
Speech at the 5th Plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International: Second Session, March 25, 1925.

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Leninism, which is the Marxism of the present, shows us the way. But only the experience of the Revolution can give an answer to the questions of the tempo and route of march of the proletarian revolution. Experience teaches us that we must handle conceptions of time very carefully. Even Marx and Lenin made mistakes in this question. As for the route of march, the political geography of the world revolution, we assumed that first its path led from Russia through Germany. At the Third World Congress [June 22-August 12, 1921] Lenin prophesied that the line of development would not be straight but a zigzag one, and that the conceptions of time and the route of march were more complicated than we had assumed. The Fifth World Congress [June 17-July 8, 1924] made a correct estimate of the economic and political world situation. The judgement of the democratic pacifist epoch, the estimate of Fascism, of Social Democracy, of the third party of the bourgeoisie, and the standpoint upon the Trade Union and peasant questions were correct. The economic situation has changed but little since the last World Congress. The prophets of collapse have been proved just as wrong as the worshippers of stabilization. The point of view of the World Congress, which prophesied that the bourgeoisie — when looked at historically — had obtained a respite, a short one it is true, but nonetheless a respite, is correct.

The *economic situation* has improved in many

respects in a number of countries. Currency has been reestablished on its former footing almost everywhere, with the exception of France, Italy, Japan, and Romania — reestablished at the cost of the working class and the peasantry, who must bear two-thirds to three-fourths of the burden of taxation. A restoration of International credit is also noticeable. America has made



loans to a total of over \$1 billion. World prices and a certain development of cartels on a world scale are the first steps towards the unity of world economy. We see an improvement of business conditions, especially in commerce. In many countries capitalism has recovered in many respects.

However, recent events illustrate the *instability of the situation*. Business conditions have grown worse in the last few weeks. Even bourgeois economists consider central European stability uncertain. For the first time in ten years we see unemployment in France. In England, unemployment is greater than at the corresponding time a year ago. In Germany we have a crisis in coal production. In Poland, Austria, and Hungary the crisis is continuing as before. The condition of the

working class is characterized by unemployment. In America there are 2 million unemployed, in England 2 million, and in Germany 1 million. The fall of real wages has become a universal phenomenon with the exception of the Soviet Union. For the moment only the good sides of the Dawes Plan are manifest in Germany. However, the fight for markets and the antagonisms in the camp of the capitalists are growing more and more bitter. It is a fact that the bourgeoisie has gained a respite. In answer to the question whether the world war and the first Bolshevik revolution mortally wounded capitalism, or seriously wounded or perhaps only slightly wounded it, we can only reply that capitalism is mortally wounded.

The most important factor in the *world political situation is the relationship between England and America*. The opportunists, who see everything rosy in the camp of our enemies and everything black in our own camp believe that America can put all Europe on rations and dominate it. When doing this they forget the differences between America and England, they forget that America is playing the European countries off against one another. A short time ago, there took place a polemic discussion between Comrades Radek and Pepper, in which Comrade Pepper was entirely correct. The rapprochement between England and America is a historical fact. Both states have Conservative governments, but nevertheless profound differences exist. There are differences in the question of world hegemony, for America has become a creditor of the world. There are differences with respect to Canada, Australia, and Mexico. There are differences in the oil question, in the question of armaments, with respect to the debts. A fight is being waged for control of raw materials; there are even differences with respect to the Dawes Plan. We see an intensification of the differences proceeding parallel with the rapprochement. It suffices to point to Canada, which is being Americanized and is slipping out of England's hands.

The *movements in Japan* — the peasant movement, the intellectuals' movement, the demonstration — characterize the situation. The bourgeois revolution is knocking at the door of Japan. The problem of the East is maturing with unexpected rapidity. The joint front of the Union of Soviet Republics with China is an event of world historical importance. As early as 1911 Lenin spoke of "Backward Europe and progres-

sive Asia."

The *strengthening of the Soviet Union* is beyond doubt. Last year the opposition in the RKP prophesied a deficit in the budget. We have, however, a considerable surplus. (*Applause.*) Workers' wages are rising continually.

The most important problem is the *peasant question*. The alliance of the peasantry with the working class is being strengthened. All this, however, does not signify that there are no dangers. It is just this strengthening which may lead the world bourgeoisie to commence new attacks on us.

