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# COMMUNISM

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## Marine Le Pen means fascism and war !



- ▶ Joint declaration – first of May 2017
- ▶ MLM Center (B) – 12 Arguments on Belgium
- ▶ Georgi Dimitrov – The class character of fascism

Maison du Peuple

This number is the fourth one and has been published in May, 2017, as a common initiative from Belgium and France. We promote the following websites as revolutionary media:  
massline.net from Afghanistan,  
sarbaharapath.com from Bangladesh,  
centremlm.be from Belgium,  
lesmaterialistes.com from France.

« Fascism in power was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital. »

**Georgi Dimitrov**

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# Joint declaration

## First of May 2017

This May 1, 2017 is marked by the historical strengthening of the tendency to imperialist war. Each camp polishes its weapons, strengthens its capacity for action, promotes nationalism.

The United Kingdom tumbles to the exit of the European Union with the Brexit; in India, Narendra Modi organizes a regime in which Hinduism turns to fanaticism.

In the United States, it is Donald Trump, that coarse, narrow billionaire who took the lead ; in Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has reinforced, in a generalized manner, his prerogatives as president relying on religion.

China is strengthening its armaments, having just launched an aircraft carrier built in complete independence; North Korea is multiplying missile tests with the aim of endowing them with nuclear warheads. In the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte leads the country with extreme nationalist populism; Japan increased its military budget for the fifth time in 10 years, reaching a record 1% of GDP.

This tendency is general, both in the capitalist-imperialist countries and in the semi-colonial capitalist bureaucratic countries. The crisis inherent to capitalism can not be resolved and the conquest of profit requires more exploitation within and more tendency to interventionism.

There is no other way out except a rush forward, the march towards war.

The price to pay, in case of incapacity to assume this orientation, is the collapse: countries like Libya and Iraq already do not exist any more, dismembered by the others; Afghanistan and Venezuela are swinging into chaos, while between 2011 and 2015, Brazil experienced more deaths by voluntary homicide than in Syria, which is experiencing a widespread war.

Given this background, on the first of May 2017, we therefore call the masses of Belgium and France to be constantly and thoroughly vigilant about the electoral progression of Marine Le Pen.

Its electoral success in the first round of the French presidential elections, with 7.7 million votes, reinforces indeed a double trend of historical importance.



There is in France a tendency towards nationalism and corporatism, that is to say the complete submission to capitalism in the name of the economic efficiency of the country.

But there is also a tendency to expansionism, to the strengthening of the capacity to project outwards - which is the basis of imperialism.

And the historical situation of the Belgian nation is known: it is marked by weaknesses in terms of its cultural unification. Consequently, France inevitably tends to seek to satellite a part of Belgium: Wallonia, even Brussels itself.

There is a convergence of interests between French imperialism and the Flemish far right, which would both

benefit from a negation of the Belgian nation, dismembering it to form real fiefs.

We would like to emphasize that it is not a question of seeing a plot or of imagining a French invasion, but of grasping a fundamental tendency which is based, on the one hand, on the expansionist needs of French capitalism in crisis, on the other on the attempt of Flemish capitalists to form fiefs, where nationalism would grant them political supremacy.

There is here an explosive situation, and this is even truer as the European Union, this capitalist utopia of a pacified Europe, collapses ever more under the blows of the selfish national interests, which is typical of

imperialism.

Capitalists have promised progress and peace, but each national capitalism in crisis knows only one, inevitable, way out : fascism internally and war on the outside, whereas the world has already seen the destructive consequences of this historic law, with the First and Second World Wars.

The Belgian question does not attract the attention of Marine Le Pen alone: it can be seen that in the first round of the French presidential elections of 2017, all the "sovereignist" or nationalist candidates already





had expressed a favorable opinion on the integration of Wallonia into France.

Marine Le Pen has already frankly approached the issue in July 2011, and this was especially easy as the Flemish far right Flemish is very close to her:

“If Belgium is going to split, if Flanders pronounces its independence, which seems more and more credible a possibility, the French republic would do well to welcome Wallonia into its heart. The historical and fraternal ties which unite our two peoples are too strong for France to abandon Wallonia.”

In 2010 already, Nicolas Dupont-Aignan spoke of “daring to clearly tell to our Walloon friends that France would welcome them with open arms”; Jean-Luc Mélenchon explained that he was “a ‘rattachiste’ as they say. If the Flemings leave, if Belgium evaporates, then, let the Walloons come with us.”

It is also the case of François Asselineau (“in the hypothesis - at present not very probable, but not improbable either - in which the ‘rattachiste’ (or ‘reunionist’) current ended by rallying a majority of French-speaking voters, France should accede to this majority demand”).

It goes without saying that the French expansionist attempts to profit from the profound Franco-Belgian friendship to justify themselves historically. It is very important to unmask such an undertaking, in order to truly strengthen genuine encounters between peoples, in a long process that will ultimately lead to the World Socialist Republic.



However, it is clear that, in any case, no progressive process can exist on the planet without being carried by the working class, without breaking with the growing power of the monopolies, without being able to break the forces that develop fascism.

The Communists must therefore be at the forefront of the anti-fascist struggle, knowing that the inevitable evolution of capitalism led to the formation of two camps: the camp of fascism, the camp of popular democracy, the latter being the natural terrain for the Communists .

Of course, this demands the ideological capacity not to yield to the pseudo-revolutionary demagogy of leftism, which is opposed to anti-fascism considered here as a “compromise” protecting bourgeois institutions.

Leftism is mistaken here, for nothing is static in society, because of the inherent instability of capitalism in crisis. The battle for democracy carries within it, inevitably, the break with the power of the monopolies, which is being strengthened in an ever more tyrannical way.

During this process, it will be a historic task for the Communists to organize the masses in general on the democratic ground of anti-fascism, with the unavoidable military confrontation of reaction and revolution.

For this reason, there is the task for the Communists to know the historical heritage of anti-fascist struggle, in particular the Spanish, Greek, Italian, German, Belgian and French experiences.



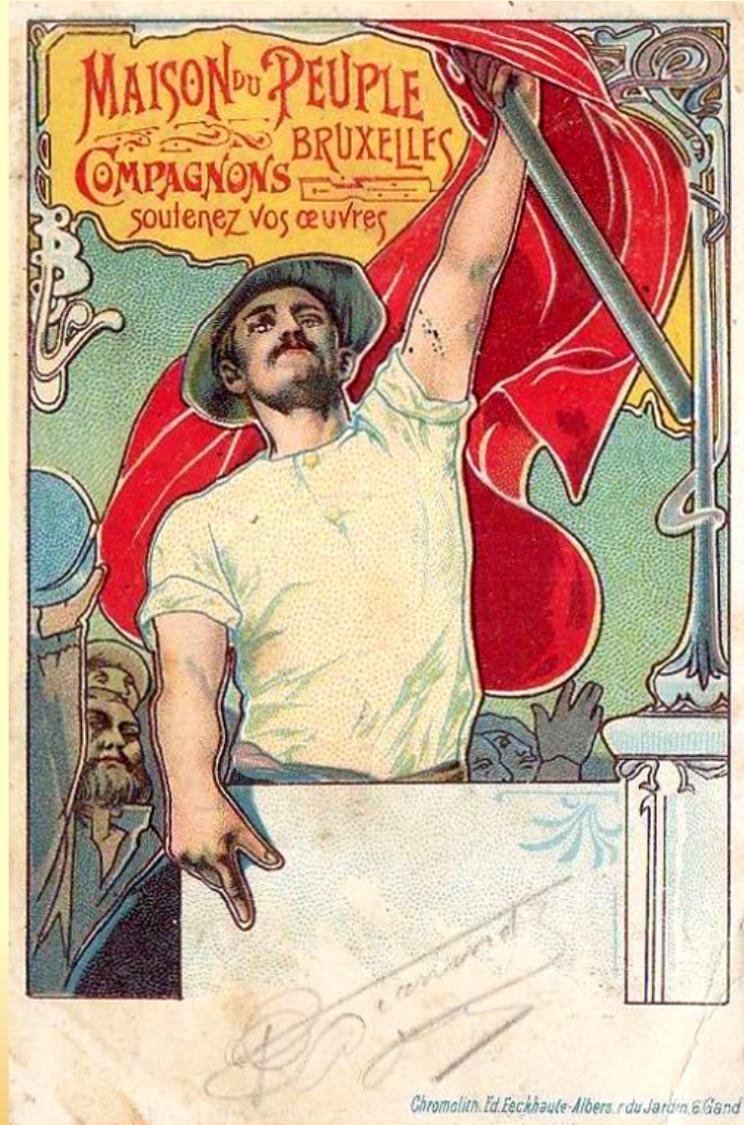
The war of the people against fascism will inevitably be the historical sequence to come, which will sweep away the attempt of capitalism to maintain itself in spite of its entirely decadent and destructive nature.

It is evident, therefore, that the question of the environment will be a particularly important detonator in the mobilization of the masses. This is part of the process of dialectical materialistic understanding of the world that the masses will experience in their ever more frontal opposition to capitalism knowing only the path of confrontation and destruction.

It is a whole new era that opens here, allowing a new undeniable impetus to the revolution, on the condition of grasping reality adequately, of knowing well the historical characteristics of its own country.

That is why, on the first of May, we affirm that the future belongs to the masses, not to fascism, and that the organized masses will be able to wage war against the anti-democratic forces seeking to prevent them from mastering their destiny, to establish the socialist society which corresponds to their needs.

**Marxist Leninist Maoist Center of Belgium**  
**Communist Party of France (marxist leninist maoist)**  
**First of May 2017**



## MLM Center (B)

### 12 Arguments on Belgium



#### 1. The historical separation between Belgium and the Netherlands

The separation between Belgium and the Netherlands has not been natural. Philip II of Spain hastened it, mainly intending to suppress Calvinism which carried an anti-feudal approach, while capitalism strongly developed in the area.

