeoisie, "Economic democracy," and the "theory" of "organised" capitalism. They tried to convince the workers that the organisation of large concerns, the fixing of monopoly prices and so on, is the road to the peaceful change of capitalism into socialism.

This, of course, does not stop them now, when all their theories are proved openly bankrupt as a result of the world economic crisis, from persuading the workers to accept other theories, which draw them away from the class struggle, or from calling them Marxian theories.

When the crisis began and the capitalists threw millions of proletarians on to the streets, the Second and Amsterdam Internationals hypocritically elaborated a plan of "struggle" against unemployment, which, actually, only helped the bourgeoisie to introduce curtailments in unemployment insurance where it already existed (in Germany, Austria, England and Czecho-Slovakia) or else hindered the struggle of the Communist Parties and Red trade unions to get social insur-

ance introduced in those countries where hitherto it had not existed.

Under various pretexts the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats helped the bourgeoisie to introduce cuts in the wages of those workers who were still in industry (especially under the pretext that cuts in wages would be compensated by a drop in the prices of products and articles of general consumption).

The social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats pursued the same treacherous policy when the political rights of the workers were being curtailed and trampled under foot (the introduction of martial law, the dissolution of revolutionary, working class organisations, closing down the Communist Party press and that of revolutionary working class organisations, shooting down demonstrators, etc.). Even in cases where, under pressure from the working masses, the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats were compelled to lead strikes, they invariably betrayed them (big strikes of textile-workers in England and France, of miners in America and Belgium). And when the strikes were led by the Communists, the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition, the social-democratic party and the trade union bureaucrats accepted the help of the police to violate the united front of the workers in the strike struggle (the transport workers' strike in Berlin in 1932, the strike of the Lodz textile workers in Poland, the railwaymen's strike in Rumania). It goes without saying that the members of the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition called upon their supporters not merely to participate in strikes declared by the reformists, but also to stand in the front ranks of the strikers (the general strike and miners' strike in England, the general twenty-four-hour strike in March, 1932, and the miners' strike this year in Poland, the general twenty-four-hour strike of German workers in 1932 and many other cases).

The social-democratic parties and reformist trade union leaders agree to call strikes only in order to stem the egress of their own members from their organisations, since among them the influence of, and confidence in, the Red trade union is growing; they agree to call strikes only in order the better to betray the masses in future. The Communists, knowing full well these ulterior motives of the reformists, are all the more active in their participation in strikes, and in being the dynamic force of these strikes. The Communists are the first to take upon themselves the blows of reaction and fascism. This clearly shows the masses *who* it is that is conducting the united front.

The double dealing of the social-democratic

parties and trade union bureaucrats on the question of the attitude to the bourgeoisie (their speeches to the workers in an oppositional spirit, and their actual support of bourgeois governments in parliaments; the utterances of the trade union bureaucrats against cuts in wages and unemployment insurance, and their actual agreement with the factory-owners and their votes in parliaments in favour of cuts) has brought about a feeling of uncertainty in the social-democratic parties and the reformist trade unions. The members of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions have begun more and more to participate in strikes led by the revolutionary workers and the trade union opposition (the transport workers' strike in Berlin, the miners' strike in Brûx and in Belgium, the textile-workers' strike in Poland and many strikes in Spain).

The attitude of members of reformist trade unions and the social-democratic party, and local organisations of this party to the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress is very characteristic. As is known, the Second and Amsterdam Internationals were strongly against participating in this congress. However, they could not prevent the attendance at this congress of eighty-two social-democratic representatives of workers' organisations. In France, 141 local organisations of the Socialist Party gave their endorsement to the decisions of the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress, despite the fact that the Socialist Party leadership threatened to exclude these organisations from the party for participating in the congress.

In Germany the united front of social-democratic and Communist workers is established primarily on the streets in fighting against the fascists. But we have also had fine examples in Germany of the united front during strikes (the Berlin transport workers' strike, for instance).

In England, the local branches of the Independent Labour Party, which urged the I.L.P. to leave the Labour Party, are now demanding that it leave the Second International and affiliate to the Communist International. The criticism hurled by the Communists and revolutionary workers against the social-democratic party and the reformist trade union officials, has obtained a ready response among the members of these organisations. The united front of Communists and social democrats has strengthened in the struggle in all countries, and it is this that has compelled the social-democratic parties and the Second International to negotiate with the Communists on the united front.