Britain as a Great Power is three-fold undetermined: In the Dominions, through the Orient problem, and through the inner situation. British imperialism is being crushed between Conservatism and the working class. The most important facts are the differentiation in the Labour Party and the growth of the Left Wing within it. The situation in England has not been consolidated, but revolutionized.

In *France*, the Herriot government is politically bankrupt.

The *Balkans* are being revolutionized by three factors: the peasant movement, national discontent, and the labor movement.

The *German* working class is still seeing the Dawes Plan from the good side. However, the antagonisms will increase. I fear that misunderstandings may arise concerning the theses that there is at present no acutely revolutionary situation but the class struggle with civil war episodes has not ceased to exist. The events in Halle are proof of this.

In *Poland* we have an important peasant movement, a strong nationalities movement, and a big labor movement. The situation is, therefore, objectively revolutionary.

In *Italy* fascism has not yet been overcome, but the situation is uncertain.

In *Czechoslovakia* the labor movement is stronger than in these countries.

In *Scandinavia* the idyll of socialist governments has vanished.

The power of attraction of the Soviet Union is growing. The social democratic workers feel instinctively that they were deceived in their illusions, and that the real building up of socialism has begun in the Soviet Union.

On the whole the world situation remains revolutionary. The idea of the world revolution has grown stronger. Our tactics must be so fashioned that we are just as prepared for a slow tempo of the revolution as for a rapid one. The comrades building upon the rapprochement of England and America are dangerously close to a revisionism of Leninism in the question of imperialism. These comrades are approaching Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism. These first feeble endeavors to revise Leninism must be decisively repelled. There were differences in the Comintern upon the era of democratic pacifism. Subsequent events have proved that we are going through an era of imperialism and not of pacifism, that the petty bourgeoisie and MacDonald worked for us against his will by aiding the differentiation in Britain's working class. The democratic-pacifist era was only an episode in the epoch of imperialism. Only two great factors exist: the working class and the imperialist bourgeoisie. The estimate of the Fifth World Congress was correct. Radek believed that fascism had defeated social democracy. Trotsky considered fascism the weapon of the bourgeoisie for the period of civil war; Liebknecht was also defeated by the bourgeoisie, for he was murdered by them. In the Eighties the former revolutionary Tikhomirov went over to the Tsarist camp. He was also conquered by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie and fascism did not defeat social democracy in the sense of Liebknecht but in the sense of Tikhomirov. Social democracy went over the other camp of the bourgeoisie; it became a party at one wing of the bourgeoisie. That is why we see a temporary strengthening of social democracy in many places. Since the bourgeoisie is growing stronger for the time being, its twin,, social democracy, is also growing stronger. The Barmat affair, the agreement of the Hungarian Social Democrats with Horthy, the last meeting of the Bureau of the London International, the funerals of Ebert, Gompers, and Branting and the eulogies of the bourgeoisie prove that the Social Democrats are just as much auxiliary troops of the bourgeoisie as is fascism. Social democracy was defeated in the sense that it is now serving the bourgeoisie. The Leninist line of the Fifth World Congress also proved its correctness on this point.

The Fifth World Congress laid down the correct line in the *trade union question*. It is now our task

to adapt this line to the specific conditions in each country. We here see two dangers, as proved by France and Czechoslovakia. The first is that many comrades consider the trade union campaign a minor manoeuvre, the second, that many, as in Czechoslovakia, want to neglect the Red Trade Unions. We must not give up our own organization without thinking twice about it. The Amsterdamers are at present very much disturbed because of England's intention of holding a special conference with the trade unions of the Soviet Union. An extra session of the Amsterdam International has been called because of this. We insist upon our old line not to look upon this campaign as a minor manoeuvre, and where we have strong Red Trade Unions, not to give them up conditionally. Our trade union campaign is so successful because it links up with the changes in the British labor movement. Britain has lost its position of monopoly. Its colonial possessions are tottering. That is why the class antagonisms have increased and the position of the labor aristocracy has been undermined. Events have proved the failure of the old trade union tactics, of the old tactics of the Labour Party. That is the reason for the rise of the *Minority Movement*, which has a great future. The Labour Party is at present an urban party, which, however, will gradually lose ground. It will attempt to gain a footing in the rural districts. That will mean a step forward. Engels and Lenin sought the key to the British situation. Following the footsteps of Engels and Lenin, the Comintern found the key, and since the objective situation is favorable, we may hope that the Communist Party of Great Britain will become a mass party. The young Communist Party of Great Britain is marching forward.