The impossibility of maintaining unity is due to various reasons and speeded up the military defeat in the Belgian zone. Belgium is as readily a crossing point, which is testified by the many wars historically waged there, as the northern part was partly preserved from these military offensives in its opposition to Spain, thanks to the canals.

Another important factor was capitalism's greater development in the southern area. It led the patricians and the aristocracy to wish to avoid an open clash, which would have set in motion a nascent proletariat, which was already numerically sizeable, and therefore threatening. It can be seen, among others, from the fate of the *stadhouder* and Knight of the Golden Fleece Lamoral, Count of Egmont, who was beheaded by order of the Council

of Troubles serving Spain.

The Netherlands' coastal orientation has to be emphasized. It had bigger ports than Belgium and it had more interest in a confrontation with Spain to try to break its maritime monopoly in America and Asia.

#### 2. The significance of Catholicism

The Catholic forces historically bound to feudalism naturally strengthened during the Spanish intervention. They were, moreover, better established in the South than in the North.

The main consequence of the separation between Belgium and what was to be the Dutch Republic consists in the triumph of Catholicism and in a

wave of general « recatholicization » in the society, in the spirit of the 1566 Lettres de Ségovie written by Philip II of Spain.

The Inquisition and a feudal refusal of whatever strengthened capitalism caused a terrible stagnation of Belgium, all the more reinforcing the intellectuals as well as the cultural and social Catholic influence, in particular with its « charity » policy.

The general states gathered for the last time in 1600; the political and cultural life faded, while the country became an isolated backyard of Spain. The comparison with the historical, cultural and intellectual wealth of the Netherlands at the same time, with its bourgeois tolerant politics, is all the more striking.

### 3. Belgium's historic moment of subordination

When Spain historically collapsed, Austria took possession of Belgium, which from « Spanish Netherlands » became « Austrian Netherlands ». It was however only one aspect of the dependence which was developing at the time.

With the Barrier Treaty at the beginning of the 18th century, the Dutch Republic took possession of some Belgian fortified towns. It had the massive support of Great-Britain, which wished to counter the French expansionism and to avoid its geographical moving closer.

The importance of centrifugal and clerical forces in Belgium allowed this situation. These forces could even lead the Brabant Revolution, which gave birth to the short-lived United Belgian States in 1790, in opposition to the absolutist policies of the Austrian emperor Joseph II.

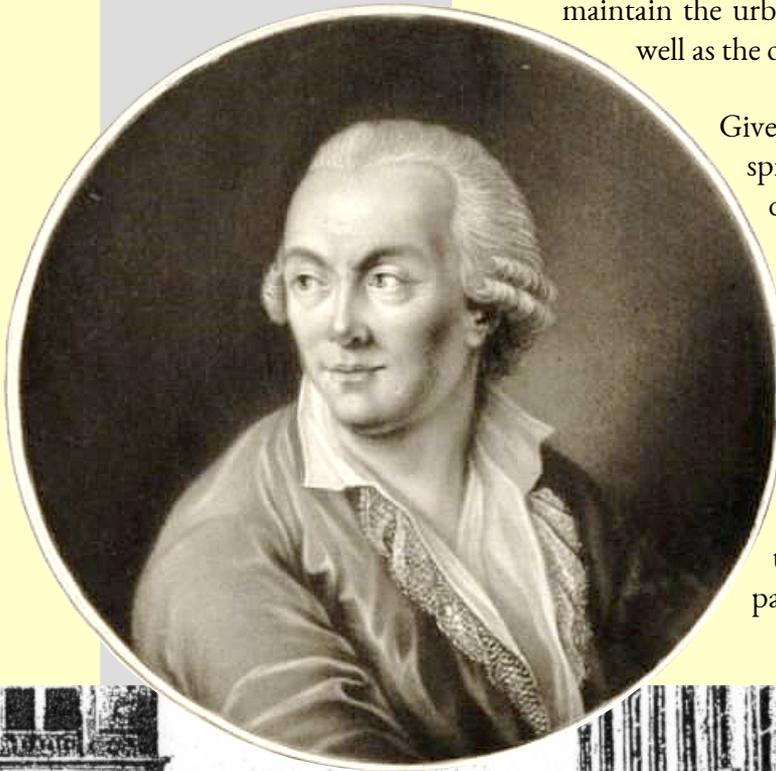
Historically, the Belgian clergy, joined by the Hungarian aristocracy, sealed the fate of the Austrian empire unable to become an absolute monarchy and to tear itself away from a powerful feudal base.

The natural effect of this situation was Belgium's deepening by further strengthening the clergy and widespread reaction. This made the country very vulnerable in front of French expansionism.



#### 4. The great national crisis

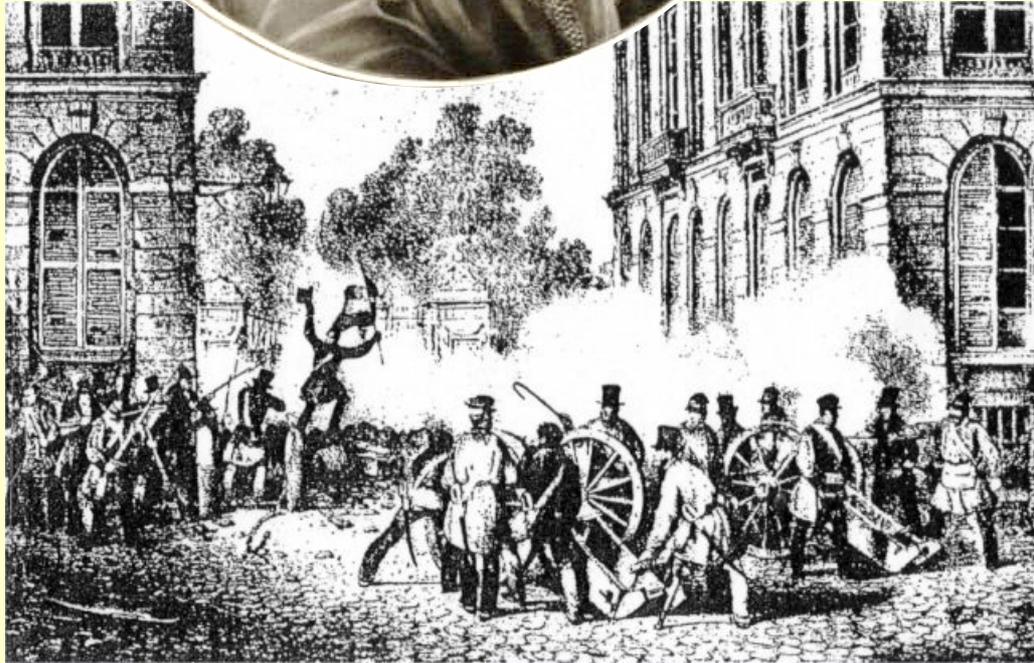
This historical moment of Belgium's dependence stemmed from the non-emerge of a bourgeois national liberation movement against the Austrian emperor. The reaction took charge of the opposition to Austria, trying to maintain the urban privileges, which kept the country divided, as well as the clergy's position of strength.



Given that the French expansionist intervention also spread values linked to the French revolution, it deeply disturbed the existing Belgian historical national structure.

Initially, during the 1790 phase of the United Belgian States, Henri van der Noot's clerical forces called the « statistes », appropriated the national issue at the expense of Jean-François Vonck's republican forces. However, when France took control of Belgium, first in 1792 and then in 1794, anti-feudal reforms were carried out, particularly at the expense of the clergy.

This means that the democratic question was paradoxically answered on an anti-national basis. It had two consequences. On the one hand, there was a strong tendency to support the French expansionist and republican impulse allowing the development of the bourgeoisie. On the other, there was a tendency to reject this evolution, as evidenced by the episode of the war waged by some sectors of Flemish peasants in 1789, compared with the Matins of Bruges and the Battle of the



Golden Spurs when, at the beginning of the 14th century, Philip IV's annexation attempt was defeated.

#### 5. Independence of Belgium

At the time of the Napoleonic collapse, Great-Britain wanted to avoid the formation of an independent Belgium at all costs. The reason was that a

historical liking for France had appeared amongst a section of the population. Therefore, its annexation by the Netherlands was organised.

The Belgian area had more inhabitants than the Dutch one - more than 3,5 million against 2,5 million. However, it remained from the start well away from power, both politically and administratively, thus organizing a virtually colonial scope.

In 1870, one out of seven ministers, one out of 117 high ranking officials of the Interior ministry and 288 out of 1967 arming officers were Belgians. The Netherlands also brought a two thousand million national debt, while Belgium's one was of only 30 millions.

The situation didn't last long before the battle for independence. During the Belgian Revolution, there were only 17 bourgeois amongst the 456 killed, and 41 bourgeois amongst the 1226 wounded.

The Belgian people's base was beginning to historically assert itself. They tried to find the path towards a democratic revolution, while socialism began to assert itself due to the growth of capitalism, thus of the proletariat.

## 6. « Belgium, a paradise of mainland liberalism »

The industrial revolution, with the advances in production industries and the emergence of the steam engine, transformed Belgium which became a hub, thanks to coal production.

It grew annually from 2,6 million tons in 1831 to 10,6 in 1861 and then 22,7 in 1901. This means that in the middle of the 19th century, if Belgium produced far less coal than Great-Britain (45 million tons), it already surpassed Germany and France who respectively produced only 3,5 and 3,4 million tons.

The canal transport has been put aside since the Netherlands gave an access to the sea. Yet, in 1870, there were 863 kilometres of State-owned railway lines and 2231 kilometres belonging to private companies; in 1879, there were already 720 railway stations.

