

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

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THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

EXTRACTS FROM INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNIST FRACTIONS IN WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES OUTSIDE THE PARTY

January 1924¹

Instructions, iv, 24, p. 263, 21 February 1924

INTRODUCTION

The question of communist fractions in non-party organizations is closely connected with the need for communist parties to establish their influence over the broad non-party masses. In order to do this, every communist party must make use of agencies pursuing a communist policy in non-party surroundings. Communist fractions are such agencies. The correct carrying-out of party directives depends on the correct organization of these fractions; it is these directives which ensure that the communists express a single will, pursue uniform tactics, and act in harmony; without this, correct activity for a communist party is unthinkable.

The existence of communist fractions raises the question of their relations with the party organs. There can be no satisfactory outcome to the work of the fractions if these relations are not defined, in harmony with the interests of the party as a whole. Communist fractions are not autarkic plenipotentiary organizations entitled to settle all questions of party life. They are subordinate to those party organs which are in charge of party activities in the given sphere and locality where the fraction has to work. In each factory, for example, the factory-committee fraction is subordinate to the party cell; the fraction in a co-operative, town council, or trade union is subordinate to the town party organization in the person of its committee, while the fraction in any national organization or in parliament is subordinate to the central committee.

It is in the interests of the entire party that fractions should strictly carry out the directives of the relevant party organs and work under their constant supervision. In their capacity as party members the members of the fraction discuss and decide all party questions in their cell, in the aggregate district meetings, or in their local group. At these meetings they may complain about incorrect conduct of and instructions to the fraction.

The activities of communists at national congresses and in parliament are the responsibility of the entire party. From this it follows that the central committee must exercise special care in selecting communist candidates for parliament, or the fraction members for trade union national committees, or for the central factory-committee organization. Careful selection will ensure that the party will not be compromised by the behavior of communists in these fractions, and that the party line will be

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must be remembered that the more important the role of a certain list fraction in a national body (parliament, national trade union committee, etc.), the stronger the tendency may be to display independence in relation to the party.

All efforts to create a strict organization, suitable for establishing contact with the broad masses and leading them in a victorious struggle against capitalism, will be fruitless if the communist parties fail to give sufficient attention to the formation of communist fractions in all non-party organizations or to establish the correct mutual relations between the fractions and the party organizations. While proceeding to organize the fractions, it remains a condition of all party organizational activity that the centre of gravity is to be shifted to the establishment of factory cells and to making them the foundation of the entire party organization.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNIST FRACTIONS IN WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES OUTSIDE THE PARTY

1. In all organizations and bodies of workers and peasants (trade unions, co-operatives, cultural and educational societies, sports clubs, factory councils, committees of the unemployed, congresses and conferences, municipal councils, parliaments, etc.), where there are at least three communists, communist fractions must be formed to increase the influence of the party and to carry through its policy in the non-party environment.

2. Communist fractions, regardless of their importance, must be subordinate to the corresponding party organization—the party cell (its bureau), the district or area committee in large towns, the town committee, the regional committee, or the central committee, according to whether the organization or body in which the fraction is working is of local or national significance. It is from these that the communist fractions receive the necessary directives. Their decisions must be strictly and precisely obeyed by the fractions.

3. When the party leadership discusses questions concerning a particular fraction, thorough preparations must be made and for this purpose representatives of the fraction should be called in for previous consultation.

4. Communist fractions shall elect, in agreement with the relevant party committee, a bureau or presidium which is responsible to the relevant party body for the activity of the fraction.

5. Between congresses (conferences) the fraction in the central trade union or co-operative committee is the body which covers and guides all the communists belonging to the union or co-operative.

6. The relevant party committee has the right to send members to the fraction and to recall any member of the fraction, which shall be informed of the decision.

7. Candidates from the communist fraction for trade union national committees and for the governing committees of other organizations or bodies may be nominated only in agreement with the appropriate party organ. The same applies to the recall and replacement of communists.

8. In internal matters and current work the fraction is autonomous. The party authorities should not interfere in the daily work of the fraction. . . . Should the fraction and the party leadership disagree fundamentally on any question within the competence of the fraction, the question must be reconsidered by the leadership and the representatives of the fraction, with the object of reaching a final decision, which must then be operated by the fraction.

9. When questions of political importance are discussed by the fraction, representatives of the relevant party committee must be present. The committee is obliged to send representatives at the request of the fraction.

10. All questions pending in the organization in which the fraction is operating must be discussed in advance by the fraction or its bureau.

11. The fraction must report on its work to the relevant party organization . . . which lays down the tactics and the political line for the future activity of the fraction.

12. On every question about which a decision has been reached in the fraction, all fraction members must speak and vote in accordance therewith at the meetings of the organization in which the fraction is operating. Anyone breaking this rule will be subject to disciplinary measures by the appropriate party bodies.

peasants, is party work, and is for the majority of members the most important part of their party work. In doing this work they must not lose themselves in the masses, but remain always revolutionary organizers of mass activity.

EXTRACTS FROM A RESOLUTION ON THE ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE OF COMMUNIST FRACTIONS IN TRADE UNIONS PASSED BY THE SECOND ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE AND ENDORSED BY THE SIXTH ECCI PLENUM

11 March 1925

Inprekorr, vi, 65, p. 986, 29 April 1926

The following instructions embody the principles on which the structure of communist fractions should be based. The varied structure of trade unions and the varying levels of development of communist parties make it necessary for the CI sections to determine their own methods by adapting these instructions to the particular conditions of their countries.

I

THE ROLE OF FRACTIONS

Communist members of a trade union and of its organizations (executive, conference, congress, etc.) are obliged to unite in a fraction and to perform active fraction work.

Communist fractions are to work energetically to bring the majority of the trade union members under their influence. They will be the more successful in this the more devotedly, intelligently, and vigorously they look after the interests of these members, the better they understand how to defend the proletarian class interests and to combine, in all spheres and on every occasion, the struggle for immediate demands with the struggle for the aims of the working class. Communist trade union work is carried on within the framework of the constitution and decisions of the union.

II

PARTY AND FRACTION

Party members must realize that fractions are not the foundation of the party and that they can therefore take decisions referring only to their special field of activity.

The success of fraction work depends on the unity, determination, and discipline of all fraction members. It is not the individual fraction member, often not even the fraction as a whole, but the communist party in

activity of communist fractions and every utterance of a communist fraction-member.

The party committees determine the political and tactical line of communist fractions, give them instructions and directives, and supervise their work. Important fraction work must be discussed by the trade union department of the committee in the presence of representatives of the fraction. Serious differences of opinion between trade union department and fraction are to be resolved by the party committee in the presence of fraction representatives. Decisions of the committee are to be unconditionally carried out by the fraction. Failure to do so is a breach of discipline.

Candidates for all trade union congresses, conferences, and executives are to be nominated by the fraction leadership and require endorsement by the appropriate party committee. If necessary the party committee may itself nominate candidates.

The relevant party committee is at all times entitled to amend or annul decisions of the fraction, and to dismiss or appoint fraction committees or leaders. In such cases an explanation must be given to the fraction members.

Within the limits of general party instructions, the fraction decides internal questions and current work. Party committees should not interfere unnecessarily in the daily work of the fraction, but should grant it all possible freedom of action and initiative.

Fraction committees are obliged to report regularly to the relevant party committee or relevant department, and to the fraction committee next above it in rank.

III

THE STRUCTURE OF FRACTIONS

Communist trade union work is carried out in factories by the cells, and in trade union bodies by the fraction. Trade union fractions do not operate in the factory. . . .

The cell committee guides and supervises the activity of communist trade union officials in the factory. It must arrange for the nomination in factory trade union elections of comrades who carry out trade union work in the factory on the instructions of the cell. There is as a rule no direct contact between the fraction committee and the cell. Communication is carried on via the party committee. . . .

At the local level

1. All communist members of a trade union branch form a fraction in that branch. . . .
2. All communists in a trade union body (executive, union committee, etc.) form a fraction.

The communist fraction in the local administrative centre of a union acts as the committee for the communist fractions of the branches within that area. . . .

3. All fraction members shall be called together for a fraction meeting whenever necessary, but in any case before every trade union meeting, to discuss the execution of the instructions given by the appropriate party committee. If, for objective reasons, it is impossible to lay down the attitude of the fraction beforehand, the instructions of the fraction committee are binding on the entire fraction at the trade union meeting. Whatever the circumstances, comrades must always speak and vote as one.

4. If in any city the union branches are organized in a local council with communists among the committee, they shall form a fraction which shall act as the committee for all fractions in the branches represented in the council. . . .

At the District Level

1. Communist members of trade union district committees form a fraction. This fraction also acts as the committee for all fractions of the branches of that union in the district. . . .

2. If the district unions are organized into a district trade union council, communists on that council form a fraction which serves at the same time as the committee for all fractions in the area covered. It works under the direction and control of the corresponding district party committee (trade union department). The district party committee may also communicate direct with the district fraction committees of the individual unions. . . .

At the National Level

1. Communist members of the national executive committee of each union form a fraction, which is in charge of the work of all fractions in that union. . . .

2. Communist fractions in the national executive committees are subordinate to the communist fraction of the executive of the trade union federation. The latter works under the direct guidance of the central committee (trade union department). The CC may also treat directly with the fractions in the union national executives. . . .

Fractions in Unions of Different Tendencies

If in one industry there are unions of different tendencies (red, Amsterdam, syndicalist), fractions are to be formed in each of them, in accordance with their structure. Similarly, fractions should be organized in company trade unions of the Christian, Hirsch-Duncker, fascist, and other varieties.

To this end party organizations must try to recruit members of these unions to the party. In order that the fractions shall act in a planned and uniform fashion when the occasion arises, the relevant party committee (trade union department) shall when necessary call together the fractions or fraction committees in these different unions for joint consultation. . .

V

FRACTIONS AT CONFERENCES AND CONGRESSES

Party committees, working through their trade union department and fraction committee, must make preparations (selection of delegates, draft resolutions, etc.) for trade union congresses, conferences, and delegate meetings. They must convene fraction meetings before these assemblies open, and guide and supervise communist work when they are in session. For the duration of these conferences and congresses, the fraction elects a bureau to deal with current work; the fraction bureau, working under the guidance of the relevant party committee, bears full political responsibility for its work to that committee.

A uniform attitude and the strictest discipline of all communists at these meetings is particularly necessary, since the broad working masses follow their course most attentively and hold the communist party responsible for the utterances of individual communists.

VI

FRACTIONS AND OPPOSITIONS

Every fraction must maintain contact with the non-communist oppositional elements in the trade unions. Meetings and discussions should be held with these sympathizers to enable a joint and united stand to be taken when the occasion arises. . . .

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EXTRACTS FROM A RESOLUTION OF THE ECCI PRESIDIUM ON THE WORK OF TRADE UNION FRACTIONS

July 1932

Inprekorr, xii, 57, p. 1817, 12 July 1932

[In August 1931 a conference on the unemployed movement was held in Prague of representatives of eleven communist parties, of the RILU, and of trade union opposition groups; it adopted a resolution saying that the LSI and IFTU were trying to keep the workers from fighting; they engaged in organized strike-breaking and 'bloody massacres of the unemployed'. Their proposals to

raise the school-leaving age and to limit hours of work to 40 a week were 'inimical to the workers'. Making the main speech at the conference, Ulbricht said that the communist parties were trying to fight the battle of the unemployed instead of organizing the unemployed to fight. In the Latin secretariat Doriot attacked the CGTU leaders who had opposed the proposal for a 40-hour working week as 'an employers' trap', and Piatnitsky at the twelfth plenum derided those communists who evaded their duty to work in the reformist unions on the ground that this was 'opportunism'; he criticized those who said that the reformists either led no strikes, or always betrayed them when they did. In nine countries—which he enumerated—there had been nearly 3,000 strikes in the first half of 1932, and many of them had been successful. Had they all been led by communists? That kind of propaganda only repelled workers.]