Turning to the question of Bolshevization, Comrade Zinoviev said that politics and organization are equally important to Bolshevization.

The Organization Conference [March 15-21(?), 1925] was of the greatest importance. Bolshevization consists not only of the reorganization upon the basis of nuclei. The campaigns must be transferred to the nuclei. The most important principle of Bolshevization is that one should continually Bolshevize oneself. A mechanical transference of Russian experiences is impossible, for the bourgeoisie has also learned from October. What happened in Hamburg and Revel

shows that a Kerensky period is no longer possible. What is most important for Bolshevization is the analysis of the social structure of the population. In the present period the parties must principally study the history of Bolshevization in the pre-war period. The beginnings of a *peasant movement* are of great importance. Our French and Italian parties have already organized peasant conferences. The German Red Sundays in the country are also an important phenomenon. The *slogan of the Workers and Peasants' Government* must be retained despite the fact that it was spoiled by Brandler. The tactics of the United Front are still a prerequisite for Bolshevization. Bolshevik means first of all "man of the masses." In this connection the question of *partial demands* is very important. Partial demands do not mean reformism. Reform cannot be obtained in the present epoch. A retardation of the tempo of the revolution does not mean reformism. Partial demands must be taken into consideration, for we must take part in the daily life of the masses of workers. This will probably lead to the endeavor to construct a Right tactical line in the Comintern. The Bruenn organization published a description of the differences in the Czechoslovakian Party. The pamphlet refers to the great task of the Bruenn labor movement. I consider this correct, but must declare that the Bruenn workers would do well to send some of their leaders back to the social democracy and to shelve a few others. These leaders consider themselves theoreticians. They confuse, however, the breaking of windows with the revolution. (*Laughter.*) The Communist International does not need such theoreticians.

Comrade Bordiga has already shifted from the Ultra-Left to the Right. The more such tendencies exist, the more irreconcilable must our Bolshevism be.

Turning to the question of Party leadership, Comrade Zinoviev mentioned two articles of Thälheimer and Kreibich, which unfortunately were not published.

These articles reject the line of the Fifth World Congress. They raise the objection that the Executive [ECCI] put new officers at the wheel. No one wants

to remove the old leaders in order to flatter the young ones. The young leaders must learn from their own mistakes, and must Bolshevize themselves. We require an amalgam of both generations, and Kreibich's charge that we are coldly shelving the old leaders is unfounded. There is absolutely no desire to persecute; we only require an honest admission that mistakes have been made. We want a clear-eyed, centralized, disciplined leadership, a standardization of the Parties, democracy and the right of free criticism for the membership, but not to please the bourgeoisie. We want to carry out Bolshevization upon the platform of Leninism. Comrade Rappaport maintains that we place Leninism above Marxism. The same is said by Friedrich Adler. However, that is a mistake, because there can be no Leninism without Marxism. We want to retain the good traditions of the First International and even a part of the good traditions of the Second International. Communism was not born yesterday. We must study what was good in Guesde, Plekhanov, Bebel, the Polish Social Democracy, and the Spartacus Bund. The present respite must be employed for study. We must learn to work upon ourselves. We must carry out Leninism in a hard, intellectual struggle against the dangers of the Right. This will be realized in the fight against the Right, as has been proved by the Bruenn example. Seventy-three percent of the membership of our parties in Czechoslovakia and in Germany are former social democratic workers. We must take even more workers away from the social democracy but we must Bolshevize them. The workers want to become good Bolsheviks. In Bruenn, nine-tenths of the workers are good revolutionaries, even though they have semi-socialist leaders.

Our line remains the same. We will adapt ourselves to conditions without losing sight of our goal for a moment and without taking our hands off the rudder. The path of the world revolution is more difficult, thorny, and beset with difficulties, and we are finding more stones and blocks upon it than we imagined. We will also travel slower than we formerly believed on the road to the victory of Communism. (*Stormy, prolonged applause.*)

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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