In his *Capital*, Marx noticed about Belgium:

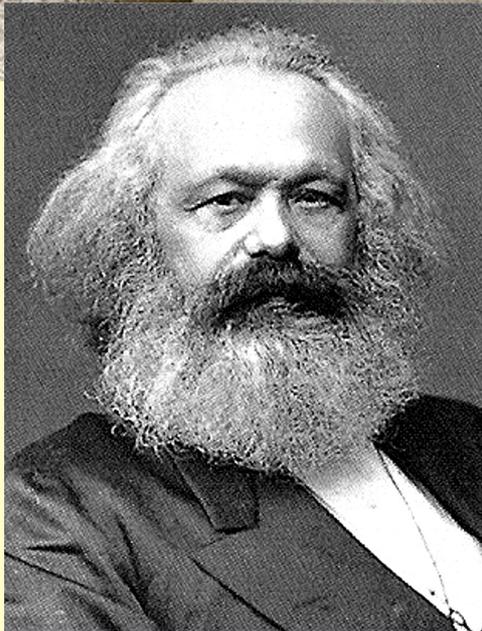
« Belgium, the paradise of Continental Liberalism shows no trace of this movement. Even in the coal and metal mines, labourers of both sexes, and all ages, are consumed, in perfect « freedom » at any period and through any length of time. Of every 1.000 persons employed there, 733 are men, 88 women, 135 boys and 44 girls under 16; in the blast furnaces, also, of every 1.000, 668 are men, 149 are women, 98 boys and 85 girls under 16. Add to this the low wages for the enormous exploitation of



KARL MARX FEIERTE 1847/1848 IN DIESEM HAUS MIT DEM  
 "DEUTSCHEN ARBEITERVEREIN" UND DER  
 "ASSOCIATION DEMOCRATIQUE" SYLVESTER  
 ER LEBTE VON FEBRUAR 1845 BIS MÄRZ 1848 IN BRÜSSEL

KARL MARX

LIVED IN BRUSSELS FROM FEBRUARY 1845 TO MARCH 1848  
 HE CELEBRATED NEW YEAR'S EVE 1847/1848  
 TOGETHER WITH THE "DEUTSCHER ARBEITERVEREIN"  
 AND THE "ASSOCIATION DEMOCRATIQUE" IN THIS PLACE



mature and immature labour power. The average daily pay for a man is 2 shillings 8 pence, for a woman, 1 shilling 8 pence, for a boy, 1 shilling 2,5 pence. As a result, Belgium had in 1863, as compared with 1850, nearly doubled both the amount and the value of its exports of coal, iron, etc.

## 7. Native country of Marxism

The progress of capitalism in Belgium naturally implied the appearance of a numerous and concentrated proletariat. Bearing democracy, the latter was in direct confrontation with the nature of the regime born in 1830. The bourgeoisie saw to it that only 44.000 people were allowed to vote after independence, within a parliamentary monarchy.

Kautsky noticed:

« Marx, along with Engels, lives in Brussels until 1848. There, they worked on the foundations of their new teaching and wrote The Communist Manifesto. Inasmuch as we want to call one single country as the native land of Communism, Belgium has the right to claim this designation for itself. As a transit country where German, French and English influences and ideas met, Belgium offered the appropriate soil for an international teaching which united in a higher unity the German philosophy, the English economy and the French spirit of revolution ».

Unlike the numerous and uncoordinated scattered rebellions attempt, as the Belgian strike of 1886, the social democracy born by the Belgian Labour Party in 1885 developed a mass line leading to many massive political strikes in 1891, 1892, 1893, 1902 and 1913.

In this context, one of the well-known and widely spread works was *Catéchisme du Peuple* by Alfred Defuisseaux (300.000 copies handed out). The workers' campaigns resulted in the broadening of the right to vote. The universal and egalitarian suffrage was established in 1913.

## 8. The historical weakness of social democracy

Social democracy had yet a problem. Within the Belgian context, it contented with calling to the fulfilment of the democratic tasks that the bourgeoisie had not been able to put into practice, while picturing it as a socialist phase.

The Belgian Labour Party was not able to really understand Marxism; it only positioned itself as a genuine democratic party, as can be noticed as regards its stances on education, while half of the population was still illiterate in 1866, as well as on the arts and against alcohol.

He could not cope with the integration in bourgeois institutions, as mentioned by Rosa Luxemburg in her controversy with Emile Vandervelde in 1902-1903.

Rosa Luxemburg :

« The sudden collapse of the great action by the Belgian working class towards which all the international proletariat was looking is a tough blow for the movement of every country. When one reviews last week's short campaign, the lack of a clear and consistent tactics from our Belgian leaders is obvious. At first, we see them limiting the struggle within the Chamber. Although there was not any hope for a capitulation of the clerical majority, the socialist faction didn't seem willing to proclaim a general strike. It burst following the sovereign decision of the impatient proletarian mass (...) The general strike had burst by itself, so





the socialist leaders immediately announced their solidarity with the working masses and the general strike, the supreme means of struggle. General strike until victory, such was the slogan launched by the socialist faction and the party's leadership (...). *Le Peuple* dated the 18th says: 'The general strike will last as long as necessary to win universal suffrage over'. The same day, the Labour Party's general council decided to carry on with the general strike following the Chamber's refusal of revision. On the morning of the 20th of April, the central body in Brussels exclaimed: 'Carrying on with the general strike means to save the universal suffrage'. But the same day, the socialist faction and the party's leadership decided to bring the general strike to an end, in a sudden about-turn (...). That being the case, the only way to get the Parliament's dissolution seems to be the intervention to the king. Thus, the various slogans tangled, intersected and banged together during the recent Belgian campaign: blockage of the Parliament, general strike, dissolution of the Chamber, intervention of the king. None of the slogans were followed to the end. Finally, the whole campaign was suppressed all at once, without any obvious reason and the workers sent back home, dismayed and empty handed (...) The final defeat seems to be the inescapable consequence of our Belgian comrades' tactics. Their parliamentary action had not effect because the pressure of the general strike supporting this action failed in the end. Moreover, the general strike had no effect because it was not backed by the threatening spectre of the people's movement's free blossoming, the spectre of a revolution. In one word, they sacrificed the extra-parliamentary action to the parliamentary action. It is precisely for that reason that both were condemned to sterility and the whole struggle to failure. The phase of the struggle for universal suffrage, which just ended, represents a turning point for the Belgian workers' movement. For the first time in Belgium, the Socialist party took part in the struggle, bound to the Liberal party by a formal compromise. Just as the 'ministerialist' faction of the French Socialist party united to radicalism, it found itself in the situation of Prometheus bound. Will our comrades be able to free themselves from the stifling grip of Liberalism? We don't hesitate to say that the future of universal suffrage in Belgium and of its workers movement in general will depend on the solution of this question ».

## 9. The Flemish Catholic romantic anti-capitalism



Belgium didn't experience a genuine democratic revolution, but numerous reforms going along with the development of capitalism. The clergy and religion always kept up, thanks to their certain prestige after the partition from the Netherlands, which king was Protestant.

A vast romantic movement celebrating the Flemish « peasant's war » against the Napoleonic occupant added further to this. It presented Belgium as a Catholic bastion whose best defenders were the Flemish peasants.

This took place in an explosive context insofar as the Belgian nation was born through Catholicism and a process of re-Catholicization. The Flemish baroque art, thus expressed in a conflicting way an apology of religion and the burgeoning Belgian national features.

This can also perfectly be read in Hendrik Conscience's position. He is the first real Flemish writer and considered as « the one who taught his people how to read ». His most famous work is *Le Lion des Flandres*.

When he published his first book *In't Wonderjaar 1566* in 1837, he told the struggle between the Spanish oppressor and the Catholic Inquisition. But all the re-printings deleted every criticism of Catholicism, which had taken the ideological lead of the Flemish peasants.

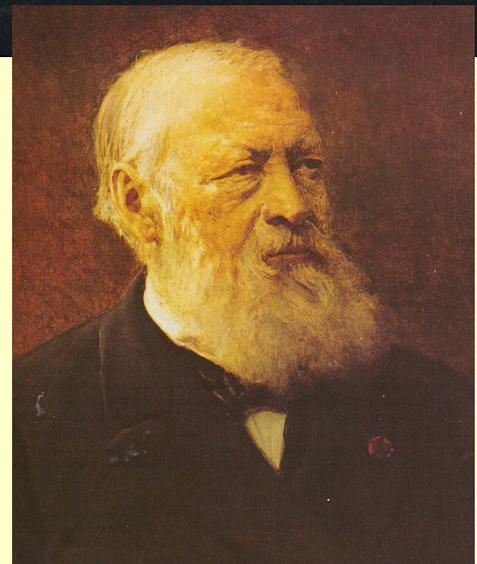
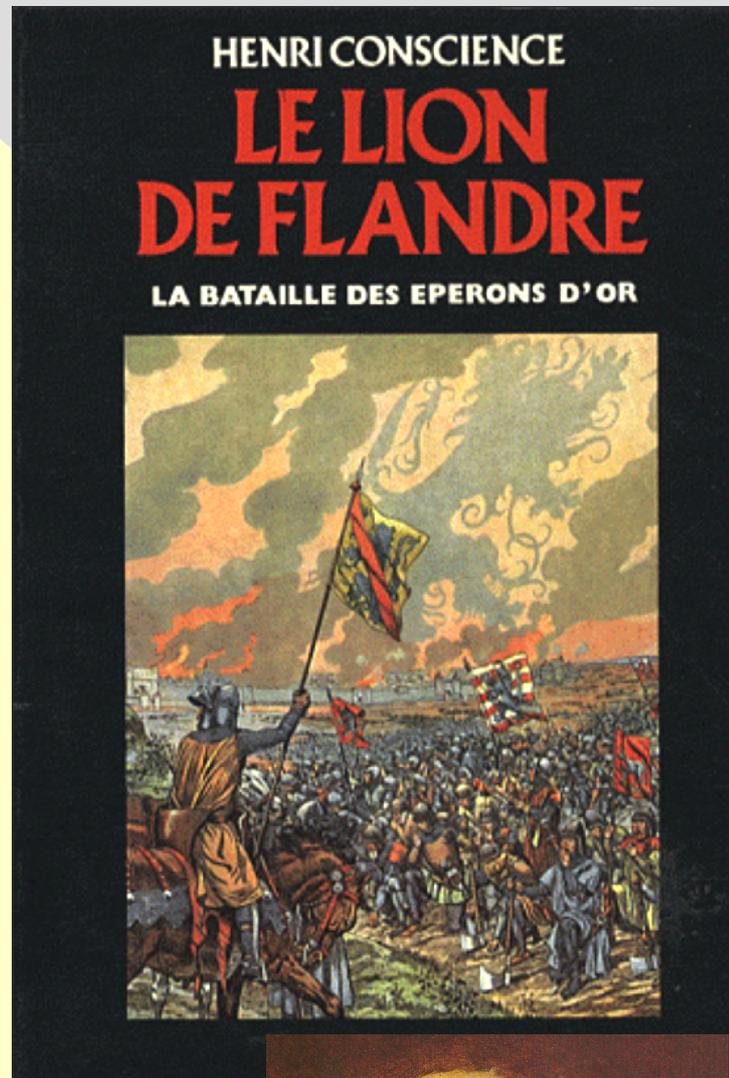
Liberalism was presented as « the party of France » and he held out the possibility of an idealised Middle Ages and a return to Flemish language, exclusively. He held this out as the only way to progress, both socially and culturally.