Experience in carrying out the decisions of the sixth Comintern congress and the supplementary decisions of the plenary sessions of the ECCI confirms the belief that it is impossible to accomplish the central task of the day—to win the majority of the working class in preparation for the fight for the proletarian dictatorship—without well-organized, systematic, and persistent work day by day both within the revolutionary trade unions which are under the ideological and organizational influence of the communist parties, and in the reformist and other reactionary unions. Nevertheless, this most vital sector on the front of communist party mass work is now as before receiving only slight attention; this neglect is one of the chief obstacles to the further development of the parties. In the resolution of the second international organization conference, ratified by the sixth enlarged plenum of the ECCI, on the structure and methods of work of communist fractions in trade unions, the communist parties were given important and practical directives on trade union work. By and large these still retain their validity.

The changes which have occurred since the sixth plenum in the general situation of the proletarian class struggle, and in the structure, methods of work, and composition of the leading cadres of the communist parties and revolutionary trade union movement, require some additions and alterations to be made. What comes out most clearly is the inexpediency of retaining the trade union departments of the party in countries where the revolutionary trade union movement is legal.

The communist parties of France, Germany, and Czechoslovakia have already abolished their trade union departments; the ECCI presidium endorses this action and, as an amendment to the directives of the second organization conference, proposes that other communist parties in countries with a legal revolutionary trade union movement liquidate their trade union departments, and transfer direction of the work of the fractions to the bureau of the competent party committee. . . .

In countries where the revolutionary trade union movement is illegal,

the trade union departments is to be replaced, as it has been in the Polish CP, by regular working conferences of representatives of the trade union fractions under the direction of specially appointed representatives of the competent party committees (central, district, and local). These conferences are to exercise the functions of the fraction bureaux (central, district, and local) of the revolutionary trade union centres.

When liquidating the trade union departments it is most important that the party committees should not tackle the job mechanically . . . their abolition should help to strengthen the link between fraction and party committee, the committee and the entire party organization being drawn into regular examination and settlement of trade union questions.

The most serious weaknesses in the work of communist trade union fractions are:

(a) the trade union fractions are not well instructed by the corresponding party committees. The guidance they receive is often formal and given mechanically in the form of circular letters and general directives. . . .

(b) in their work in the unions, communists very often carry out the work of party leadership by giving orders instead of using methods of patient persuasion and personal example; as a result the revolutionary unions have no life of their own and merely duplicate the party organizations, with roughly the same composition, the members doing no more than repeat mechanically party decisions;

(c) very often the party committees fail to discuss and decide the practical questions of trade union work. . . . All communist party committees must immediately give the most careful attention to the practical tasks of overcoming the defects and weaknesses in trade union work and of strengthening their positions in union organizations. The ECCI presidium considers that the most important of these tasks are:

(i) Efforts must be made to set up as quickly as possible trade union fractions in all unions, whatever their character, of which communists are members. For this purpose the central committees of all parties must send out experienced instructors and organizers. . . .

(ii) The eleventh ECCI plenum endorsed the decision of the second international organization conference that fractions should be linked not only with their corresponding party committees, but also with each other, the fractions in the higher trade union bodies giving binding instructions to the fractions in the subordinate bodies, so that every fraction has a dual subordination, to both the corresponding party committee and the fraction in the higher trade union body. This regulation has in practice been often ignored, and even disputed. . . . The presidium recommends all communist parties to put the decision of the sixth ECCI plenum on the dual subordination of fractions into operation. . . . If the work of the fractions is properly managed by the party committees, the

decisions and directives of the fractions will be brought into line with party policy, thus making them directives for all members of the party who work in the trade union organization concerned. . . .

(iii) The presidium fully endorses the decision of the second organization conference that trade union fractions should carry out their work through the factory cell. . . . The factory cell must direct all trade union work in the factories. It follows that the fractions working in the various unions represented in the factory must work under the direct control of the factory cell. For its part, the cell must make vigorous use of these factory fractions to penetrate the unions which have branches in the factory, thus consolidating the influence of the communist party in these unions. To this end, it is supremely important that the area and local party committees should hold regular conferences with representatives of the factory cells and fractions in their area to discuss the practical current questions of trade union work, with the object of organizing joint action by all the unions represented in the factory under the ideological and organizational leadership of the revolutionary trade union group of that factory. . . .

(iv) When questions of great political importance arise, such as the formulation of a programme of immediate demands, preparations for a strike, etc., the party committees concerned must hold prior consultations with one or more representatives of the fraction, so that clear instructions can be worked out for the fraction, telling it what to do and what not to do, and how to set about it, but leaving detailed practical questions to the fraction. . . .

(v) Before meetings, congresses, and conferences of the red trade unions or the revolutionary trade union opposition (RTUO), the party committees concerned must discuss the agenda for these meetings, calling in representatives of the corresponding communist fractions. The committee must draw up instructions for the fractions on every item of the agenda. If there are to be trade union elections the party committee, together with representatives of the fraction, must carefully consider which candidates the fraction should support, and which reject. In doing so the following considerations must be kept in mind: (a) there should be a kernel of party members who will carry out the party's policy . . . (b) in addition to members of our party, it is essential to put forward revolutionary-minded workers (non-party, socialist, anarchist, etc.) who enjoy the confidence of the masses and have shown themselves to be good organizers of proletarian revolutionary activities . . .

(vi) In preparing for party conferences and congresses which are to discuss trade union questions and industrial struggles, the leading trade union fractions must be drawn into active practical collaboration in the drafting of theses; in this way the party will be able to rely on the experience of the trade union movement. . . . The party must instruct its

members in the trade unions that their main task is to convince the bulk of the trade union membership by democratic trade union methods of the correctness of the slogans and the proposals of the communist party referring to the strengthening of the revolutionary trade union movement. . . .

(vii) The most important and the most difficult thing is to establish the correct fraternal relations between the communist fractions and the trade unions, particularly the revolutionary unions. It is precisely in this field that most mistakes are made and the greatest confusion exists. Since the revolutionary unions must be mass organizations, embracing all strata of the working class regardless of political affiliation, the communists who work in these organizations must gain influence and a leading position in them by good and intelligent work, by patiently and persistently expounding the communist line . . . and by their own actions giving a personal example of consistent and devoted struggle. . . .

When communists, in accordance with decisions of the fraction or party committee, put forward proposals at trade union meetings, they do not necessarily have to emphasize that these proposals are the outcome of a party directive. By decision of the fraction, one of its members may put forward the proposal in his own name. The other members of the fraction must vote for it as one man and support it by appropriate means, such as taking part in the discussion. This applies also to those members of the fraction who, at the fraction meeting, were not in agreement with the proposal.

(viii) In carrying out party directives, the fractions, while persevering undeviatingly with their policy, must always act according to trade union democracy, so that the unions retain their separate identity and the initiative of the union officials is not hampered. If at a trade union meeting the majority are opposed to a proposal of the party committee, it should as a rule be withdrawn, no matter how useful and necessary it may be, and communists should not act upon it before the question has been again discussed. . . . The proposal should be put forward again and again, until a majority in its favour has been won. Communists must learn not to force their opinion on others, but to convince the erring, otherwise they will never be able to win new recruits.

(ix) While adhering irreconcilably to everything that concerns communist party policy, and pitilessly exposing the counter-revolutionary role of the reformist leaders, communists must adopt a comradely attitude to workers belonging to the socialist party and the reformist unions. In the revolutionary unions, from top to bottom, an atmosphere must be created in which non-party and social-democratic workers feel that they have equal rights with communists and communist sympathizers.

The fight against the opposition in the revolutionary unions must be

waged differently from the fight within the party against the right and the 'left' opposition. On no account should questions of party discipline be brought into the fight. . . . The struggle must be waged only on trade union questions. . . .

The ECCI presidium . . . proposes that the central committees should bring these instructions to the knowledge of all party members; they should be thoroughly discussed and popularized in the party press, at party meetings and training schools. Furthermore, all party committees, from the central committee down to the factory cell, must work out practical measures on the basis of these directives for their trade union work, and subsequently examine strictly and methodically ~~how the directives have been put into effect and how the local party organizations have in fact used them in practice.~~ At the same time the ECCI presidium demands the most resolute struggle, if necessary by organizational measures, against those party bodies and committees which continue to pay inadequate attention to questions of trade union work.

THE TWELFTH PLENARY SESSION OF THE ECCI

[The meeting was held from 27 August to 15 September 1932. There were 174 delegates (38 with voting powers) from 35 countries. The four items on the agenda were the international situation and the tasks of the sections, the lessons of strikes and the struggle of the unemployed, the Far Eastern war and the struggle against imperialist war and anti-Soviet intervention, and socialist construction in the USSR. All the meeting's decisions were unanimous. Summarizing its work in the following month, the *Communist International* wrote that it placed the emphasis on mass strikes and political strikes as the chief means of struggle; communist parties were passing from the stage of agitation and propaganda to the organization of mass activity.

The end of capitalist stabilization was once more announced in Manuilsky's opening speech; this determined Comintern policy; the Dawes and Young Plans had broken down, the Washington agreement was no more; imperialist rivalries, attacks on the colonies, hatred of Russia were all mounting while production was declining. In these objectively favourable conditions, the communist parties were lagging behind, so delaying the transformation of the capitalist crisis into a revolutionary crisis. The change from a revolutionary mood to a revolutionary crisis could be made, Manuilsky said, if the communist parties fought for the economic demands of the masses, which social-democracy abandoned on the ground that capitalism was unable to grant them. It depended on the communist parties whether the proletariat would have to suffer new wars before establishing its dictatorship, whether in some countries fascism would precede the revolution. There were fatalists in the communist parties who argued that 'the historic task of preparing the proletarian revolution will be carried out for us by war and fascism, that war and fascism will undermine and destroy the influence of social-democracy, which is the main obstacle in the path of the

plants. There are very few in large plants, and these are as a rule numerically weak and politically with little influence.

3. Existing factory cells are as a rule not active enough and have no contact with the daily life of the factories.

4. Among the workers who are party members there is a strong tendency to evade factory-cell work, and consequently not all of them belong to the factory cell. The Czechoslovak CP, for example, stated that on 1 July 1930 57 per cent of its members were industrial workers, but only 14 per cent were organized in factory cells.

5. The factory cells as a rule have no ties with the communist fractions in the corresponding trade union.

6. The work of the factory cells is very bad, and frequently completely disconnected from the work of the party as a whole, in consequence of the inadequate attention paid to factory-cell work by the leading party bodies.

To change this state of affairs, to transform the factory cells into the real basic organizations of the communist party, all these shortcomings must be eliminated. . . . In the big political campaigns conducted by the party the factory cells as a rule take only a very minor part, sometimes none at all. Usually political campaigns are run in the old way, repeatedly condemned by the Communist International, inherited from the social-democratic parties—general agitation, popular meetings, participation by members in their home area but not where they work; the driving forces in the campaign are still the central party press and agitators sent out by the party centre. . . . It is said that the weakness of the factory cells makes it impossible to organize campaigns around them. . . . This means that in practice nothing is done to reorganize the party on a factory-cell basis, and that the party is not in a position to bring our slogans to the masses of workers and to expose the treacherous and counter-revolutionary work of the social-democrats, the reformists, and the fascists. . . .