The social-democratic party and the social democratic press in many countries has put forward demagogic proposals for "a pact of non-aggression" between the social-democrats and

Communists. They wrote in their press that since the Soviet Government has concluded pacts of non-aggression with bourgeois governments, why should not the Communists and social-democrats conclude similar pacts of non-aggression? At the same time, of course, they remained silent on the point that the Soviet Union concludes pacts of non-aggression on the part of imperialist governments towards the Soviet Union, which actually pursues a policy of peace and is not preparing to attack bourgeois countries. Moreover, they remain silent on the fact that when the Soviet Government concluded its non-aggression pact, the press of the C.P.S.U. did not undertake an obligation to cease criticising the bourgeoisie and its agents in capitalist countries. The Communists cannot fail to attack the social-democratic parties and the trade union bureaucrats when the latter attack the working class and betray their interests. Let the social-democratic parties and the trade union bureaucrats begin a *real* struggle against the capitalist offensive and fascism, together with the Communists, and it will immediately become unnecessary to strive for "pacts of non-aggression," because they will then be actually realised. But that is just the point; the social-democratic parties want us to cease our criticism without carrying on a real struggle against the bourgeoisie themselves.

The social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucrats wrote and declared: The Communists and social-democrats represent a united army; how can the army fight successfully, if inside it the Communists criticise the social-democrats? And at the same time they hide the fact that ever since the formation of the Communist Party their entire activities have amounted to urging their own "army" against the Communists, and doing their utmost to keep the army, as a whole, back from fighting against the bourgeoisie.

The desire for unity among the workers is very strong. Many workers may think that the Communists are acting unwisely when they refuse to accept the conditions offered by the social-democrats concerning the cessation of criticism against the latter in such a critical moment for the workers, and since it is such an obstacle to establishing the united front, the social democratic parties exploit this feeling and make it appear that they want unity, while the Communists do not.

In the Manifesto of the Second International Bureau of February 19, we read:

"The danger is too great to allow the unanimous desire of the working class for a joint proletarian struggle to be used for party political manœuvres . . . The Socialist Labour International is desirous of joint action on the part of the entire working class on the basis of open,

honest agreement . . . We call upon the German workers and the workers of all countries, in view of the tragic danger before us, to cease mutual attacks and fight together against fascism. The Socialist Labour International has always been ready to negotiate with the Communist International for united struggle as soon as the latter expresses its willingness in this direction."

But it is not joint struggle that the Second International and its sections want, but that the Communists should cease to unmask them. We have nothing whatever to fear from "criticism" on the part of the social democrats. The social democratic parties and the Second International have to convince the workers "to forget the past" and have to persuade them into believing that the social democrats are prepared to turn over a new leaf of history. But despite all this, the Communist International was right when, in its appeal to the workers of all lands, it declared that it considered it possible that on the basis of two conditions: the fight against fascism and against any lowering of the standard of living of the workers and unemployed (see C.I. Manifesto to workers of all lands on the establishment of a united front of struggle between the Communist and social-democratic workers, points a and b)—"to recommend the Communist parties during the time of common fight against capital and fascism to refrain from making attacks on social-democratic organisations." The appeal, however, emphasises that "the most ruthless fight must be conducted against all those who violate the conditions of the agreement in carrying out the united front, as against strikebreakers who disrupt the united front of the workers." (Point c of the Manifesto.)

The social-democratic parties say: Stop your criticism; the Communist International replies: "Yes, but only on condition that the social-democrats observe the conditions of the agreement concerning concrete struggle in actual deeds, and only for the duration of that struggle." And the workers understand this. Proof of this lies in the fact that the Communist International Manifesto wrought havoc among the social-democratic parties. Leon Blum, in his article, "Moscow Ignores Zurich," printed on March 7 in the "Populaire" (the organ of the French Socialist Party), wrote:

"The Socialist Labour International has made a direct offer to the Comintern to open up negotiations as soon as possible. The Communist International in its Manifesto does not appeal to the Socialist International, and the Comintern Manifesto does not even reply to the offer of the Second International. *There is not a word in it about negotiations.*"

The official organ of the Second International Secretariat (Information Internationale) on March 6, as though repudiating Blum writes:

"The Communist International Manifesto contains a clear reply to the appeal of the Bureau of the Socialist International of February 19."

Thus the Socialist Party of France hid the real essence of the Communist International Manifesto from the readers of its organ, and did not want to recognise even that which the Secretariat of the Second International could not deny. How is this? This is because the French Socialist Party had to hide from the workers that the Communist International recommends its sections to make a proposal to the social-democratic parties to carry out a joint struggle around the actual questions in each given country.