This was all the more easier that French had become the cities' language as well as the language of the bourgeoisie, both Walloon and Flemish. The administrative recognition of the Flemish language, spoken by most people, was thus very slow, nay clearly put aside.

This background movement played a basic role in the spreading of religion and of a romantic anti-capitalism idealising the Middle Ages, contradicting the aspects of united clerical, Liberal and Socialist parties.

## 10. The bourgeois separatism

Faced with the Flemish demands, which basis was democratic even if it expressed itself in a reactionary way, the bourgeoisie didn't hesitate to



promote the logic of division, of separation. It feared to be weakened by the demands made.

Jules Destrée, a Liberal who became « Socialist », expressed this leanings in 1912 in a letter to Albert I. One can read, among others:



« Sire, please first forget that the one who dares addressing you here is a Socialist deputy. What I want to tell you, any Catholic or Liberal could tell it, just like me (...). Let me tell you the truth, the great and horrifying truth: there are no Belgians. I mean that Belgium is a political State, quite artificially set up, but it is not a nationality. It dates from 1830 (...). Flanders is mainly agricultural, while Wallonia is mainly industrial (...). Flanders is mainly Catholic, sometimes aggressively and meanly Catholic; on the contrary, in Wallonia, faith has become a mere habit and there are many freethinkers (...). A second species of Belgians developed in the country, in particular in Brussels. It is really not much interesting. It seems that they added up the defects of both races while losing their qualities. Its means of expression is a foul gibberish. The Beulemans and Kakebroek families popularized its unexpected drollness [they are characters created by the writer Leopold Courouble]. It is ignorant and

sceptical. Its ideal is a comfortable second-rate status (...). No Sire, there is no Belgian soul. A merging between Flemish and Walloons is not desirable. And even if we wanted it, it has to be noticed that it is impossible (...). They (the Flemish people) have stolen our past (...). When we think of the past, great names such as Breydel, Van Artevelde, Marnix, Annessens rise in our memory. All of them are Flemish! We don't know anything about our Walloon past. They have stolen our artists (...). They have stolen our security (...). They have stolen our freedom (...). They have stolen our language (...) The Flemish people never step back. They have the sweet obstinacy of fanaticism ».

## II. The « Belgian mystery »

Belgium's political system was a parliamentary monarchy, which allowed the free development of capitalism, while preserving a powerful clergy as

well as a monarchy of which the king headed the initiative of the murderous colonisation of Congo at the end of the 19th century.

In their book published within social democracy in 1911 on *Le mouvement ouvrier en Belgique*, Henri de Man and Louis de Brouckère talked about « the Belgian mystery » like this:

« Belgium is an economically very advanced country, but culturally, it is very backward. It is the most industrialized country of the world, but it is ruled by a clerical-agricultural party (...). The Socialist party is like nowhere else quite exclusively made of proletarian elements. But the dominant spirit here is, to some extent, even more petty bourgeois than in France, for instance.

It is interesting to see that later on, Henri de Man started following « neo-Socialism » and supported Nazi Germany, while Louis de Brouckère advocated an economic union which took Brussels as a capital.

Both Henri de Man and Louis de Brouckère thought that it was needed to take advantage of an external burst to overstep the Belgian « localisms » and senses of identity. According to them, they were due to romantic anti-capitalism and strengthened both the clergy and the local structures in a Middle Ages spirit.

This reasoning was also made, but inversely, by the ultra Catholic forces bound to Wallonia and represented by the Leon Degrelle's Rexist Party as well as by pro-Netherlands forces such as Joris Van Severen's Verdinaso in favour of a « Groot-Nederland » and Flemish separatist forces bound to the VNV (Flemish National Union).



## 12. The answer to the Belgian issue

Contrary to the theses of Henri Pirenne, a bourgeois historian who wrote seven volumes, making Belgium a « national civilization » born behind Charlemagne, Belgium was born through the establishing of a capitalist basis, which was temporarily slowed down by the Spanish intervention.

This birth has been unable to assert a national structure because of its historical relations with Joseph II and Napoleon. The result was a deep unequal development, the division between urban and rural realities becoming more pronounced at the expense of the Flemish peasants.





The Flemish democratic demands were, however unable to express themselves other than by idealistic-separatist distortions (Vlaams Block, Vlaams Belang, etc.) or by an ultra-democratic « basism » (AMADA, PTB, etc.). It allowed the upholding of Walloon liberalism, using Brussels as the guarantee of historical unity.

The clergy, which was still paid by the State up to almost a hundred million euros per year, supported the regime's stabilization through an instability provoked by the neighbouring imperialist powers trying to make Belgium into a satellite State.

It is interesting to note that in the cycling world, ASO, the company owning the Tour de France also detains two classical races, Liège-Bastogne-Liège and the Flèche Wallonne. Separatism to serve a satellization, the passive upholding of the regime in the European Union, etc. do not obscure the historical necessity for a democratic union, which goes through the division between the State and religion, the overtaking of administrative splits by a legal unification thanks to an absolute and systematic bilingualism.

The bourgeoisie has failed in this task. Thus, it came back to Socialism. The Communists must base themselves on the failure of 1950 when, despite a great mass movement, the system remained while it had lost its credibility. This reactionary maintenance went through Julien Lahaut's murder, Communist leader, in August 1950. This happened a week after Baudouin I took the oath in Parliament, while the Communists welcomed him to shouts of "Long live the Republic!".



# GEORGI DIMITROV

## THE CLASS CHARACTER OF FASCISM

(1935)

### Seventh World Congress of the Communist International

Comrades, fascism in power was correctly described by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International as the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.

The most reactionary variety of fascism is the German type of fascism. It has the effrontery to call itself National Socialism, though it has nothing in common with socialism. German fascism is not only bourgeois nationalism, it is fiendish chauvinism. It is a government system of political gangsterism, a system of provocation and torture practised upon the working class and the revolutionary elements of the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. It is medieval barbarity and bestiality, it is unbridled aggression in relation to other nations.

German fascism is acting as the spearhead of international counter-revolution, as the chief instigator of imperialist war, as the initiator of a crusade against the Soviet Union, the great fatherland of the working people of the whole world.

Fascism is not a form of state power "standing above both classes -- the proletariat and the bourgeoisie," as Otto Bauer, for instance, has asserted. It is not "the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the machinery of the state," as the British Socialist Brailsford declares. No, fascism is not a



power standing above class, nor government of the petty bourgeoisie or the lumpen-proletariat over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself. It is the organization of terrorist vengeance against the working class and the revolutionary section of the peasantry and intelligentsia. In foreign policy, fascism is jingoism in its most brutal form, fomenting bestial hatred of other nations.

This, the true character of fascism, must be particularly stressed because in a number of countries, under cover of social demagogy, fascism has managed to gain the following of the mass of the petty bourgeoisie that has been dislocated by the crisis, and even of certain sections of the most backward strata of the proletariat. These would never have supported fascism if they had understood its real character and its true nature.

The development of fascism, and the fascist dictatorship itself, assume different forms in different countries, according to historical, social and economic conditions and to the national peculiarities, and the international position of the given country. In certain countries, principally those in which fascism has no broad mass basis and in which the struggle of the various groups within the camp of the fascist bourgeoisie itself is rather acute, fascism does not immediately venture to abolish parliament, but allows the other bourgeois parties, as well as the Social-Democratic Parties, to retain a modicum of legality. In other countries, where the ruling bourgeoisie fears an early outbreak of revolution, fascism establishes its unrestricted political monopoly, either immediately or by intensifying its reign of terror against and persecution of all rival parties and groups. This does not prevent fascism, when its position becomes particularly acute, from trying to extend its basis and, without altering its class nature, trying to combine open terrorist dictatorship with a crude sham of parliamentarism.

The accession to power of fascism is not an ordinary succession of one bourgeois government by another, but a substitution of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie -- bourgeois democracy -- by another form -- open terrorist dictatorship. It would be a serious mistake to ignore this distinction, a mistake liable to prevent the revolutionary proletariat from mobilizing the widest strata of the working people of town and country for the struggle against the menace of the seizure of power by the fascists, and from taking advantage of the contradictions which exist in the camp of the bourgeoisie itself. But it is a mistake, no less serious and dangerous, to underrate the importance, for the establishment of fascist dictatorship, of the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie at present increasingly developing in bourgeois-democratic countries -- measures which suppress the democratic liberties of the working people, falsify and curtail the rights of parliament and intensify the repression of the revolutionary movement.