The central committees of the communist parties must take every measure to see that the entire system of party leadership must be turned to face the factories. Above all the entire party press must be recast for this purpose. . . . Articles must be written in simple language, so that the average workman, including the non-political workman, still unaccustomed to specific political expressions and formulations, can understand them. . . . In addition to articles of a general character, party newspapers must carry a great many letters from different districts and factories. Some intensive work must be done to create a network of worker correspondents, and to organize groups of worker correspondents in all factories; others as well as party members should be drawn into these groups—sympathetic workers belonging to no party, revolutionary social-democratic workers and members of reformist unions. Groups of officials

of the party press' should also be set up, on the lines of the 'Friends of *L'Humanité*' groups in France. . . .

What has been said here about the party newspapers applies completely, though in another form, to the party committees, particularly those which are directly responsible for work in the factories. Factory cells can grow stronger and become the decisive party units only if the party committees which guide their work give them constant daily help. . . . Instead of the present bureaucratic contact, maintained by circulars, the party committees must establish direct and lively contact with the factories and factory cells. . . .

Members of communist trade union fractions must maintain the closest contact with the appropriate party committee and keep it regularly informed about what is happening in the factories and about the sentiments of trade union members. . . .

One of the greatest difficulties in reorganizing the party on the basis of factory cells is presented by the problem of how to form cells in factories where there are no party members, or where there are at most only one or two. . . .

The first step is to find out, from the fractions in the mass organizations (Young Communist League, trade union, Red Aid, sports organizations, delegate meetings) whether there are in these organizations members who are in the communist party or who sympathize with it. If no party members can be found by this means, the fractions in the mass organizations should be asked to suggest the names of sympathizing workers, through whom or with whose help the foundation can be laid for forming a factory cell. . . . It may be necessary to this end, in particular cases, to raise the question whether to direct some party members to seek work in a particular factory.

These methods might be employed with particular advantage on agricultural plantations, sugar-beet farms, potato districts, etc., which are usually remote from industrial centres and employ the more backward sections of the proletariat and semi-proletariat.

Help in forming factory cells should be given by the street cells in the neighbourhood of the factory concerned. The street-cell members should make contact with the factory workers, wait for them when they leave the factory, or catch them on their way to work, make their acquaintance in the local public-houses, or call on them in their homes. . . .

Once contact has been established, by these or other means, with three to five workers in the factory, they must be immediately organized into a factory cell. However weak numerically the cell may be, it must at once get energetically about establishing further contacts and recruiting new members into the ranks of the communist party, and do its best to establish connections with departments of the factory where there are not yet

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party members. The party committee must pay most careful attention to this work and must give unceasing help to the comrades in correcting their mistakes and if necessary sending in some officials to help them in their work. . . .

The primary link in the party factory cell is the shop cell. Some comrades believe that shop cells can be organized only in parties with strong and numerous factory cells. That is not correct. Party work in the factory always begins in the shop. A party member cannot be active in the factory as a whole, but only in one shift in one shop. . . . He must first find out all about the workers in his shift, whether there are any party members or sympathizers there . . . and with them create the core of the workshop party cell. With this basis established, they must ascertain the political colouring of their workmates, which of them are members of reformist unions, of the social-democratic party, of fascist organizations, etc. This knowledge is absolutely essential for every party member. When they are doing their party work in the shop, party members must first of all, naturally, establish contact with revolutionary-minded non-party workers, and also try to approach revolutionary-minded members of reformist unions and of the social-democratic party, and also individual fascist workers. . . .

In all capitalist countries the factory cell can operate only as a conspirative organization. Consequently its work, and the work of each member, must be conducted in such a way that the various police agents in the factory should as far as possible be unable to find out which of the workers are communists, and should in no case learn about the practical work done by the communist party, about its political propaganda and agitation among the factory workers, and the organizational consolidation of its influence in the factory. In its work, therefore, the factory cell must strictly observe the primary conspirative rules. This applies both to illegal and to legal communist parties. In countries where the communist party is illegal the maintenance of contact between the cell and the party committee is a complicated matter. It requires (in addition to the creation of a solid illegal apparatus and a particularly solid machinery of illegal contacts), the thorough utilization of all legal and semi-legal possibilities, in the first place the utilization of the party fractions in the legal and semi-legal mass organizations, municipal councils, etc. But even in countries where the communist party is legal, the party committees which guide the factory cells in their work must instruct the cell members in the rules of conspirative work. Examples of such rules are: (1) At meetings of the cell and in discussions of party affairs, and most particularly in drawing up minutes of proceedings and other documents, cell members must not use their correct names but make use of cover names. (2) As a rule party affairs must never be discussed in the presence of unknown persons,

certainly not in the presence of those of whom there is some reason to suspect that they have connexions with the police. (3) As a rule party meetings and discussions should not be held in the presence of others. Therefore meeting places should be chosen which give the best guarantee that party questions can be discussed without risk of being overheard by outsiders. It follows that as a rule factory-cell meetings should be held not in the factory itself, although this should not change the character of its work as connecting link between the party and the workers in that factory. (4) Every member must carefully avoid bringing with him to the meeting party documents which would reveal, if the meeting were broken up, that it is a communist meeting. (5) In general party members working in a factory should not unnecessarily reveal to everybody that they are communist party members.

When instructing the cells in conspirative methods, party committees must at the same time explain that these rules should in no circumstances be applied in a way that cuts the cell off from the masses in the factory; that, while adopting conspiratorial methods in regard to the police and their agents, they must always make the workers aware of their existence, employing such means as leaflets and factory news-sheets, holding meetings, etc. The most important duty of a factory cell is to react immediately to every event in the factory and in the country, to issue appropriate slogans in the name of the party for organizing and conducting the struggle for working-class interests. . . . If conditions make it necessary (e.g. when there is great excitement among the workers because of a mine disaster), the cell must instruct the most active members to come out openly before the workers in the name of the party, without regard to the risk, to the possibility of arrest or dismissal. . . .

In assigning duties to factory-cell members, provision must be made for work among juvenile and women workers. . . . In its day-to-day work the cell must rely on the various legal and semi-legal auxiliary organizations—trade unions, educational and sports associations, etc. Of these the trade unions are the most important, as the body in which the factory cell connects with the broad working masses of the factory. If the factory cell is to be able to get support from the trade unionists in the factory, the trade union itself must be reorganized according to its members' place of work, as outlined in the decisions of the fifth RILU congress. Party factory cells must take the initiative in getting this reorganization put through by the party members in the union. Within the factory trade union group, the factory cell must serve as an organizing centre. Using the trade union group as its point of departure, the party cell can extend its influence over the backward workers, win them for the struggle for immediate demands, and in the course of that struggle explain the general policy and aims of the revolutionary trade union movement and of the communist party.

→ If the workers become discontented with the way things are run in the factory, with the employers' attacks on wages, with the action of the bourgeois Government, the treachery of the social-democrats, etc., the party cell must take the initiative in establishing appropriate fighting bodies—to prepare for a strike, a fight against a lockout, organizing demonstrations, etc. . . . The cell's most powerful instrument, both for spreading the party's slogans among the workers in the factory and for mobilizing the masses behind them, is the factory news-sheet. Its importance is seriously underestimated in many communist parties. They are still poorly distributed, and in many cases, even where a factory cell has long been in existence, there is no news-sheet. . . . Factory news-sheets must be put out by the factory-cell members, and not by the party committee, which is what often happens now in a number of cases in all parties. The committees must, however, give careful and continuous guidance to the cells in regard to the news-sheets, and for this purpose assign to the cells politically capable members with literary ability. The party committees must keep the contents of the news-sheets under constant review and arrange discussions about it . . . so that by means of self-criticism the news-sheets can be improved. . . .

Red factory committees and revolutionary shop stewards can be of the utmost assistance to the factory cell in its work. The attention of the party factory news-sheet must be concentrated on the question of winning over the factory committees and consolidating their influence when won. . . .

The party cells must give particular attention to activities among social-democratic workers and members of reformist trade unions. This is of special importance at the present time, because the treacherous social-fascist role of the leaders of the Social-Democratic and Amsterdam Internationals is being more and more clearly recognized by broad sections of the working class, who are consequently turning away in increasing numbers from their reactionary leaders. . . . One of the most important tasks of the fight against social-democratic and reformist influence in the factory is to expose those in the factory who are the vehicles of that influence. All those who directly carry the influence of social-fascism into the factory, all the social-democratic and reformist officials, must be kept under constant and sharp fire in the factory cell's day-to-day propaganda, through the party's fractions in those organizations, and particularly in the columns of the factory paper. . . . At the same time the cell must keep track of the growth of discontent among the members of the social-democratic party and reformist unions with the policy of their leaders, establish close contacts with these discontented elements, and draw them into various activities in defence of immediate working-class interests on the basis of the united front from below. . . . The chief job of the factory cells in regard to such workers is not to criticize them because they have not yet

broken completely with their leaders, but to find a common language with them on those questions on which they are already prepared to break, in order to draw them through these questions into the struggle for immediate demands and in the course of that struggle to widen the breach between them and their reactionary leaders and in the end to detach them from those leaders.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM THE ECCI TO CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF COMINTERN SECTIONS ON THE STATE OF MEMBERSHIP

April 1932

Inprekorr, xii, 32, p. 985, 19 April 1932

[An article in the issue of *Inprekorr* which published this circular letter (which was not reproduced in full), explained that although the communist parties were growing in countries where a revolutionary crisis was developing, such as Germany and Poland, this was happening spontaneously, not as the result of systematic party work; the proportion of factory workers among the members was declining and recruiting work had to be concentrated on them, although no artificial obstacles should be placed in the way of entry by the unemployed and the intelligentsia. There was a high turnover in the membership—in the United States it exceeded 100 per cent; this showed that newcomers were not properly integrated into party life and work. Other articles in the same issue gave some details of membership. The Polish CP had grown by 107 per cent since the beginning of 1931, but had made no gains among the industrial workers and few among the unemployed; the new recruits were mostly peasants. The Czechoslovakian CP had made 36,000 new members in 1931, but the proportion of members organized in factory cells remained stationary. Membership of the CPGB had risen from 3,200 at the end of 1929 to 6,300 two years later; of these 49 per cent were unemployed, and 30 per cent worked in industry; the proportion of those organized in factory cells had fallen from 8.5 to 4.2 per cent. In 1930 the KPD had gained 143,000 members and lost 95,000. The French CP, Piatnitsky said at the tenth plenum, 'is continually registering new members, while the total membership figures are in continual decline'. A resolution of the ECCI presidium of 16 July 1930, following a meeting of the French commission attended by sixteen leading members of the CPF, directed the party to establish committees of the unemployed; the French representatives undertook to increase the membership of the party and the CGTU, and the circulation of *L'Humanité*, but, said Piatnitsky two years later at the twelfth plenum, none of this had happened. He rebuked the communist deputies for

Three Extracts on Factory Nuclei from THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL 1919-1943 DOCUMENTS
Edited by Jane Degras

1. Volume II - p. 291-294; "Extracts From A Resolution On Factory And Street Cells Passed By The Second Organization Conference Of The Communist International and Ratified By The Orgbureau Of The ECCI" 26 March 1926
2. Volume III - p. 141-149; "Extracts From A Circular Letter On Factory Cells Of The Organization Department Of The ECCI Endorsed By The Political Secretariat" December 1930
3. Volume III - p. 187-190; "Extracts From A Letter From The ECCI To Central Committees Of Comintern Sections On The State Of Membership" April 1932

clusion that the present course of the KPD signifies a return to the situation in the party before October 1923. The party is not going backwards; it is going forwards. The struggle which was conducted against the Brandler group was not annulled by the change in the KPD leadership; its results were made secure. . . .