The social-democratic press of Czecho-Slovakia gave a clear idea of the sort of united front it wanted to establish between Communist and social-democratic parties. Thus, the "Pravo Lidu" (the central organ of Czech social-democracy) in an article by the Editor-in-Chief, Joseph Stivin, on the subject of the proposal made by the Czecho-Slovakian social-democrats in 1920, writes about the creation of a "permanent socialist congress," which should be composed of representatives of political, trade union and co-operative working class organisations of all nationalities in the Czech Republic on the basis of the class struggle. This congress should be the highest organ and its decisions binding upon all. Even now the social-democratic party of Czecho-Slovakia conceives unity to be "mutual unity on joint work, the democratic subjection of the minority to the majority." This means that the Czecho-Slovakian social-democratic party, even now, wants the Communist Party to enter into an organisation, in which it will be in the minority and that it should submit to the decisions of the majority. But this would not be a united front in the struggle of the working class, but liquidation of the struggle, since the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party, being fettered to social-democracy, would cease to be the vanguard of the working class in its struggle. The Swiss social-democratic party reacted in the same way to the proposal for the creation of the united front. As the "Baseler Vorwaerts" reports, the Central Committee of Swiss social-democracy entirely avoided the conditions of the Comintern about concrete joint struggle against capital and fascism. This fact alone clearly proves the refusal to enter into the united front. But this is not all. Swiss social-democracy demands the conclusion of a "pact of non-aggression" and that the Communist Party submit to "proletarian solidarity," i.e., that it submit ideologically and politically to

social-democracy, just as the Central Organ of Czech social-democracy also proposes. That the proposals of two parties of the Second International should thus coincide is no accident.

The "Wiener Arbeiter Zeitung" (organ of the Austrian Marxists) in an article entitled "One Step Forward," printed on March 7, writes:

"The reply of the Communist International to the proposal for a united front of the Second International Bureau came too late; so late, in fact, that in Germany, where the united front was required most of all, the working masses cannot be told about the proposal of the Communist International, since all the working class press is closed down. How different things could have been in Germany, if this willingness had been established before."

The "Wiener Arbeiter Zeitung" purposely refrains from informing its readers of the fact that the German Communist Party, immediately after the previous elections to the Prussian Landtag, appealed to all workers' organisations in Germany with the proposal for a united front against the capitalist offensive. The social-democratic party and reformist trade unions did not reply to this proposal. On July 20, 1932, when von Papen dissolved the social-democratic Prussian government, the Communist Party of Germany made a proposal for a general strike to the social-democratic party and the Federation of Trade Unions of Germany. In reply they declared that this call for a strike was an act of provocation.

A similar proposal was made by the German Communist Party on January 30, 1933, when Hitler was appointed Reichskanzler, and the "Vorwaerts" replied: "Hitler came to power legally, we must wait and see what he will do. To act now would be shooting in the air." A third time, on March 1, 1933, the Central Committee of the German Communist Party appealed

to the social-democratic party and the Federation of Trade Unions of Germany with a proposal for a joint struggle against fascism. No answer was forthcoming to this proposal. Is it possible that the "Wiener Arbeiter Zeitung" knows nothing of this? Yet it hides the truth and tries to persuade its readers into believing that the Communists are to blame for the crimes of the German social-democratic party.

In vain does the Secretariat of the Socialist International, "fearing" that the socialist parties will enter into a united front with the Communists, propose that they "wait a little with the discussion of the Communist proposals in individual countries, until the Executive Committee of the Socialist International has decided on its attitude to the new platform of the Comintern." The social-democratic press has already sufficiently frankly shown its attitude to unity in deed. The Executive Committee of the Second International would have liked to do it a little less sincerely, a little more skilfully. But actually the refusal of the social-democratic parties to join in a united front is quite in keeping with the plans of the Executive Committee of the Second International.

In Germany, the fascists have begun to smash up the Communist organisations with the assistance of social-democratic police presidents. The reformist trade unions and social democratic party did not prevent this in any way. Now the bourgeoisie, with the help of the fascist storm troops, are crushing the social-democratic and trade union organisations. Thus does the bourgeoisie reward its servants.

Social Democratic Party leaders and the trade union bureaucrats have no desire for unity in the working class; their hypocritical utterances about unity are merely to keep the workers under their influence. But social-democracy will be unmasked. The working class united front of struggle will be established.