Comrades, the accession to power of fascism must not be conceived of in so simplified and smooth a form, as though some committee or other of



finance capital decided on a certain date to set up a fascist dictatorship. In reality, fascism usually comes to power in the course of a mutual, and at times severe, struggle against the old bourgeois parties, or a definite section of these parties, in the course of a struggle even within the fascist camp itself -- a struggle which at times leads to armed clashes, as we have witnessed in the case of Germany, Austria and other countries. All this, however, does not make less important the fact that, before the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, bourgeois governments usually pass through a number of preliminary stages and adopt a number of reactionary measures which directly facilitate the accession to power of fascism. Whoever does not fight the reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie and the growth of fascism at these preparatory stages is not in a position to prevent the victory of fascism, but, on the contrary, facilitates that victory.

The Social-Democratic leaders glossed over and concealed from the masses the true class nature of fascism, and did not call them to the struggle against the increasingly reactionary measures of the bourgeoisie. They bear great historical responsibility for the fact that, at the decisive moment of the fascist offensive, a large section of the working people of Germany and of a number of other fascist countries failed to recognize in fascism the most bloodthirsty monster of finance capital, their most vicious enemy, and that these masses were not prepared to resist it.

What is the source of the influence of fascism over the masses? Fascism is able to attract the masses because it demagogically appeals to their most urgent needs and demands. Fascism not only inflames prejudices that are deeply ingrained in the masses, but also plays on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions. Why do the German fascists, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie and mortal enemies of socialism, represent themselves to the masses as "Socialists," and depict their accession to power as a "revolution"? Because they try to exploit the faith in revolution and the urge towards socialism that lives in the hearts of the mass of working people in Germany.



Fascism acts in the interests of the extreme imperialists, but it presents itself to the masses in the guise of champion of an ill-treated nation, and appeals to outraged national sentiments, as German fascism did, for instance, when it won the support of the masses of the petty bourgeoisie by the slogan "Down with the Versailles Treaty."

Fascism aims at the most unbridled exploitation of the masses but it approaches them with the most artful anti-capitalist demagogy, taking advantage of the deep hatred of the working people against the plundering bourgeoisie, the banks, trusts and financial magnates, and advancing those slogans which at the given moment are most alluring to the politically immature masses. In Germany -- "The general welfare is higher than the welfare of the individual," in Italy -- "Our state is not a capitalist, but a corporate state," in Japan -- "For Japan without exploitation," in the United States -- "Share the wealth," and so forth.

Fascism delivers up the people to be devoured by the most corrupt and venal elements, but comes before them with the demand for "an honest and incorruptible government." Speculating on the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption.

It is in the interests of the most reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie that fascism intercepts the disappointed masses who desert the old bourgeois parties. But it impresses these masses by the vehemence of its attacks on the bourgeois governments and its irreconcilable attitude to the old bourgeois parties.

Surpassing in its cynicism and hypocrisy all other varieties of bourgeois reaction, fascism adapts its demagogy to the national peculiarities of each country, and even to the peculiarities of the various social strata in one and the same country. And the mass of the petty bourgeoisie and even a section of the workers, reduced to despair by want, unemployment and



the insecurity of their existence, fall victim to the social and chauvinist demagoguery of fascism.

Fascism comes to power as a party of attack on the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, on the mass of the people who are in a state of unrest; yet it stages its accession to power as a "revolutionary" movement against the bourgeoisie on behalf of "the whole nation" and for the "salvation" of the nation. One recalls Mussolini's "march" on Rome, Pilsudski's "march" on Warsaw, Hitler's National-Socialist "revolution" in Germany, and so forth.

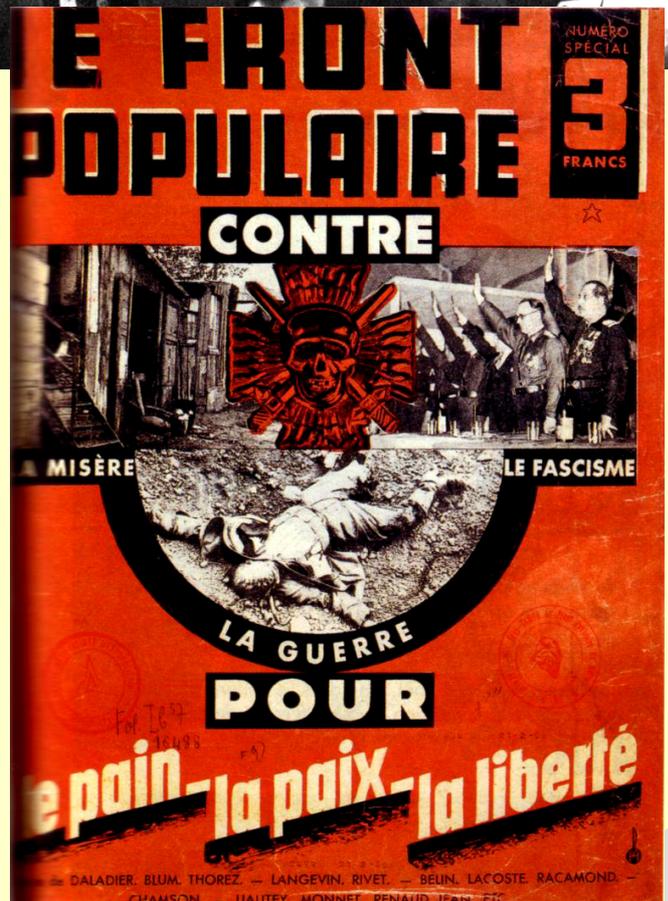
But whatever the masks that fascism adopts, whatever the forms in which it presents itself, whatever the ways by which it comes to power

Fascism is a most ferocious attack by capital on the mass of the working people;

Fascism is unbridled chauvinism and predatory war;

Fascism is rabid reaction and counter-revolution;

Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and of all working people.



## WHAT DOES FASCIST VICTORY BRING TO THE MASSES?

Fascism promised the workers "a fair wage," but actually it has brought them an even lower, a pauper, standard of living. It promised work for the unemployed, but actually it has brought them even more painful torments of starvation and forced servile labor. In practice it converts the workers and unemployed into pariahs of capitalist society stripped of rights; destroys their trade unions; deprives them of the right to strike and to have their working-class press, forces them into fascist organizations, plunders their social insurance funds and transforms the mills and factories into barracks where the unbridled arbitrary rule of the capitalist reigns.

Fascism promised the working youth a broad highway to a brilliant future. But actually it has brought wholesale dismissals of young workers,



labor camps and incessant military drilling for a war of conquest.

Fascism promised to guarantee office workers, petty officials and intellectual security of existence, to destroy the omnipotence of the trusts and wipe out profiteering by bank capital. But actually it has brought them an

ever greater degree of despair and uncertainty as to the morrow; it is subjecting them to a new bureaucracy made up of the most submissive of its followers, it is setting up an intolerable dictatorship of the trusts and spreading corruption and degeneration to an unprecedented extent.

Fascism promised the ruined and impoverished peasants to put an end to debt bondage, to abolish rent and even to expropriate the landed estates without compensation, in the interests of the landless and ruined peasants. But actually it is placing the laboring peasants in a state of unprecedented servitude to the trusts and the fascist state apparatus, and pushes to the utmost limit the exploitation of the great mass of the peasantry by the big landowners, the banks and the usurers.

"Germany will be a peasant country, or will not be at all," Hitler solemnly declared. And what did the peasants of Germany get under Hitler? The moratorium, 1) which has already been cancelled? Or the law on the inheritance of peasant property, which leads to millions of sons and daughters of peasants being squeezed out of the villages and reduced to paupers? Farm laborers have been transformed into semi-serfs, deprived even of the elementary right of free movement. The working peasants have been deprived of the opportunity of selling the produce of their farms in the market.

And in Poland?

The Polish peasant, says the Polish newspaper *Czas*, employs methods and means which were used perhaps only in the Middle Ages; he nurses the fire in his stove and lends it to his neighbor; he splits matches into several parts; he lends dirty soapwater to others; he boils herring barrels in order to obtain salt water. This is not a fable, but the actual state of affairs in the countryside, of the truth of which anybody may convince himself.

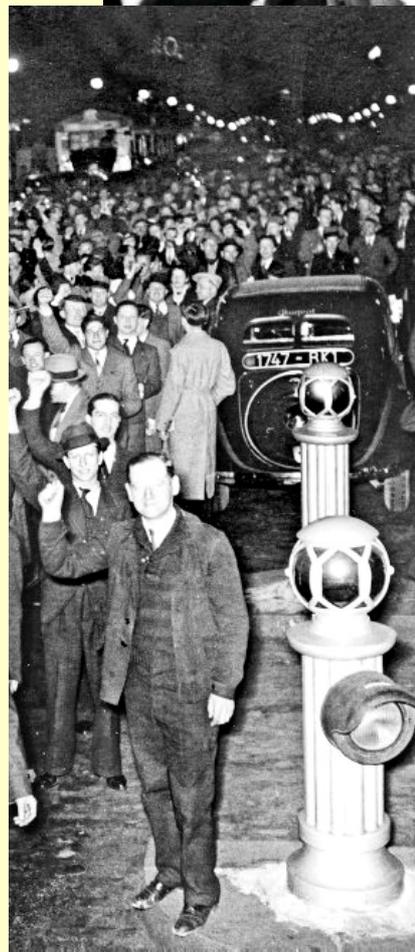
And it is not Communists who write this, Comrades, but a Polish reactionary newspaper.

But this is by no means all.