VI. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE KPD

The present leadership of the KPD arose in the struggle against right errors and was strengthened in the struggle against ultra-left errors. The group of workers at the head of the KPD is the nucleus of a truly Leninist party leadership. . . .

VII. THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE KPD

. . . At the present time the following demands are at the centre of the workers' struggle:

1. The fight against the employers' offensive—the fight for the unemployed. . . .
2. Transfer of the Dawes burden to the propertied classes. . . .
3. Strengthening the unions. . . .
4. Fight against monarchism and fascism. . . .
5. Fight for the needs of the working peasants. . . .
6. Organizing an active struggle for the demands of young workers, working women, public employees, and the impoverished sections of the petty bourgeoisie. . . .

The watchword which unites all these demands is the fight for an independent, socialist Germany, freely allied with the Soviet Union, with the class-conscious workers, and with all the oppressed peoples of the world.

EXTRACTS FROM A RESOLUTION ON FACTORY AND STREET CELLS
PASSED BY THE SECOND ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE OF THE COM-
MUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND RATIFIED BY THE ORGBUREAU OF THE
ECCI

26 March 1926

Inprekorr, vi, 65, p. 968, 29 April 1926

[The French were particularly critical of factory-cell organization, complaining that it had meant a severe loss of membership. Members who did not work in factories tended to drop out. The Clichy congress in January 1925 claimed 76,000 members; the Lille congress in June 1926 only 55,000. The decline was attributed to factory cells and to the loss of members in North Africa during the Moroccan war.]

I

THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULTS SINCE THE FIRST ORG-CONFERENCE

1. Since the first international organization conference (March 1925) the reorganization of communist parties on the basis of factory cells has made considerable progress. The ideological resistance which at that time could still be met in some parties has been almost completely overcome. In the most important parties . . . factory cells have been established which in essentials have already become the basic party unit. In some parties entire local and district party organizations have been reorganized into factory cells. . . .

2. In the light of these results it has been conclusively proved that:

(a) The factory cell is the appropriate basic unit for all parties in capitalist countries.

(b) Reorganization on a factory-cell basis improves the social composition of communist parties, strengthens the influence of the lower party bodies in the party committees, creates close relations between party committees and the membership, increases the activity of members, and thus provides guarantees for the operation of democratic centralism within the party.

(c) Factory cells have proved to be the most reliable supports in the struggle against ultra-left and right groups, and the best guarantee for the execution of the Comintern line.

(d) By their daily work in the factory, by defending the workers' interests, and by enlightening the workers, factory cells strengthen and consolidate the influence of the party over the non-party and social-democratic masses. They enable united front tactics to be applied fruitfully, and are an important preliminary for success in capturing non-party mass organizations, particularly trade unions. . . .

(e) The arguments of the opponents of reorganization that factory cells were suitable for factory work, but not for carrying out mass political campaigns, and that therefore the old form of organization according to place of residence should not be dissolved have been refuted by experience. . . .

(f) The publication of factory newspapers has turned out—where they are well edited and regularly issued—to be the most important instrument of factory-cell work. . . .

(g) To organize those members who do not work in factories (housewives, intellectuals, artisans, etc.), and to make proper use of them for party work, it is necessary to establish street cells. . . .

were two of the seven tasks confronting communist parties. (The other five were to investigate the causes of their loss of ground, to fight the dangers from left and right within the parties, to wage a systematic campaign against social-democracy and reformism, to build the united front from below, and to pay more attention to party structure, since political could not be separated from organizational questions.) In the summer of 1930 the ECCI convened a conference of representatives of seven communist parties (Germany, France, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland) to discuss agitation and propaganda. The chief weaknesses in their work were said to be their inadequate use of material about capitalist crises and Soviet progress, a low theoretical level, a failure to link their political agitation with the economic crisis and unemployment, and an inadequate explanation of the need to fight on two fronts. Progress had been shown in the bolshevization of the press, in better publications, in the success of the Lenin School, and in the better ideological preparation of campaigns.

The earlier part of the letter referred to directives issued in February 1930 on expanding agitation and propaganda to ensure that the forms and methods of work fitted the task of communist leadership of mass industrial action. All parties without exception must improve and strengthen their factory-cell organization; the KPD attributed its electoral success in part to the establishment of 188 new factory cells.

The fifth RILU congress was held in Moscow in the latter half of August 1930. The number of countries represented is given as 55 in one source, 60 in another. In his opening speech Lozovsky said it was 'the policy of the entire reformist trade union leadership to break off any and every struggle and to enslave the working class'. This they did very subtly in order not to lose the loyalty of their members; sometimes they called strikes in agreement with the employers. The resolution adopted said the congress marked 'a turning point in the strategy and tactics of the RILU in western Europe'. The congress ratified 'the decision of the revolutionary trade union opposition in Germany and Poland to drop the slogan of "into the reformist unions"'. 'Parallel red unions' were to be established wherever the situation warranted this step, in preparation for taking over the leadership of the class struggle. There was growing antagonism between the reformist leaders and the masses; revolutionary unions were the 'best weapon' for the complete defeat of Amsterdam, 'the most dangerous enemy of the working class'. Where there were no RILU unions, the trade union opposition had to be strengthened. 'RILU adherents must take steps to create opposition groups in the factories, and to strengthen the local and central organization of the revolutionary trade union opposition.' The splitting policy of the social-fascist trade union leaders had to be vigorously combated, but this did not run counter to the need to build independent unions; for revolutionaries to dispute this need was tantamount to a renunciation of revolutionary work in the trade union movement, an abandonment of the most exploited sections of the working class. The congress also 'welcomed the decision of the Soviet trade unions to establish an international school for the trade union movement'.

An article in the *Communist International* shortly before the RILU congress

opened argued that the old idea of a labour aristocracy was no longer valid; the capitalists could no longer afford to bribe large numbers, the few 'labour aristocrats' did not work in industry, but in government and social-fascist organizations, where they 'deceived and terrorized' the masses. However, the results of the factory-committee elections in Germany showed that these masses were not yet disillusioned about the reformist unions, whose influence could be countered and eliminated by independent revolutionary leadership of the industrial struggle. Revolutionary unions would bring in the unorganized and the unemployed, and include representatives of factory committees. 'No Leninist considers it necessary to establish new trade unions "just for the sake of a split", but no communist can declare—as Brandler, Walcher & Co. do—that the establishment of revolutionary trade unions is a violation of unity, once there is no longer any possibility of carrying on revolutionary mass work in the reformist unions.'

The establishment of communist-controlled unions had long been urged by Lozovsky. At the sixteenth CPSU congress he argued that there was far too much 'trade union legalism' in the American, British, German, and other communist parties; they submitted to trade union discipline in preference to party discipline and independent leadership. The old opportunist leadership of the Russian unions, he said, had sabotaged the RILU, interpreting the united front as fraternization with Amsterdam, and not as a revolutionary tactic to expose the IFTU leaders. A year earlier, in the trade union commission of the ECCI (February 1929), Piatnitsky had been extremely critical of the CGTU and the communist unions of Czechoslovakia (where some members, he said, had acted as strikebreakers). The time might come when it would be necessary to split the German unions; the harder they worked in the reformist unions now, the better their chances later. Lozovsky said there was no problem about organizing the unorganized and the unemployed where there were red unions; where there were no revolutionary unions, there was a good deal of opposition by communists to bringing the unorganized into the reformist unions because it would strengthen them; how could they urge them to go into unions whose leaders they had accused of strike-breaking? There had been much opposition in the KPD to running their own independent list of candidates for factory-committee elections.

At the tenth plenum Lozovsky answered Gusev's objections to the formation of new unions; these were a necessary outcome of the decisions of the ninth plenum and the fourth RILU congress; the situation for them was favourable in Poland and the United States.

Writing about the fifth RILU congress at the beginning of 1933, Martynov explained the declining influence of the RILU at the time to isolation from the masses, failure to work for concrete partial demands, and 'unprincipled blocs' with the reformists.]

In all communist parties, including even the strongest such as the KPD, the most serious shortcomings in factory-cell work are the following:

1. There are very few factory cells....
2. The majority of existing factory cells are concentrated in small-scale

... The characteristic errors and defects are:

(a) In the establishment of cells:

Cells are still frequently set up either in an unplanned and unsystematic way, the initiative being left entirely to the comrades working in the factory . . . or in too minute and detailed a fashion, without any regard for the independent initiative of the party membership in the factories. . . . It is also no doubt due to mistakes in the work of reorganization that, as has happened in some cases, a large number of members are lost in the process. . . .

(b) In the structure of cells:

Too many members are attached to the cells who either work in other factories or who do not work in a factory at all. . . . Many cells still have no cell committee, but only a secretary, whose work is often only of a technical character. Where there is a committee, it is often inadequate. . . . Sometimes the committee only carries out technical jobs, such as collecting dues and distributing literature, and does not undertake and carry through the work of planning and guiding the activities of the cell. . . .

(c) In the work of the cells:

1. Inadequate political activity:

The decisive defect in the work of the cells is that the majority of them have not yet managed to engage in political activity. They are not sufficiently concerned with party questions, nor have they shown the capacity to combine their factory work with the political questions raised by the party. Most of them react only to the questions arising in the factory itself. . . .

2. Imprudent methods of work:

It is another serious defect that many factory cells still do not understand how to work invisibly, so that their members, while working steadily and energetically, do not fall victim to the terrorism of employers and governments. In practice this has often led to serious upheavals in cell work. . . . They also frequently neglect the job of creating a body of sympathizers around the cell and maintaining contact with them.

3. In the daily work of the cells:

The following defects are most obvious: the lack of systematic planned work, and of careful organization and distribution of work. . . . Cell meetings are too long, badly prepared, uninteresting, and are not held regularly. It is also clear from reports that many cells do no thinking or the matters discussed at their meetings.

4. Factory committee fraction and cell:

The attitude of communist fractions in factory committees to the factory ~~cells~~ is in many respects still unsatisfactory. . . . Many fractions refuse to carry out the decisions of the cell, while on the other hand the idea prevails in many cells that communist work in the factory committee can replace cell work. It is not clearly enough understood that the function of communist fractions in factory committees must be different from that of the cells, that the fraction is subordinate to the cell and works on its instructions. first

5. Factory newspapers:

It must be recognized as a special defect that, although the great agitational and organizational value of factory newspapers has been clearly demonstrated, their number has fallen and their publication is more irregular. . . .

All the defects and errors noted here in the structure and work of the cells cannot however detract from the significant successes obtained in this field in the last few months. Few though they may be in number, and weak as many of them are, the fact that there are in existence in Germany, Italy, France, England, and other countries communist cells in large factories, which do good work, which extend the activities of party members, which lead the workers' struggle against the employers, which strengthen and deepen the power and influence of the party among the working masses in political struggles, has proved that the reorganization of the parties on the basis of factory cells is an important prerequisite for bolshevization. 141

EXTRACTS FROM A CIRCULAR LETTER ON FACTORY CELLS OF THE ORGANIZATION DEPARTMENT OF THE ECCI ENDORSED BY THE POLITICAL SECRETARIAT

December 1930

Imprekorr, x, 109, p. 2693; 110,
p. 2717; 111-12, p. 2764, 19,
23, & 30 December 1930

[In *Communists in Action* Piatnitsky had complained that 'so far party reorganization on the basis of factory nuclei has not been carried out in any of the sections of the Comintern'. At best, they included 20 per cent of the communists' workday in various. To remedy this situation, and to bring the situation...

their voting behaviour in the Chamber, and the CGTU for its failure in the industrial field. An article in *Imprecorr* in November 1932 reproved those parties which excused their lagging behind by the absence of trained cadres: their complaints were a reflection on their own work; this had been concentrated on agitation and propaganda; what was needed was operative leadership in launching and waging revolutionary struggles. Every member must be given a specific task and the volume of paper instructions and circulars reduced.

Attention was also being paid at this time to the agrarian question. In 1930 representatives of European CPs met in Berlin and set up a European Peasant Committee, but nothing is known of its work, if any. In 1931 the eleventh ECCI plenum appointed a special sub-commission to examine communist work in the village, and in 1932 the ECCI convened a conference of those in charge of work among the peasants in a number of countries. These parties were instructed to draw up a programme of action embodying partial demands for the peasants; in a number of countries the fascists were carrying the peasants with them, and this was said to be due in large part to the inadequacy of communist work in the village.]

Close analysis shows that in all countries the main reason for inadequate recruiting of factory workers lies not outside but within the party itself, in incorrect plans and methods of recruiting, and above all in the insufficient attention paid to questions of work in the factories; in the absence of the requisite bolshevist vigour in reorganizing all party work on to a factory basis. . . .

It is therefore essential that in future the party's entire recruiting activity must be concentrated on the factory, in the first place the large factories in the most important industries. . . . Recruiting work must become the daily obligation of every party member, and the enrolment of new members in the cells must be immediately undertaken and completed without any unnecessarily formal procedures. It is in the first place up to the central and district committees of the party to ensure that their recruiting work is carried on systematically in these factories. The parties—and in particular such parties as the Polish and the German—must see to it that in the immediate future, in the next month or two, those localities and factories which represent the advanced outposts of the proletarian class-struggle front are given particular and careful attention in respect to the extension and consolidation of contact with the workers employed there, to winning the best revolutionary elements among them for the party. The appropriate local party committees must, with the whole-hearted and close participation and support of the central committee, work out special methods for approaching the different groups of workers in these factories (skilled and unskilled, women, juveniles, foreign workers, socialists, Christians, etc.), draft demands appropriate for each group, discuss them, issue special literature, appoint special organizers or form special brigades.

called up for the forces. . . .

To make this change in the party's recruiting activities requires in addition the most resolute and ruthless struggle against elements of bureaucratism in the work of party organizations among workers sympathetic to the party who wish to join it but are kept waiting for months (as sometimes happened in 1931, or as happened in Spain, when hundreds were refused admission because there were no party cards). A resolute struggle must also be waged against sectarian tendencies, against the fear of taking in new members, rejected on the most varied pretexts. Against those guilty of such bureaucratic formalism and sectarian narrow-mindedness, the party must proceed with the utmost rigour. . . .

Such a situation is wholly abnormal, and involves the danger that the present stream of workers into the communist party may be followed by a movement in the opposite direction, and that in general the numerical growth of the parties will not be stable. The retention of new party members, the question of the special measures required for work among them, for raising their political level, drawing them into current practical work, assimilating them into the party—all these tasks are today of the utmost political importance, and in this regard the leading bodies of the communist parties bear a great responsibility to the world communist movement.

Clearly, rapid and decisive changes are urgently required in the entire present way of dealing with new members. Seeing that the situation in this respect is wholly unsatisfactory, although numerous decisions have been taken to deal with fluctuations in membership, what is now required is a thorough and methodical examination of what is in fact being done, so that mistaken methods of work can be singled out and the work itself intensified; all obstacles rooted in incorrect methods of work in party organizations, and in particular those which are the result of bureaucratic attitudes or of the incapacity of individuals in the party apparatus, must be eliminated 'without respect to persons'. . . .

It is what goes on in the life of the factory cell that is as a rule decisive in regard to fluctuation. If the factory cell is lively and active, if it takes part in all mass movements of the workers in the factory, if it is at the head of them, if all the cell members have party duties to carry out, and if inner-party democracy gives them the opportunity to discuss all questions of party life, to fight against deviations from the party line, to fight bureaucratic, sectarian, and other distortions in the party apparatus there will as a rule be no defections; on the contrary, the cell will grow and its mass influence increase. And conversely, cells which are not active,

DRAFT PROGRAMME

A. 1. Big factories are developing in Russia with ever-growing rapidity, ruining the small handicraftsmen and peasants, turning them into propertyless workers, and driving ever-increasing numbers of the people to the cities, factory and industrial villages and townlets.

2. This growth of capitalism signifies an enormous growth of wealth and luxury among a handful of factory owners, merchants and landowners, and a still more rapid growth of the poverty and oppression of the workers. The improvements in production and the machinery introduced in the big factories, while facilitating a rise in the productivity of social labour, serve to strengthen the power of the capitalists over the workers, to increase unemployment and with it to accentuate the defenceless position of the workers.

3. But while carrying the oppression of labour by capital to the highest pitch, the big factories are creating a special class of workers which is enabled to wage a struggle against capital, because their very conditions of life are destroying all their ties with their own petty production, and, by uniting the workers through their common labour and transferring them from factory to factory, are welding masses of working folk together. The workers are beginning a struggle against the capitalists, and an intense urge for unity is appearing among them. Out of the isolated revolts of the workers is growing the struggle of the Russian working class.

4. This struggle of the working class against the capitalist class is a struggle against all classes who live by the labour of others, and against all exploitation. It can only end

in the passage of political power into the hands of the working class, the transfer of all the land, instruments, factories, machines, and mines to the whole of society for the organisation of socialist production, under which all that is produced by the workers and all improvements in production must benefit the working people themselves.

5. The movement of the Russian working class is, according to its character and aims, part of the international (Social-Democratic) movement of the working class of all countries.

6. The main obstacle in the struggle of the Russian working class for its emancipation is the absolutely autocratic government and its irresponsible officials. Basing itself on the privileges of the landowners and capitalists and on subservience to their interests, it denies the lower classes any rights whatever and thus fetters the workers' movement and retards the development of the entire people. That is why the struggle of the Russian working class for its emancipation necessarily gives rise to the struggle against the absolute power of the autocratic government.

B. 1. The Russian Social-Democratic Party declares that its aim is to assist this struggle of the Russian working class by developing the class-consciousness of the workers, by promoting their organisation, and by indicating the aims and objects of the struggle.

2. The struggle of the Russian working class for its emancipation is a political struggle, and its first aim is to achieve political liberty.

3. That is why the Russian Social-Democratic Party will, without separating itself from the working-class movement, support every social movement against the absolute power of the autocratic government, against the class of privileged landed nobility and against all the vestiges of serfdom and the social-estate system which hinder free competition.

4. On the other hand, the Russian Social-Democratic workers' party will wage war against all endeavours to patronise the labouring classes with the guardianship of the absolute government and its officials, all endeavours to retard the development of capitalism, and consequently the development of the working class.

5. The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself.

6. What the Russian people need is not the help of the absolute government and its officials, but emancipation from oppression by it.

C. Making these views its starting-point, the Russian Social-Democratic Party demands first and foremost:

1. The convening of a Zemsky Sobor made up of representatives of all citizens so as to draw up a constitution.

2. Universal and direct suffrage for all citizens of Russia who have reached 21 years of age, irrespective of religion or nationality.

3. Freedom of assembly and organisation, and the right to strike.

4. Freedom of the press.

5. Abolition of social estates, and complete equality of all citizens before the law.

6. Freedom of religion and equality of all nationalities. Transfer of the registration of births, marriages and deaths to independent civic officials, independent, that is, of the police.

7. Every citizen to have the right to prosecute any official, without having to complain to the latter's superiors.

8. Abolition of passports, full freedom of movement and residence.

9. Freedom of trades and occupations and abolition of guilds.

D. For the workers, the Russian Social-Democratic Party demands:

1. Establishment of industrial courts in all industries, with elected judges from the capitalists and workers, in equal numbers.

2. Legislative limitation of the working day to 8 hours.

3. Legislative prohibition of night work and shifts. Prohibition of work by children under 15 years of age.

4. Legislative enactment of national holidays.

5. Application of factory laws and factory inspection to all industries throughout Russia, and to government factories, and also to handicraftsmen who work at home.

6. The Factory Inspectorate must be independent and not be under the Ministry of Finance. Members of industrial

courts must enjoy equal rights with the Factory Inspectorate in ensuring the observance of factory laws.

7. Absolute prohibition everywhere of the truck system.

8. Supervision, by workers' elected representatives, of the proper fixing of rates, the rejection of goods, the expenditure of accumulated fines and the factory-owned workers' quarters.

A law that all deductions from workers' wages, whatever the reason for their imposition (fines, rejets, etc.), shall not exceed the sum of 10 kopeks per ruble all told.

9. A law making the employers responsible for injuries to workers, the employer being required to prove that the worker is to blame.

10. A law making the employers responsible for maintaining schools and providing medical aid to the workers.

E. For the peasants, the Russian Social-Democratic Party demands:

1. Abolition of land redemption payments³⁶ and compensation to the peasants for redemption payments made. Return to the peasants of excess payments made to the Treasury.

2. Return to the peasants of their lands cut off in 1861.

3. Complete equality of taxation of the peasants' and landlords' lands.

4. Abolition of collective responsibility³⁷ and of all laws that prevent the peasants from doing as they will with their lands.

EXPLANATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme is divided into three main parts. Part one sets forth all the tenets from which the remaining parts of the programme follow. This part indicates the position occupied by the working class in contemporary society, the meaning and significance of their struggle against the employers and the political position of the working class in the Russian state.

Part two sets forth the *Party's aim*, and indicates the Party's relation to other political trends in Russia. It deals with what should be the activity of the Party and of all class-conscious workers, and what should be their

attitude to the interests and strivings of the other classes in Russian society.

Part three contains the Party's practical demands. This part is divided into three sections. The first section contains demands for nation-wide reforms. The second section states the demands and programme of the working class. The third section contains demands in the interests of the peasants. Some preliminary explanations of the sections are given below, before proceeding to the practical part of the programme.

A 1. The programme deals first of all with the rapid growth of big factories, because this is the main thing in contemporary Russia that is completely changing all the old conditions of life, particularly the living conditions of the labouring class. Under the old conditions practically all the country's wealth was produced by petty proprietors, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. The population lived an immobile life in the villages, the greater part of their produce being either for their own consumption, or for the small market of neighbouring villages which had little contact with other nearby markets. These very same petty proprietors worked for the landlords, who compelled them to produce mainly for their consumption. Domestic produce was handed over for processing to artisans, who also lived in the villages or travelled in the neighbouring areas to get work.

But after the peasants were emancipated, these living conditions of the mass of the people underwent a complete change: the small artisan establishments began to be replaced by big factories, which grew with extraordinary rapidity; they ousted the petty proprietors, turning them into wage-workers, and compelled hundreds and thousands of workers to work together, producing tremendous quantities of goods that are being sold all over Russia.