Every day, in the concentration camps of fascist Germany, in the cellars of the Gestapo (German secret police), in the torture chambers of Poland, in the cells of the Bulgarian and Finnish secret police, in the Glavnyacha in Belgrade, in the Rumanian Siguranza and on the Italian islands, the best sons of the working class, revolutionary peasants, fighters for the splendid future of mankind, are being subjected to revolting tortures and indignities, before which pale the most abominable acts of the tsarist Okhrankaz). The blackguardly German fascists beat husbands to a bloody pulp in the presence of their wives, and send the ashes of murdered sons by parcel post to their mothers. Sterilization has been made a method of political warfare. In the torture chambers, imprisoned anti-fascists are given injections of poison, their arms are broken, their eyes gouged out; they are strung up and have water pumped into them; the fascist swastika is carved in their living flesh.

I have before me a statistical summary drawn up by the International Red Aid [international organization of that time for aid to revolutionary fighters] regarding the number of killed, wounded, arrested, maimed and tortured to death in Germany, Poland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. In Germany alone, since the National-Socialists came to power, over 4,200 anti-fascist workers, peasants, employees, intellectuals -- Communists, Social Democrats and members of opposition Christian organizations -- have been murdered, 317,800 arrested, 218,600 injured and subjected to torture. In Austria, since the battles of February last year the "Christian" fascist government has murdered 1,900 revolutionary workers, maimed and injured 10,000 and arrested 40,000. And this summary, comrades is far from complete.

Words fail me in describing the indignation which seizes us at the thought of the torments which the working people are now undergoing in a number of fascist countries. The facts and figures we quote do not reflect one hundredth part of the true picture of the exploitation and tortures inflicted by the White terror and forming part of the daily life of the working class in many capitalist countries. Volumes



cannot give a just picture of the countless brutalities inflicted by fascism on the working people.

Le peuple de France  
a voté  
pour le pain, la paix,  
la liberté !

DEUXIÈME ÉDITION

# I'Humanité

ORGANE CENTRAL DU PARTI COMMUNISTE (S.F.I.C.)

33<sup>e</sup> ANNÉE, — N° 13.653  
LUNDI 4 MAI 1936  
DEUX ÉDITIONS

RÉDACTION ET ADMINISTRATION  
136, RUE MONTMARTRE, PARIS (2<sup>e</sup>)  
LE NUMÉRO : 30 CENTIMES

Fondateur : JEAN JAURÈS  
Directeur : MARCEL CACHIN  
SÉNATEUR DE LA SEINE



# VICTOIRE!

## Le Front Populaire triomphe !

DANS TOUT LE PAYS, DES MANIFESTATIONS PUISSANTES ET ENTHOUSIASTES GROUPANT DES DIZAINES DE MILLIERS DE PERSONNES ONT SUIVI LA PROCLAMATION DU SCRUTIN

With feelings of profound emotion and hatred for the fascist butchers, we dip the banners of the Communist International before the unforgettable memory of John Scheer, Fiete Schulze and Luttgens in Germany, Koloman Wallisch and Munichreiter in Austria, Sallai and Furst in Hungary, Kofardjiev, Lyutibrodski and Voykov in Bulgaria -- before the memory of thousands and thousands of Communists,

Social-Democrats and non-party workers, peasants and representatives of the progressive intelligentsia who have laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism.

From this platform we greet the leader of the German proletariat and the honorary chairman of our Congress -- Comrade Thaelmann. We greet Comrades Rakosi, Gramsci, Antikainen. We greet Tom Mooney, who has been languishing in prison for eighteen years, and the thousands of other prisoners of capitalism and fascism, and we say to them: "Brothers in the fight, brothers in arms, you are not forgotten. We are with you. We shall give every hour of our lives, every drop of our blood, for your liberation, and for the liberation of all working people from the shameful regime of fascism."



Comrades, it was Lenin who warned us that the bourgeoisie may succeed in overwhelming the working people by savage terror, in checking the growing forces of revolution for brief periods of time, but that, nevertheless, this would not save it from its doom.

Life will assert itself -- Lenin wrote -- Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, overdo things, commit stupidities, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance and endeavour to kill off (in India, Hungary,

Germany, etc.) hundreds, thousands and hundreds of thousands more of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. Acting thus, the bourgeoisie acts as all classes doomed by history have acted. Communists should know that the future, at any rate, belongs to them; therefore we can and must combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle with the coolest and most sober evaluation of the mad ravings of the bourgeoisie. [V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, New York (1949), pp. 81-82; Collected Works 31:101]

Ay, if we and the proletariat of the whole world firmly follow the path indicated by Lenin, the bourgeoisie will perish in spite of everything.

## IS THE VICTORY OF FASCISM INEVITABLE?

Why was it that fascism could triumph, and how? Fascism is the most vicious enemy of the working class and working people, who constitute nine-tenths of the German people, nine-tenths of the Austrian people, nine-tenths of the people in other fascist countries. How, in what way, could this vicious enemy triumph?

Fascism was able to come to power primarily because the working class, owing to the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Social-Democratic leaders, proved to be split, politically and organizationally disarmed, in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie. And the Communist Parties, on the other hand, apart from and in opposition to the Social-Democrats, were not strong enough to rouse the masses and to lead them in a decisive struggle against fascism.

And, indeed, let the millions of Social-Democratic workers, who together with their Communist brothers are now experiencing the horrors of fascist barbarism, seriously reflect on the following: If, in 1918, when revolution broke out in Germany and Austria, the Austrian and German proletariat had not followed the Social



Democratic leadership of Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler and Karl Renner in Austria and Ebert and Scheidemann in Germany, but had followed the road of the Russian Bolsheviks, the road of Lenin, there would now be no fascism in Austria or Germany, in Italy or Hungary, in Poland or in the Balkans. Not the bourgeoisie, but the working class would long ago have been the master of the situation in Europe.

Take, for example, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. The revolution of 1918 raised it to a tremendous height. It held the power in its hands, it held strong positions in the army and in the state apparatus. Relying on these positions, it could have nipped fascism in the bud. But it surrendered one position of the working class after another without resistance. It allowed the bourgeoisie to strengthen its power, annul the constitution, purge the state apparatus, army and police force of Social-Democratic functionaries, and take the arsenals away from the workers. It allowed the fascist bandits to murder Social-Democratic workers with impunity and accepted the terms of the Hüttenberg Pact 3), which gave the fascist elements entry to the factories. At the same time the Social-Democratic leaders fooled the workers with the Linz program 4), which contained the alternative possibility of using armed force against the bourgeoisie and establishing the proletarian dictatorship, assuring them that in the event of the ruling class using force against the working class, the Party would reply by a call for general strike and for armed struggle. As though the whole policy of preparation for a fascist attack on the working class were not one chain of acts of violence against the working class masked by constitutional forms. Even on the eve and in the course of the February battles the Austrian Social Democratic leaders left the heroically fighting Schutzbund 5) isolated from the broad masses, and doomed the Austrian proletariat to defeat.

Was the victory of fascism inevitable in Germany? No, the German working class could have prevented it.

But in order to do so, it should have achieved a united anti-fascist proletarian front, and forced the Social-Democratic leaders to discontinue their campaign against the Communists and to accept the repeated proposals of the Communist Party for united action against fascism.

When fascism was on the offensive and the bourgeois-democratic liberties were being progressively abolished by the bourgeoisie, it should not have contented itself with the verbal resolutions of the Social-Democrats, but should have replied by a genuine mass struggle, which would have made the fulfilment of the fascist plans of the German bourgeoisie more difficult.

It should not have allowed the prohibition of the League of Red Front Fighters by the government of Braun and Severing 6), and should have established fighting contact between the League and the Reichsbanner 7), with its nearly one million members, and should have compelled Braun

and Severing to arm both these organizations in order to resist and smash the fascist bands.

It should have compelled the Social-Democratic leaders who headed the Prussian government to adopt measures of defence against fascism, arrest the fascist leaders, close down their press, confiscate their material resources and the resources of the capitalists who were financing the fascist movement, dissolve the fascist organizations, deprive them of their weapons, and so forth.

Furthermore, it should have secured the re-establishment and extension of all forms of social assistance and the introduction of a moratorium and crisis benefits for the peasants -- who were being ruined under the impact of crisis -- by taxing the banks and the trusts, in this way winning the support of the working peasants. It was the fault of the Social-Democrats of Germany that this was not done, and that is why fascism was able to triumph.

Was it inevitable that the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy should have triumphed in Spain, a country where the forces of proletarian revolt are so advantageously combined with a peasant war?

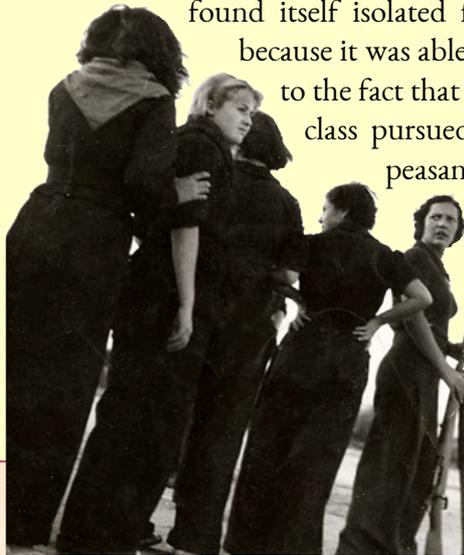
The Spanish Socialists were in the government from the first days of the revolution. Did they establish fighting contact between the working class organizations of every political opinion, including the Communists and the Anarchists, and did they weld the working class into a united trade union organization? Did they demand the confiscation of all lands of the landlords, the church and the monasteries in favor of the peasants in order to win over the latter to the side of the revolution? Did they attempt to fight for national self-determination for the Catalonians and the Basques, and for the liberation of Morocco? Did they purge the army of monarchist and fascist elements and prepare it for passing over to the side of the workers and peasants? Did they dissolve the Civil Guard, so detested by the people, the executioner of every movement of the people? Did they strike at the fascist party of Gil Robles and at the might of the Catholic church? No, they did none of these things. They rejected the frequent proposals of the Communists for united action against the offensive of the bourgeois-landlord reaction and fascism; they passed election laws which enabled the reactionaries to gain a majority in the Cortes (parliament), laws which penalized the popular movement, laws



under which the heroic miners of Asturias are now being tried. They had peasants who were fighting for land shot by the Civil Guard, and so on.