The emancipation of the peasants destroyed the immobility of the population and placed the peasants in conditions under which they could no longer get a livelihood from the patches of land that remained in their possession. Masses of people left home to seek a livelihood, making for the factories or for jobs on the construction of the railways which connect the different corners of Russia and carry the output

of the big factories everywhere. Masses of people went to jobs in the towns, took part in building factory and commercial premises, in delivering fuel to factories, and in preparing raw materials for them. Finally, many people were occupied at home, doing jobs for merchants and factory owners who could not expand their establishments fast enough. Similar changes took place in agriculture; the landlords began to produce grain for sale, big cultivators from among the peasants and merchants came on the scene, and grain in hundreds of millions of poods began to be sold abroad. Production required wage-workers, and hundreds of thousands and millions of peasants, giving up their tiny allotments, went to work as regular or day labourers for the new masters engaged in producing grain for sale. Now it is these changes in the old way of life that are described by the programme, which says that the big factories are ruining the small handicraftsmen and peasants, turning them into wage-workers. Small-scale production is being replaced everywhere by large-scale, and in this large-scale production the masses of the workers are just hirelings employed for wages by the capitalist, who possesses enormous capital, builds enormous workshops, buys up huge quantities of materials and fills his pockets with all the profit from this mass-scale production by the combined workers. Production has become capitalist, and it exerts merciless and ruthless pressure on all the petty proprietors, destroying their immobile life in the villages, compelling them to travel from one end of the country to the other as ordinary unskilled labourers, selling their labour-power to capital. An ever-increasing part of the population is being separated once and for all from the countryside and from agriculture, and is concentrating in the towns, factory and industrial villages and townlets, forming a special propertyless class of people, a class of hired proletarian workers, who live only by the sale of their labour-power.

These are what constitute the tremendous changes in the country's life brought about by the big factories—small-scale production is being replaced by large-scale, the petty proprietors are turning into wage-workers. What, then, does this change mean for the whole of the work-

the population, and where is it leading? This is dealt with further in the programme.

A 2. Accompanying the replacement of small- by large-scale production is the replacement of small financial resources in the hands of the individual proprietor by enormous sums employed as capital, the replacement of small, insignificant profits by profits running into millions. That is why the growth of capitalism is leading everywhere to the growth of luxury and riches. A whole class of big financial magnates, factory owners, railway owners, merchants, and bankers has arisen in Russia, a whole class of people who live off income derived from money capital loaned on interest to industrialists has arisen; the big landowners have become enriched, drawing large sums from the peasants by way of land redemption payments, taking advantage of their need of land to raise the price of the land leased to them, and setting up large beet-sugar refineries and distilleries on their estates. The luxury and extravagance of all these wealthy classes have reached unparalleled dimensions, and the main streets of the big cities are lined with their princely mansions and luxurious palaces. But as capitalism grew, the workers' conditions became steadily worse. If earnings increased in some places following the peasants' emancipation, they did so very slightly and not for long, because the mass of hungry people swarming in from the villages forced rates down, while the cost of food-stuffs and necessities continued to go up, so that even with their increased wages the workers got fewer means of subsistence; it became increasingly difficult to find jobs, and side by side with the luxurious mansions of the rich (or on city outskirts) there grew up the slums where the workers were forced to live in cellars, in overcrowded, damp and cold dwellings, and even in dug-outs near the new industrial establishments. As capital grew bigger it increased its pressure on the workers, turning them into paupers, compelling them to devote all their time to the factory, and forcing the workers' wives and children to go to work. This, therefore, is the first change towards which the growth of capitalism is leading: tremendous wealth is accumulating in the coffers of a small handful of capitalists, while the masses of the people are being turned into paupers.

The second change consists in the fact that the replacement of small- by large-scale production has led to many improvements in production. First of all, work done singly, separately in each little workshop, in each isolated little household, has been replaced by the work of combined labourers working together at one factory, for one landowner, for one contractor. Joint labour is far more effective (productive) than individual, and renders it possible to produce goods with far greater ease and rapidity. But all these improvements are enjoyed by the capitalist alone, who pays the workers next to nothing and appropriates all the profit deriving from the workers' combined labour. The capitalist gets still stronger and the worker gets still weaker because he becomes accustomed to doing some one kind of work and it is more difficult for him to transfer to another job, to change his occupation.

Another, far more important, improvement in production is the introduction of *machines* by the capitalist. The effectiveness of labour is increased manifold by the use of machines; but the capitalist turns all this benefit against the worker: taking advantage of the fact that machines require less physical labour, he assigns women and children to them, and pays them less. Taking advantage of the fact that where machines are used far fewer workers are wanted, he throws them out of the factory in masses and then takes advantage of this unemployment to enslave the worker still further, to increase the working day, to deprive the worker of his night's rest and to turn him into a simple appendage to the machine. Unemployment, created by machinery and constantly on the increase, now makes the worker utterly defenceless. His skill loses its worth, he is easily replaced by a plain unskilled labourer, who quickly becomes accustomed to the machine and gladly undertakes the job for lower wages. Any attempt to resist increased oppression by the capitalist leads to dismissal. On his own the worker is quite helpless against capital, and the machine threatens to crush him.

A 3. In explaining the previous point, we showed that on his own the worker is helpless and defenceless against the capitalist who introduces machines. The worker has at all costs to seek means of resisting the capitalist, in order

to defend himself. And he finds such means in *organisation*. Helpless on his own, the worker becomes a force when organised with his comrades, and is enabled to fight the capitalist and resist his onslaught.

Organisation becomes a necessity for the worker, now faced by big capital. But is it possible to organise a motley mass of people who are strangers to one another, even if they work in one factory? The programme indicates the conditions that prepare the workers for unity and develop in them the capacity and ability to organise. These conditions are as follows: 1) the large factory, with machine production that requires regular work the whole year round, completely breaks the tie between the worker and the land and his own farm, turning him into an absolute proletarian. The fact of each farming for himself on a patch of land divided the workers and gave each one of them a certain specific interest, separate from that of his fellow worker, and was thus an obstacle to organisation. The worker's break with the land destroys these obstacles. 2) Further, the joint work of hundreds and thousands of workers in itself accustoms the workers to discuss their needs jointly, to take joint action, and clearly shows them the identity of the position and interests of the entire mass of workers. 3) Finally, constant transfers of workers from factory to factory accustom them to compare the conditions and practices in the different factories and enable them to convince themselves of the identical nature of the exploitation in all factories, to acquire the experience of other workers in their clashes with the capitalist, and thus enhance the solidarity of the workers. Now it is because of these conditions, taken together, that the appearance of big factories has given rise to the organisation of the workers. Among the Russian workers unity is expressed mainly and most frequently in strikes (we shall deal further with the reason why organisation in the shape of unions or mutual benefit societies is beyond the reach of our workers). The more the big factories develop, the more frequent, powerful and stubborn become the workers' strikes; the greater the oppression of capitalism and the greater the need for joint resistance by the workers. Strikes and isolated revolts of the workers, as the programme states, now constitute the

most widespread phenomenon in Russian factories. But, with the further growth of capitalism and the increasing frequency of strikes, they prove inadequate. The employers take joint action against them: they conclude agreements among themselves, bring in workers from other areas, and turn for assistance to those who run the machinery of state, who help them crush the workers' resistance. Instead of being faced by the one individual owner of each separate factory, the workers are now faced by the *entire capitalist class* and the government that assists it. The *entire capitalist class* undertakes a struggle against the *entire working class*; it devises common measures against the strikes, presses the government to adopt anti-working-class legislation, transfers factories to more out-of-the-way localities, and resorts to the distribution of jobs among people working at home and to a thousand and one other ruses and devices against the workers. The organisation of the workers of a separate factory, even of a separate industry, proves inadequate for resisting the *entire capitalist class*, and joint action by the *entire working class* becomes absolutely necessary. Thus, out of the isolated revolts of the workers grows the struggle of the *entire working class*. The struggle of the workers against the employers turns into a *class struggle*. All the employers are united by the one interest of keeping the workers in a state of subordination and of paying them the minimum wages possible. And the employers see that the only way they can safeguard their interests is by joint action on the part of the *entire employing class*, by acquiring influence over the machinery of state. The workers are likewise bound together by a common interest, that of preventing themselves being crushed by capital, of upholding their right to life and to a human existence. And the workers likewise become convinced that they, too, need unity, joint action by the *entire class*, the *working class*, and that to that end they must secure influence over the machinery of state.

A 4. We have explained how and why the struggle between the factory workers and the employers becomes a class struggle, a struggle of the *working class*—the proletarians—against the *capitalist class*—the bourgeoisie. The question arises, what significance has this struggle for the *entire people* and for all working people? Under the

contemporary conditions, of which we have already spoken in the explanation of point 1, production by wage-workers increasingly ousts petty economy. The number of people *who live by wage-labour* grows rapidly, and not only does the number of regular factory workers increase, but there is a still greater increase in the number of peasants who also have to search for work as wage-labourers, in order to live. At the present time, work for hire, work for the capitalist, has already become the most widespread form of labour. The domination of capital over labour embraces the bulk of the population not only in industry, but also in agriculture. Now it is this exploitation of wage-labour underlying contemporary society that the big factories develop to the utmost. All the methods of exploitation used by all capitalists in all industries, and which the entire mass of Russia's working-class population suffers from, are concentrated, intensified, made the regular rule right in the factory and spread to all aspects of the worker's labour and life, they create a whole routine, a whole system whereby the capitalist sweats the worker. Let us illustrate this with an example: at all times and places, anybody who undertakes work for hire, rests, leaves his work on a holiday if it is celebrated in the neighbourhood. It is quite different in the factory. Once the factory management has engaged a worker, it disposes of his services just as it likes, paying no attention to the worker's habits, to his customary way of life, to his family position, to his intellectual requirements. The factory drives the employee to work when it needs his labour, compelling him to fit in his entire life with its requirements, to tear his rest hours to pieces, and, if he is on shifts, to work at night and on holidays. All the imaginable abuses relating to working time are set into motion by the factory and at the same time it introduces its "rules," its "practices," which are obligatory for every worker. The order of things in the factory is deliberately adapted to squeezing out of the hired worker all the labour he is capable of yielding, to squeezing it out at top speed and then to throwing him out! Another example. Everybody who takes a job, undertakes, of course, to submit to the employer, to do everything he is ordered. But when anybody hires himself out on a temporary job, he does not surrender his will at all; if he finds his employer's

demands wrong or excessive, he leaves him. The factory, on the other hand, demands that the worker surrender his will altogether; it introduces discipline within its walls, compels the worker to start or to stop work when the bell rings, assumes the right itself to punish the worker, and subjects him to a fine or a deduction for every violation of rules which it has itself drawn up. The worker becomes part of a huge aggregate of machinery. He must be just as obedient, enslaved, and without a will of his own, as the machine itself.

Yet another example. Anybody who takes a job has frequent occasion to be dissatisfied with his employer, and complains about him to the court or a government official. Both the official and the court usually settle the dispute in the employer's favour, support him, but this promotion of the employer's interests is not based on a general regulation or a law, but on the subservience of individual officials, who at different times protect him to a greater or lesser degree, and who settle matters unjustly in the employer's favour, either because they are acquaintances of his, or because they are uninformed about working conditions and cannot understand the worker. Each separate case of such injustice depends on each separate clash between the worker and the employer, on each separate official. The factory, on the other hand, gathers together such a mass of workers, carries oppression to such a pitch, that it becomes impossible to examine every separate case. General regulations are established, a law is drawn up on relations between the workers and the employers, a law that is obligatory for all. In this law the promotion of the employer's interests is backed up by the authority of the state. The injustice of individual officials is replaced by the injustice of the law itself. Regulations appear, for example, of the following type: if the worker is absent from work, he not only loses wages, but has to pay a fine in addition, whereas the employer pays nothing if he sends the workers home for lack of work; the employer may dismiss the worker for using strong language, whereas the worker cannot leave the job if he is similarly treated; the employer is entitled on his own authority to impose fines, make deductions or demand that overtime be worked, etc.