This is the way in which the Social-Democrats, by disorganizing and splitting the ranks of the working class, cleared the path to power for fascism in Germany, Austria and Spain.

Comrades, fascism also attained power for the reason that the proletariat found itself isolated from its natural allies. Fascism attained power because it was able to win over large masses of the peasantry, owing to the fact that the Social-Democrats in the name of the working class pursued what was in fact an anti-peasant policy. The peasant saw in power a number of Social-Democratic governments, which in his eyes were an embodiment of the power of the working class; but not one of them put an end to peasant want, none of them gave land to the peasantry. In Germany, the Social-Democrats did not touch the landlords; they combated the strikes of the farm laborers, with the result that long before Hitler came to power the farm laborers of Germany were deserting the reformist trade unions and in the majority of cases were going over to the Stahlhelm and to the National Socialists.

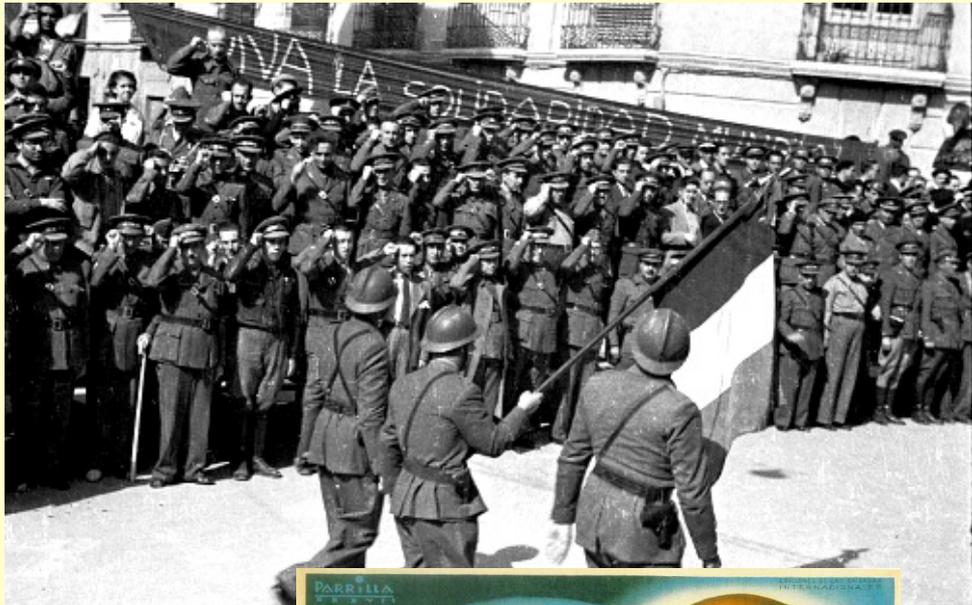


Fascism also attained power for the reason that it was able to penetrate into the ranks of the youth, whereas the Social-Democrats diverted the working class youth from the class struggle, while the revolutionary proletariat did not develop the necessary educational work among the youth and did not pay enough attention to the struggle for its specific interests and demands. Fascism grasped the very acute need of the youth for militant activity, and enticed a considerable section of the youth into its fighting detachments. The new generation of young men and women has not experienced the horrors of war. They have felt the full weight of the economic crisis, unemployment and the disintegration of bourgeois democracy. But, seeing no prospects for the future, large sections of the youth proved to be particularly receptive to fascist demagoguery, which depicted for them an alluring

future should fascism succeed.

In this connection, we cannot avoid referring also to a number of mistakes made by the Communist Parties, mistakes that hampered our struggle against fascism.

In our ranks there was an impermissible underestimation of the fascist danger, a tendency which to this day has not everywhere been overcome. A case in point is the opinion formerly to be met with in our Parties that "Germany is not Italy," meaning that fascism may have succeeded in Italy, but that its success in Germany was out of the question, because the latter is an industrially and culturally highly developed country, with forty years of traditions of the working-class movement, in which fascism was impossible. Or the kind of opinion which is to be met with nowadays, to the effect that in countries of "classical" bourgeois democracy the soil for fascism does not exist. Such opinions have served and may serve to relax vigilance towards the fascist danger, and to render the mobilization of the proletariat in the struggle against fascism more difficult.



One might also cite quite a few instances where Communists were taken unawares by the fascist coup. Remember Bulgaria, where the leadership of our Party, took up a "neutral," but in fact opportunist, position with regard to the coup d'état of June 9, 1923; Poland, where in May 1926 the leadership of the Communist Party, making a wrong estimate of the motive forces of the Polish revolution, did not realize the fascist nature of Pilsudski's coup, and trailed in the rear of events; Finland, where our Party based itself on a false conception of slow and gradual fascization and overlooked the fascist coup which was being prepared by the leading group of the bourgeoisie and which took the Party and the working class unawares.



When National Socialism had already become a menacing mass movement in Germany, there were comrades who regarded the Bruening government as already a government of fascist dictatorship, and who boastfully declared: "If Hitler's Third Reich ever comes about, it will be six feet underground, and above it will be the victorious power of the workers."

Our comrades in Germany for a long time failed to fully reckon with the wounded national sentiments and the indignation of the masses against the Versailles Treaty; they treated as of little account the waverings of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie; they were late in drawing up their program of social and national emancipation, and when they did put it forward they were unable to adapt it to the concrete demands and to the

level of the masses. They were even unable to popularize it widely among the masses.

In a number of countries, the necessary development of a mass fight against fascism was replaced by barren debates on the nature of fascism "in general" and by a narrow sectarian attitude in formulating and solving the immediate political tasks of the Party.

Comrades, it is not simply because we want to dig up the past that we speak of the causes of the victory of fascism, that we point to the historical responsibility of the Social Democrats for the defeat of the working class, and that we also point out our own mistakes in the fight against fascism. We are not historians divorced from living reality; we, active fighters of the working class, are obliged to answer the question that is tormenting millions of workers: Can the victory of fascism be prevented, and how? And we reply to these millions of workers: Yes, comrades, the road to fascism can be blocked. It is quite possible. It depends on ourselves—on the workers, the peasants and all working people.

Whether the victory of fascism can be prevented depends first and foremost on the militant activity of the working class itself, on whether its forces are welded into a single militant army combating the offensive of capitalism and fascism. By establishing its fighting unity, the proletariat would paralyze the influence of fascism over the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the youth and the intelligentsia, and would be able to neutralize one section of them and win over the other section.

Second, it depends on the existence of a strong revolutionary party, correctly leading the struggle of the working people against fascism. A party which systematically calls on the workers to retreat in the face of fascism and permits the fascist bourgeoisie to strengthen its positions is doomed to lead the workers to defeat.

Third, it depends on a correct policy of the working class towards the peasantry and the petty-bourgeois masses of the towns. These masses must be taken as they are, and not as we should like to have them. It is in the process of the struggle that they will overcome their doubts and waverings. It is only by a patient attitude towards their inevitable waverings, it is only by the political help of the proletariat, that they will be able to rise to a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and activity.

Fourth, it depends on the vigilance and timely action of the revolutionary proletariat. The latter must not allow fascism to take it unawares, it must not surrender the



initiative to fascism, but must inflict decisive blows on it before it can gather its forces, it must not allow fascism to consolidate its position, it must repel fascism wherever and whenever it rears its head, it must not allow fascism to gain new positions. This is what the French proletariat is so successfully trying to do.

These are the main conditions for preventing the growth of fascism and its accession to power.

## **FASCISM -- A FEROCIOUS BUT UNSTABLE POWER**

The fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is a ferocious power, but an unstable one.

What are the chief causes of the instability of fascist dictatorship?

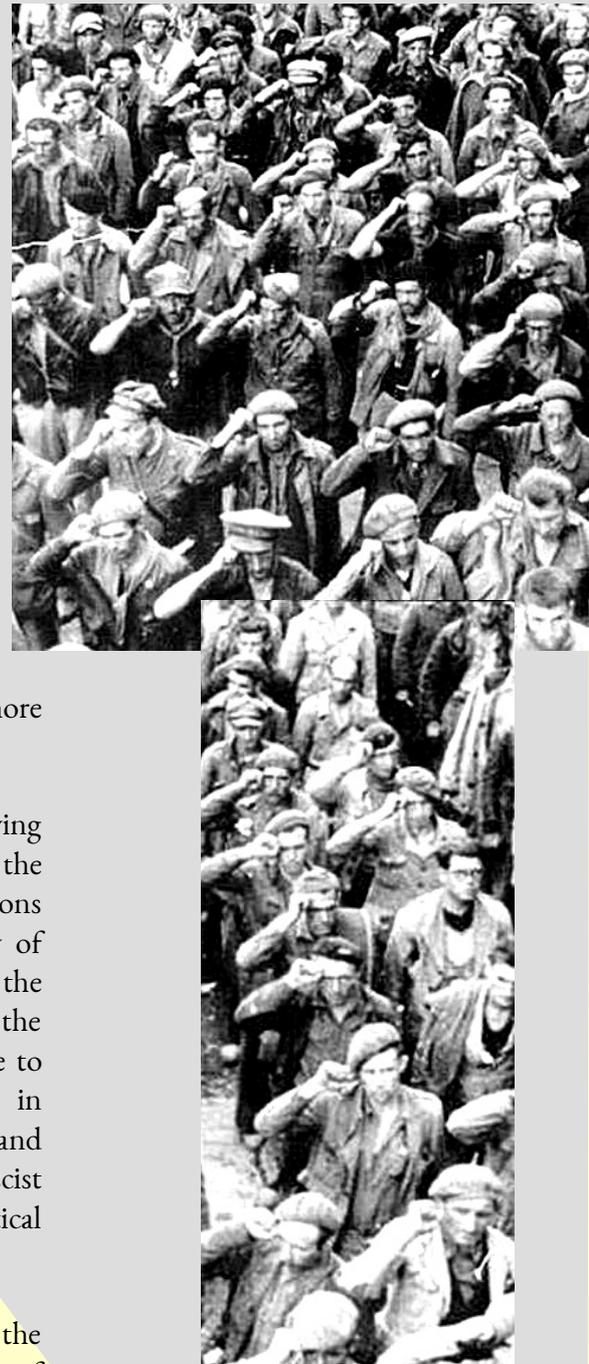
Fascism undertakes to overcome the differences and antagonisms within the bourgeois camp, but it makes these antagonisms even more acute.