All these examples show us how the factory intensifies the exploitation of the workers and makes this exploitation universal, makes a whole "*system*" of it. The worker now has to deal, willy-nilly, not with an individual employer and his will and oppression, but with the arbitrary treatment and oppression he suffers from the entire employing class. The worker sees that his oppressors are not some one capitalist, but the entire capitalist class, because the system of exploitation is the same in all establishments. The individual capitalist cannot even depart from this system: if, for example, he were to take it into his head to reduce working hours, his goods would cost him more than those produced by his neighbour, another factory owner, who makes his employees work longer for the same wage. To secure an improvement in his conditions, the worker now has to deal with the entire social system aimed at the exploitation of labour by capital. The worker is now confronted not by the individual injustice of an individual official, but by the injustice of the state authority itself, which takes the entire capitalist class under its protection and issues laws, obligatory for all, that serve the interests of that class. Thus, the struggle of the factory workers against the employers inevitably turns into a struggle against the entire capitalist class, against the entire social order based on the exploitation of labour by capital. That is why the workers' struggle acquires a social significance, becomes a struggle on behalf of all working people against all classes that live by the labour of others. That is why the workers' struggle opens up a new era in Russian history and is the dawn of the workers' emancipation.

What, however, is the domination of the capitalist class over the entire mass of working folk based on? It is based on the fact that all the factories, mills, mines, machines, and instruments of labour are in the hands of the capitalists, are their private property; on the fact that they possess enormous quantities of land (of all the land in European Russia, more than one-third belongs to landed proprietors, who do not number half a million). The workers possess no instruments of labour or materials, and so they have to sell their labour-power to the capitalists, who only pay the workers what is necessary for their keep, and place all the surplus

produced by labour in their pockets; thus they pay for only part of the working time they use, and appropriate the rest. The entire increase in wealth resulting from the combined labour of the masses of workers or from improvements in production goes to the capitalist class, while the workers, who toil from generation to generation, remain propertyless proletarians. That is why there is only one way of ending the exploitation of labour by capital, and that is to abolish the private ownership of the instruments of labour, to hand over all the factories, mills, mines, and also all the big estates, etc., to the whole of society and to conduct socialist production in common, directed by the workers themselves. The articles produced by labour in common will then go to benefit the working people themselves, while the surplus they produce over and above their keep will serve to satisfy the needs of the workers themselves, to secure the full development of all their capabilities and equal rights to enjoy all the achievements of science and art. That is why the programme states that the struggle between the working class and the capitalists can end only in this way. To achieve that, however, it is necessary that political power, i.e., the power to govern the state, should pass from the hands of a government which is under the influence of the capitalists and landowners, or from the hands of a government directly made up of elected representatives of the capitalists, into the hands of the working class.

Such is the ultimate aim of the struggle of the working class, such is the condition for its complete emancipation. This is the ultimate aim for which class-conscious, organised workers should strive; here in Russia, however, they still meet with tremendous obstacles, which hinder them in their struggle for emancipation.

A 5. The fight against the domination of the capitalist class is now being waged by the workers of all European countries and also by the workers of America and Australia. Working-class organisation and solidarity is not confined to one country or one nationality: the workers' parties of different countries proclaim aloud the complete identity (solidarity) of interests and aims of the workers of the whole world. They come together at joint congresses, put forward common demands to the capitalist class of all countries, have

established an international holiday of the entire organised proletariat striving for emancipation (May Day), thus welding the working class of all nationalities and of all countries into one great workers' army. The unity of the workers of all countries is a necessity arising out of the fact that the capitalist class, which rules over the workers, does not limit its rule to one country. Commercial ties between the different countries are becoming closer and more extensive; capital constantly passes from one country to another. The banks, those huge depositories that gather capital together and distribute it on loan to capitalists, begin as national institutions and then become international, gather capital from all countries, and distribute it among the capitalists of Europe and America. Enormous joint-stock companies are now being organised to set up capitalist enterprises not in one country, but in several at once; international associations of capitalists make their appearance. Capitalist domination is international. That is why the workers' struggle in all countries for their emancipation is only successful if the workers fight jointly against international capital. That is why the Russian worker's comrade in the fight against the capitalist class is the German worker, the Polish worker, and the French worker, just as his enemy is the Russian, the Polish, and the French capitalists. Thus, in the recent period foreign capitalists have been very eagerly transferring their capital to Russia, where they are building branch factories and founding companies for running new enterprises. They are flinging themselves greedily on this young country in which the government is more favourable and obsequious to capital than anywhere else, in which they find workers who are less organised and less capable of fighting back than in the West, and in which the workers' standard of living, and hence their wages, are much lower, so that the foreign capitalists are able to draw enormous profits, on a scale unparalleled in their own countries. International capital has already stretched out its hand to Russia. The Russian workers are stretching out their hands to the international labour movement.

A 6. We have already spoken of how the big factories carry capital's oppression of labour to the highest pitch, how they establish a whole system of methods of

exploitation; how the workers, in their revolt against capital, inevitably arrive at the need to unite all workers, at the need for joint struggle by the entire working class. In this struggle against the capitalist class, the workers come up against the general laws of the state, which protect the capitalists and their interests.

But then, if the workers are strong enough to force concessions from the capitalists, to resist their attacks by joint action, they could also, by their unity, influence the laws of the state, and secure their alteration. That is what the workers of all other countries are doing. The Russian workers, however, cannot exert direct influence on the state. The conditions of the Russian workers are such that they are deprived of the most elementary civil rights. They must not dare to gather together, to discuss their affairs together, to organise unions, to publish statements; in other words, the laws of the state have not only been drawn up in the interests of the capitalist class, but they frankly deprive the workers of all possibility of influencing these laws and of securing their alteration. The reason this happens is that in Russia (and in Russia alone of all European countries) the absolute power of an autocratic government continues to this day, that is, a system of state exists under which laws that are obligatory for the entire people may be issued by the tsar alone, at his discretion, while only officials appointed by him may give effect to them. The citizens are not allowed to take any part in issuing laws, in discussing them, in proposing new or in demanding the repeal of old laws. They have no right to demand of officials an account of their activity, to check their activity, and to prosecute them. Citizens do not even possess the right to discuss affairs of state: they must not dare to organise meetings or unions without the permission of those same officials. The officials are thus irresponsible in the full sense of the term; they constitute a special caste, as it were, placed above the citizens. The irresponsibility and arbitrary conduct of the officials, and the fact that the population itself is inarticulate, give rise to such scandalous abuse of power by officials and such a violation of the rights of the common people as are hardly possible in any European country.

Thus, according to law, the Russian Government has absolute authority, and is considered to be quite independent, as it were, of the people, standing above all social estates and classes. If, however, that were really the case, why should the law and the government in all conflicts between the workers and the capitalists take the side of the capitalists? Why should the capitalists meet with ever-growing support as their numbers and their wealth grow, whereas the workers meet with ever-increasing resistance and restriction?

Actually the government does not stand above classes, it protects one class against the other, protects the propertied class against the propertyless, the capitalists against the workers. An absolute government could not rule such a huge country if it did not give all sorts of privileges and favours to the propertied classes.

Although the government, according to law, possesses absolute and independent power, actually the capitalists and landowners possess thousands of means of influencing the government and affairs of state. They have their own social-estate associations—noblemen's and merchants' societies, chambers of trade and manufactures, etc.—recognised by law. Their elected representatives either become officials outright, and take part in governing the state (for example, marshals of the nobility), or are given posts in government institutions of every kind: for example, the law provides for factory owners to participate in factory courts (the chief authority over the Factory Inspectorate), to which they elect their representatives. But they do not confine themselves to this direct participation in ruling the state. In their societies they discuss laws of state, draft bills, and the government usually consults them on each issue, submits draft bills to them with a request for their views.

The capitalists and landed proprietors organise all-Russian congresses, where they discuss their affairs and devise various measures of benefit to their class, and on behalf of all the landed nobility, or of the "merchants of all Russia," petition for the adoption of new laws and for the amendment of old ones. They can discuss their affairs in the newspapers, for however much the government hampers the press with

its censorship, it would never dare think of depriving the propertied classes of the right to discuss their affairs. They have all sorts of ways and means of approaching the top representatives of the governmental authorities, they can more easily discuss the arbitrary conduct of lower officials, and can easily secure the repeal of particularly oppressive laws and regulations. And while there is no country in the world where there are so many laws and regulations, such unexampled police supervision by the government, a supervision that extends to all sorts of petty details and robs every undertaking of its individuality, there is no country in the world where these bourgeois regulations are so easily violated and where these police laws are circumvented so easily by just the gracious assent of the supreme authorities. And this gracious assent is never refused.³⁸

B 1. This is the most important, the paramount, point of the programme, because it indicates what should constitute the activity of the Party in defending the interests of the working class, the activity of all class-conscious workers. It indicates how the striving for socialism, the striving for the abolition of the age-old exploitation of man by man, should be linked up with the popular movement engendered by the living conditions created by the large-scale factories.

The Party's activity must consist in promoting the workers' class struggle. The Party's task is not to concoct some fashionable means of helping the workers, but to join up with the workers' movement, to bring light into it, to assist the workers in the struggle they themselves have already begun to wage. The Party's task is to uphold the interests of the workers and to represent those of the entire working-class movement. Now, what must this assistance to the workers in their struggle consist of?

The programme says that this assistance must consist, firstly, in developing the workers' class-consciousness. We have already spoken of how the workers' struggle against the employers becomes the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

What is meant by workers' class-consciousness follows from what we have said on the subject. The workers' class-consciousness means the workers' understanding that

the only way to improve their conditions and to achieve their emancipation is to conduct a struggle against the capitalist and factory-owner class created by the big factories. Further, the workers' class-consciousness means their understanding that the interests of all the workers of any particular country are identical, that they all constitute one class, separate from all the other classes in society. Finally, the class-consciousness of the workers means the workers' understanding that to achieve their aims they have to work to influence affairs of state, just as the landlords and the capitalists did, and are continuing to do now.

By what means do the workers reach an understanding of all this? They do so by constantly gaining experience from the very struggle that they begin to wage against the employers and that increasingly develops, becomes sharper, and involves larger numbers of workers as big factories grow. There was a time when the workers' enmity against capital only found expression in a hazy sense of hatred of their exploiters, in a hazy consciousness of their oppression and enslavement, and in the desire to *wreak vengeance* on the capitalists. The struggle at that time found expression in isolated revolts of the workers, who wrecked buildings, smashed machines, attacked members of the factory management, etc. That was the *first*, the initial, form of the working-class movement, and it was a necessary one, because hatred of the capitalist has always and everywhere been the first impulse towards arousing in the workers the desire to defend themselves. The Russian working-class movement has, however, already outgrown this original form. Instead of having a hazy hatred of the capitalist, the workers have already begun to understand the antagonism between the interests of the working class and of the capitalist class. Instead of having a confused sense of oppression, they have begun to distinguish *the ways and means* by which capital oppresses them, and are revolting against various forms of oppression, placing limits to capitalist oppression, and protecting themselves against the capitalist's greed. Instead of wreaking vengeance on the capitalists they are now turning to the fight for concessions, they are beginning to face the capitalist class with one demand after another, and are

demanding improved working conditions, increased wages, and shorter working hours. Every strike concentrates all the attention and all the efforts of the workers on some particular aspect of the conditions under which the working class lives. Every strike gives rise to discussions about these conditions, helps the workers to appraise them, to understand what capitalist oppression consists in in the particular case, and what means can be employed to combat this oppression. Every strike enriches the experience of the entire working class. If the strike is successful it shows them what a strong force working-class unity is, and impels others to make use of their comrades' success. If it is not successful, it gives rise to discussions about the causes of the failure and to the search for better methods of struggle. This transition of the workers to the steadfast struggle for their vital needs, the fight for concessions, for improved living conditions, wages and working hours, now begun all over Russia, means that the Russian workers are making tremendous progress, and that is why the attention of the Social-Democratic Party and all class-conscious workers should be concentrated mainly on this struggle, on its promotion. Assistance to the workers should consist in showing them those most vital needs for the satisfaction of which they should fight, should consist in analysing the factors particularly responsible for worsening the conditions of different categories of workers, in explaining factory laws and regulations the violation of which (added to the deceptive tricks of the capitalists) so often subject the workers to double robbery. Assistance should consist in giving more precise and definite expression to the workers' demands, and in making them public, in choosing the best time for resistance, in choosing the method of struggle, in discussing the position and the strength of the two opposing sides, in discussing whether a still better choice can be made of the method of fighting (a method, perhaps, like addressing a letter to the factory owner, or approaching the inspector, or the doctor, according to circumstances, where direct strike action is not advisable, etc.).

We have said that the Russian workers' transition to such struggle is indicative of the tremendous progress they have made. This struggle places (leads) the working-class

movement on to the high road, and is the certain guarantee of its further success. The mass of working folk learn from this struggle, firstly, how to recognise and to examine one by one the methods of capitalist exploitation, to compare them with the law, with their living conditions, and with the interests of the capitalist class. By examining the different forms and cases of exploitation, the workers learn to understand the significance and the essence of exploitation as a whole, learn to understand the social system based on the exploitation of labour by capital. Secondly, in the process of this struggle the workers test their strength, learn to organise, learn to understand the need for and the significance of organisation. The extension of this struggle and the increasing frequency of clashes inevitably lead to a further extension of the struggle, to the development of a sense of unity, a sense of solidarity—at first among the workers of a particular locality, and then among the workers of the entire country, among the entire working class. Thirdly, this struggle develops the workers' political consciousness. The living condition of the mass of working folk places them in such a position that they do not (cannot) possess either the leisure or the opportunity to ponder over problems of state. On the other hand, the workers' struggle against the factory owners for their daily needs automatically and inevitably spurs the workers on to think of state, political questions, questions of how the Russian state is governed, how laws and regulations are issued, and whose interests they serve. Each clash in the factory necessarily brings the workers into conflict with the laws and representatives of state authority. In this connection the workers hear "political speeches" for the first time. At first from, say, the factory inspectors, who explain to them that the trick employed by the factory owner to defraud them is based on the exact meaning of the regulations, which have been endorsed by the appropriate authority and give the employer a free hand to defraud the workers, or that the factory owner's oppressive measures are quite lawful, since he is merely availing himself of his rights, giving effect to such and such a law, that has been endorsed by the state authority that sees to its implementation. The political explanations of Messrs, the Inspectors are occasionally

supplemented by the still more beneficial "political explanations" of the minister,³⁹ who reminds the workers of the feelings of "Christian love" that they owe to the factory owners for their making millions out of the workers' labour. Later, these explanations of the representatives of the state authority, and the workers' direct acquaintance with the facts showing for whose benefit this authority operates, are still further supplemented by leaflets or other explanations given by socialists, so that the workers get their political education in full from such a strike. They learn to understand not only the specific interests of the working class, but also the specific place occupied by the working class in the state. And so the *assistance* which the Social-Democratic Party can render to the class struggle of the workers should be: to develop the workers' class-consciousness by assisting them in the fight for their most vital needs.

The second type of *assistance* should consist, as the programme states, in promoting the organisation of the workers. The struggle we have just described necessarily requires that the workers be organised. Organisation becomes necessary for strikes, to ensure that they are conducted with great success, for collections in support of strikers, for setting up workers' mutual benefit societies, and for propaganda among the workers, the distribution among them of leaflets, announcements, manifestoes, etc. Organisation is still more necessary to enable the workers to defend themselves against persecution by the police and the gendarmerie, to conceal from them all the workers' contacts and associations and to arrange the delivery of books, pamphlets, newspapers, etc. To assist in all this—such is the Party's second task.

The third consists in indicating the real aims of the struggle, i.e., in explaining to the workers what the exploitation of labour by capital consists in, what it is based on, how the private ownership of the land and the instruments of labour leads to the poverty of the working masses, compels them to sell their labour to the capitalists and to yield up gratis the entire surplus produced by the worker's labour over and above his keep, in explaining, furthermore, how this exploitation inevitably leads to the class struggle be-

tween the workers and the capitalists, what the conditions of this struggle and its ultimate aims are—in a word, in explaining what is briefly stated in the programme.

B 2. What is meant by these words: the struggle of the working class is a political struggle? They mean that the working class cannot fight for its emancipation without securing influence over affairs of state, over the administration of the state, over the issue of laws. The need for such influence has long been understood by the Russian capitalists, and we have shown how they have been able, despite all sorts of prohibitions contained in the police laws, to find thousands of ways of influencing the state authority, and how this authority serves the interests of the capitalist class. Hence it naturally follows that the working class, too, cannot wage its struggle, cannot even secure a lasting improvement of its lot unless it influences state authority.

We have already said that the workers' struggle against the capitalists will inevitably lead to a clash with the government, and the government itself is exerting every effort to prove to the workers that only by struggle and by joint resistance can they influence state authority. This was shown with particular clarity by the big strikes that took place in Russia in 1885-86. The government immediately set about drawing up regulations concerning workers, at once issued new laws about factory practices, yielded to the workers' insistent demands (for example, regulations were introduced limiting fines and ensuring proper wage payment); in the same way the present strikes (in 1896) have again caused the government's immediate intervention, and the government has already understood that it cannot confine itself to arrests and deportations, that it is ridiculous to regale the workers with stupid sermons about the noble conduct of the factory owners (see the circular issued by Finance Minister Witte to factory inspectors. Spring 1896). The government has realised that "organised workers constitute a force to be reckoned with" and so it already has the factory legislation under review and is convening in St. Petersburg a Congress of Senior Factory Inspectors to discuss the question of reducing working hours and other inevitable concessions to the workers.

Thus we see that the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class must necessarily be a political struggle. Indeed, this struggle is already exerting influence on the state authority, is acquiring political significance. But the workers' utter lack of political rights, about which we have already spoken, and the absolute impossibility of the workers openly and directly influencing state authority become more clearly and sharply exposed and felt as the working-class movement develops. That is why the most urgent demand of the workers, the primary objective of the working-class influence on affairs of state must be *the achievement of political freedom*, i.e., the direct participation, guaranteed by law (by a constitution), of all citizens in the government of the state, the guaranteed right of all citizens freely to assemble, discuss their affairs, influence affairs of state through their associations and the press. The achievement of political freedom becomes the "*vital task of the workers*" because without it the workers do not and cannot have any influence over affairs of state, and thus inevitably remain a rightless, humiliated and inarticulate class. And if even now, when the workers are only just beginning to fight and to close their ranks, the government is already hastening to make concessions to the workers, in order to check the further growth of the movement, there can be no doubt that when the workers fully close their ranks and unite under the leadership of one political party, they will be able to compel the government to surrender, they will be able to win political freedom for themselves and the entire Russian people!

The preceding parts of the programme indicated the place occupied by the working class in contemporary society and the contemporary state, what is the aim of the struggle of the working class, and what constitutes the task of the Party that represents the workers' interests. Under the absolute rule of the government there are not, nor can there be openly functioning political parties in Russia, but there are political trends which express the interests of other classes and which exert influence over public opinion and the government. Hence, in order to make clear the position of the Social-Democratic Party, it is necessary now to indicate its attitude towards the remaining political trends

in Russian society, so as to enable the workers to determine who may be their ally and to what extent, and who their enemy. That is indicated in the two following points of the programme.

B 3. The programme declares that the workers' allies are, firstly, all those social strata which oppose the absolute power of the autocratic government. Since this absolute rule is the main obstacle to the workers' fight for their emancipation, it naturally follows that it is in the direct interest of the workers to support every social movement against absolutism (absolute means unlimited; absolutism is the unlimited rule of the government). The stronger the development of capitalism, the deeper become the contradictions between this bureaucratic administration and the interests of the propertied classes themselves, the interests of the bourgeoisie. And the Social-Democratic Party proclaims that it will support all strata and grades of the bourgeoisie who oppose the absolute government.

It is infinitely more to the workers' advantage for the bourgeoisie to *influence* affairs of state *directly*, than for their influence to be exerted, as is the case now, through a crowd of venal and despotic officials. It is far more advantageous to the workers for the bourgeoisie to *openly* influence policy than, as is the case now, to exert a *concealed* influence, concealed by the supposedly all-powerful "independent" government, which is called a government "by the grace of God," and hands out "its graces" to the suffering and industrious landlords and the poverty-stricken and oppressed factory owners. The workers need *open struggle* against the capitalist class, in order that the entire Russian proletariat may see for whose interests the workers are waging the struggle, and may learn how to wage the struggle properly; in order that the intrigues and aspirations of the bourgeoisie may not be hidden in the ante-rooms of grand dukes, in the saloons of senators and ministers, and in departmental offices barred to the public, and in order that they may come to the surface and open the eyes of all and sundry as to who really inspires government policy and what the capitalists and landlords are striving for. And so, down with everything that hides the present influence of the capitalist class, and our support for any representative of the bourgeoisie

who *comes out* against the bureaucracy, the bureaucratic administration, against the absolute government! But, while proclaiming its support for every social movement against absolutism, the Social-Democratic Party recognises that it does not separate itself from the working-class movement, because the working class has its specific interests, which are opposed to the interests of all other classes. While rendering support to all representatives of the bourgeoisie in the fight for political freedom, the workers should remember that the propertied classes can only be their allies for a time, that the interests of the workers and the capitalists cannot be reconciled, that the workers need the abolition of the government's absolute rule only in order to wage an open and extensive struggle against the capitalist class.

Further the Social-Democratic Party proclaims that it will render support to all who rise up against the class of the privileged landed nobility. The landed nobility in Russia are considered to be the first estate in the land. The remnants of their feudal power over the peasants weigh down the masses of the people to this day. The peasants continue to make land redemption payments for emancipation from the power of the landlords. The peasants are still tied to the land, in order that the landed gentry may not suffer any shortage of cheap and submissive farm labourers. Rightless and treated as juveniles, the peasants to this day are at the mercy of officials who look after their own pockets and interfere in peasant life so as to ensure that the peasants make their redemption payments or pay quit-rent to the feudal landlords "punctually," that they do not dare to "shirk" working for the landlords, do not dare, for example, to leave the district and so perhaps compel the landlords to hire outside workers, who are not so cheap or so oppressed by want. The landlords keep millions, tens of millions of peasants in their service, enslaving them and keeping them without rights, and in return for their display of prowess in this sphere enjoy the highest privileges of state. The landed nobility are the principal holders of the highest posts in the state (what is more, by law the nobility, as a social estate, enjoy priority in the civil service); the aristocratic landlords are closest to the Court and more directly and easily than anybody else influence government policy in their own direction. They

utilise their close connections with the government to plunder the state coffers and to secure out of public funds gifts and grants that run into millions of rubles, sometimes in the shape of huge estates distributed for services, at other times in the shape of "concessions."*

* The hectographed text in the notebook in the possession of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., breaks off here.—*Ed.*