Fascism tries to establish its political monopoly by violently destroying other political parties. But the existence of the capitalist system, the existence of various classes and the accentuation of class contradictions inevitably tend to undermine and explode the political monopoly of fascism. In a fascist country the party of the fascists cannot set itself the aim of abolishing classes and class contradictions. It puts an end to the legal existence of bourgeois parties. But a number of them continue to maintain an illegal existence, while the Communist Party even in conditions of illegality continues to make progress, becomes steeled and tempered and leads the struggle of the proletariat against the fascist dictatorship. Hence, under the blows of class contradictions, the political monopoly of fascism is bound to explode.

Another reason for the instability of the fascist dictatorship is that the contrast between the anti-capitalist demagoguery of fascism and its policy of enriching the monopolist bourgeoisie in the most piratical fashion makes it easier to expose the class nature of fascism and tends to shake and narrow its mass basis.

Furthermore, the victory of fascism arouses the deep hatred and indignation of the masses, helps to revolutionize them, and provides a powerful stimulus for a united front of the proletariat against fascism.

By conducting a policy of economic nationalism (autarchy) and by seizing the greater part of the national income for the purpose of preparing for war, fascism undermines the whole economic life of the country and accentuates the economic war between the capitalist states. To the conflicts that arise among the bourgeoisie it lends the character of



sharp and at times bloody collisions that undermine the stability of the fascist state power in the eyes of the people. A government which murders its own followers, as happened in Germany on June 30 8) of last year, a fascist government against which another section of the fascist bourgeoisie is conducting an armed fight (the National-Socialist putsch in

Austria and the violent attacks of individual fascist groups on the fascist government in Poland, Bulgaria, Finland and other countries) -- a government of this character cannot for long maintain its authority in the eyes of the broad mass of the petty bourgeoisie.

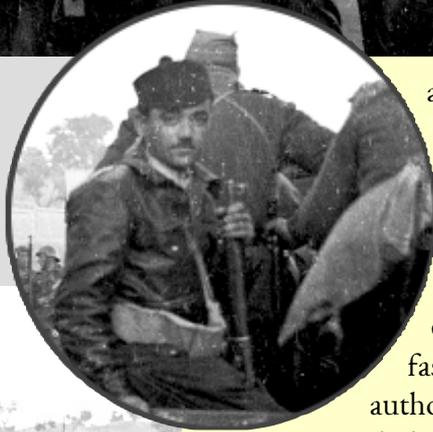
The working class must be able to take advantage of the antagonisms and conflicts within the bourgeois camp, but it must not cherish the illusion that fascism will exhaust itself of its own accord. Fascism will not collapse automatically. Only the revolutionary

activity of the working class can help to take advantage of the conflicts which inevitably arise within the bourgeois camp in order to undermine the fascist dictatorship and to overthrow it.

By destroying the relics of bourgeois democracy, by elevating open violence to a system of government, fascism shakes democratic illusions and undermines the authority of the law in the eyes of the working people. This is particularly true in countries such as Austria and Spain, where the workers have taken up arms against fascism. In Austria, the heroic struggle of the Schutzbund and the Communists in spite of its defeat, shook the stability of the fascist dictatorship from the very outset.

In Spain, the bourgeoisie did not succeed in putting the fascist muzzle on the working people. The armed struggles in Austria and Spain have resulted in ever wider masses of the working class coming to realize the necessity for a revolutionary class struggle.

Only such monstrous philistines, such lackeys of the bourgeoisie, as the superannuated theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky, are capable of casting reproaches at the workers, to the effect that they should not have taken up arms in Austria and Spain. What would the working class movement in Austria and Spain look like today if the working class of these countries were guided by the treacherous counsels of the Kautskys? The working class would be experiencing profound demoralization in its ranks.



The school of civil war -- Lenin says -- does not leave the people unaffected. It is a harsh school, and its complete curriculum inevitably includes the victories of the counterrevolution, the debaucheries of enraged reactionaries, savage punishments meted out by the old governments to the rebels, etc. But only downright pedants and mentally decrepit mummies can grieve over the fact that nations are entering this painful school; this school teaches the oppressed classes how to conduct civil war; it teaches how to bring about a victorious revolution; it concentrates in the masses of present-day slaves that hatred which is always harboured by the downtrodden, dull, ignorant slaves, and which leads those slaves who have become conscious of the shame of their slavery to the greatest historic exploits. [V. I. Lenin, Collected Works 15:183]

The triumph of fascism in Germany has, as we know, been followed by a new wave of the fascist offensive, which in Austria led to the provocation by Dollfuss, in Spain to the new onslaughts of counter-revolution on the revolutionary conquests of the masses, in Poland to the fascist reform of the constitution, while in France it spurred the armed detachments of the fascists to attempt a coup d'état in February 1934. But this victory, and the frenzy of the fascist dictatorship, called forth a countermovement for a united proletarian front against fascism on an international scale.

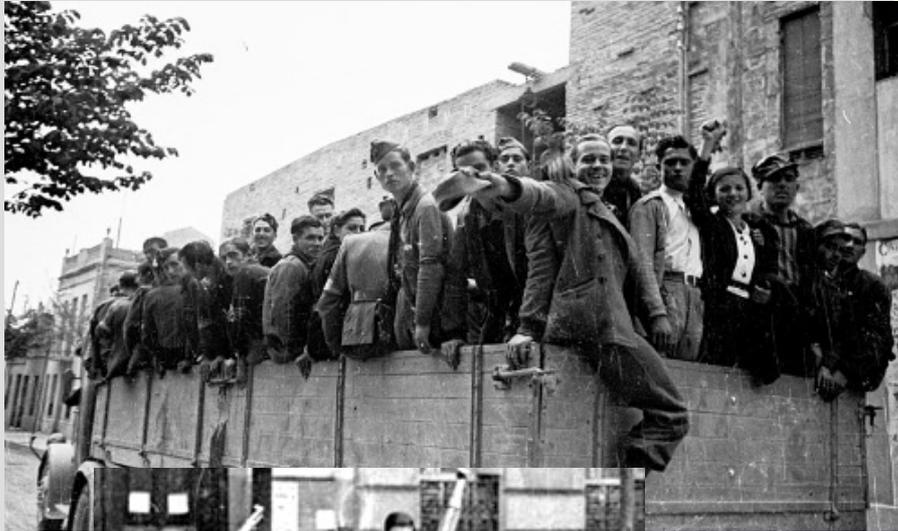
The burning of the Reichstag, which served as a signal for the general attack of fascism on the working class, the seizure and spoliation of the trade unions and the other working class organizations, the groans of the tortured anti-fascists rising from the vaults of the fascist barracks and concentration camps, are making clear to the masses what has been the outcome of the reactionary, disruptive role played by the German Social-Democratic leaders, who rejected the proposal made by the Communists for a joint struggle against advancing fascism. These things are convincing the masses of the necessity of uniting all forces of the working class for the overthrow of fascism.

Hitler's victory also provided a decisive stimulus for the creation of a united front of the working class against fascism in France. Hitler's victory not only aroused in the workers a fear of the fate that befell the German workers, not only kindled hatred for the executioners of their German class brothers, but also strengthened in them the



determination never in any circumstances to allow in their country what happened to the working class in Germany.

The powerful urge towards a united front in all the capitalist countries shows that the lessons of defeat have not been in vain. The working class



is beginning to act in a new way. The initiative shown by the Communist Parties in the organization of a united front and the supreme self-sacrifice displayed by the Communists, by the revolutionary workers in the struggle against fascism, have resulted in an unprecedented increase in the prestige of the Communist International. At the same time, the Second International is undergoing a profound crisis, a crisis which is particularly noticeable and has particularly accentuated since the bankruptcy of German Social-

Democracy. With ever greater ease the Social-Democratic workers are able to convince themselves that fascist Germany, with all its horrors and barbarities, is in the final analysis the result of the Social-Democratic policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. These masses are coming ever more clearly to realize that the path along which the German Social-Democratic leaders led the proletariat must not be traversed again. Never has there been such ideological dissension in the camp of the Second International as at the present time. A process of differentiation is taking place in all Social-Democratic Parties. Within their ranks two principal camps are forming: side by side with the existing camp of reactionary elements, who are trying in every way to preserve the bloc between the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie, and who rabidly reject a united front with the Communists, there is beginning to emerge a camp of

revolutionary elements who entertain doubts as to the correctness of the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, who are in favor of the creation of a united front with the Communists, and who are increasingly coming to adopt the position of the revolutionary class struggle.

Thus fascism, which appeared as the result of the decline of the capitalist system, in the long run acts as a factor in its further disintegration. Thus fascism, which has undertaken to bury Marxism, the revolutionary movement of the working class, is, as a result of the dialectics of life and the class struggle, itself leading to the further development of the forces that are bound to serve as its grave-diggers, the grave-diggers of capitalism.