

Characteristic Theses of the Party

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I. Theory

The doctrine of the Party is founded on the principles of the historical materialism of the critical communism set out by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, in the Capital and their other fundamental works and which formed the basis of the Communist International constituted in 1919 and of the Italian Communist Party founded at Leghorn in 1921 (section of the Communist International).

1. In the present capitalist social regime an ever increasing contrast between productive forces and production relations is developing. This contrast reveals itself in the opposing interests and the class struggle between the proletariat and the ruling bourgeoisie.
2. The present production relations are protected by the bourgeois State. Even when democratic elections are used and whatever the form of the representative system may be, it is always the exclusive organ of the capitalist class.
3. The proletariat cannot crush or modify the mechanism of capitalist production relations, source of its exploitation, without wrecking the bourgeois power through violence.
4. The class Party is the indispensable organ for the proletarian revolutionary struggle. The Communist Party consists of the most advanced and resolute part of the proletariat, unites the efforts of the working masses transforming their struggles for group interests and contingent issues into the general struggle for the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat. Propagating the revolutionary theory among the masses, organising the material means of action, leading the working class all along its struggle, by securing the historical continuity and the international unity of the movement, are duties of the Party.

5. After it has knocked down the power of the capitalist State, the proletariat must completely destroy the old State apparatus in order to organise itself as ruling class and set up its own dictatorship. It will deny all functions and political rights to any individual of the bourgeois class as long as they survive socially, founding the organs of the new regime exclusively on the productive class. Such is the programme which the Communist Party sets itself and which is characteristic of it. It is the Party alone which therefore represents, organises and directs the proletarian dictatorship. The necessary defence of the proletarian State against all counter-revolutionary attempts can only be secured by taking from the bourgeoisie and from all the parties, enemies of proletarian dictatorship, any means of agitation and political propaganda, and by the proletariat's armed organisation, able to repulse all internal and external attacks.
6. Only the force of the proletarian State will be able to put systematically into effect the necessary measures for intervening in the relations of the social economy, by means of which the collective management of production and distribution will take the place of the capitalist system.
7. This transformation of the economy and consequently of the whole social life will lead to the gradual elimination of the necessity for the political State which will progressively become an apparatus for the rational administration of human activities.

In the face of the capitalist world and the workers' movement following the second World War the position of the Party is founded on the following points:

8. In the course of the first half of the twentieth century the capitalist social system has been developing, in the economic field, by creating monopolistic trusts among the employers, and by trying to control and to manage production and exchanges according to control plans with State management of whole sectors of production. In the political field, there has been an increase of the police and army potential of the State, all governments adopting a more totalitarian form. All these are neither new sorts of social organisations as a transition from capitalism to socialism, nor revivals of pre-bourgeois political regimes. On the contrary, they are definite forms of a more and more direct and exclusive management of power and State by the most developed forces of capital.

This course excludes the progressive, pacifist and evolutionist interpretations of the becoming of the bourgeois regime, and confirms the prevision of the concentration and of the antagonistic arraying of the class forces. The proletariat in order to confront its enemies' growing potential with strengthened revolutionary energy, must repel the illusory revival of democratic liberalism and constitutional guarantees. The Party must not

even accept this as a means of agitation: it must historically get rid once and for all, of the practice of alliances, even for transitory issues, with the middle class as well as with the pseudo-proletarian and reformist parties.

9. The world imperialistic wars show that the crisis of disaggregation of capitalism is inevitable as it has entered the phase when its expansion, instead of signifying a continual increment of the productive forces, is conditioned by repeated and ever-growing destructions. These wars have caused repeated deep crises in the workers' world organisation because the dominant classes could impose on them military and national solidarity with one or another of the belligerents. The only historical alternative to be set against such a situation is the awakening of the internal class struggle, until the civil war of the working masses to overthrow the power of all bourgeois states and of world coalitions, with the reconstitution of the International Communist Party as an autonomous force, independent of any organised political or military power.
10. The proletarian State, being its apparatus an instrument and a weapon for the struggle in a transition historical period, does not draw its force from constitutional canons and representative systems. The most complete historical example of such a State is up to the present that of the Soviets (workers' councils) which were created during the October 1917 Russian revolution, when the working class armed itself under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party alone; during the totalitarian seizure of power, the wiping out of the Constituent Assembly, the struggle to repulse the external attacks of bourgeois governments and to crush the internal rebellion of defeated classes, of middle and petty-bourgeois strata and of opportunist parties, inevitable allies of the counter-revolution at the decisive moment.
11. The integral realisation of socialism within the limits of one country is inconceivable and the socialist transformation cannot be carried out without insuccess and momentary set-backs. The defence of the proletarian regime against the ever-present dangers of degeneration is possible only if the proletarian State is always solidary with the international struggle of the working class of each country against its own bourgeoisie, its State and its army; this struggle permits of no respite even in wartime. This co-ordination can only be secured if the world communist Party controls the politics and programme of the States where the working class has vanquished.

II. Tasks of the Communist Party

1. The proletariat can only free itself from the capitalist exploitation if it fights under a revolutionary political organ: the Communist Party.

2. The chief aspect of the political struggle in the Marxist sense is the civil war and the armed uprising by which a class overthrows the power of the opposed dominant class and sets up its own power. Such a struggle can only succeed if it is led by the Party organisation.
3. Neither the struggle against the power of the exploiting class nor the successive uprooting of the capitalist economic structures can be achieved without the political revolutionary party: the proletarian dictatorship is indispensable all along the historical period where such tremendous changes will take place and will be exercised openly by the Party.
4. The Party defends and propagates the theory of the movement for the socialist revolution; it defends and strengthens its inner organisation by propagating the communist theory and programme and by being constantly active in the rank of the proletariat wherever the latter is forced to fight for its economic interests; such are its tasks before, during and after the struggle of the armed proletariat for state power.
5. The Party is not made up of all members of the proletariat or even of its majority. It is the organisation of the minority which has, collectively, reached and mastered revolutionary tactics in theory and in practice; in other words, which sees clearly the general objectives of the historic movement of the proletariat in the whole world and for the whole of the historical course which separates the period of its formation from that of its final victory. The Party is not formed on the basis of individual consciousness; it is not possible for each worker to become conscious and still less to master the class doctrine in a cultural way, neither is this possible for each militant nor even for the leaders of the Party as individuals. This consciousness lies in the organic unity of the Party.

Any conception which makes the progress of revolutionary emancipation of the working class derive from individual acts or on the contrary from mass action without a party framework must therefore be rejected. In the same way we must reject any conception of the party as a group of enlightened scholars or conscious individuals. On the contrary, the Party is the organic tissue whose function inside the working class is to carry out its revolutionary task in all its aspects and in its successive phases.

6. Marxism has always energetically rejected the theory which proposes to the proletariat only trade, industrial or factory associations, theory which considers that these associations can, by themselves, lead the class struggle to its historical end: the conquest of power and the transformation of society. Incapable of facing the immense task of the social revolution on its own, the union is however indispensable to

mobilise the proletariat on a political and revolutionary level. This however is possible only if the Communist Party is present and its influence inside the union grows. The party can only work inside entirely proletarian unions where membership is voluntary and where no given political, religious or social opinions are forced on members. This is not the case with confessional unions, with those where membership is compulsory and with those which have become an integrant part of the State system.

The Party will never set up economic associations which exclude those workers who do not accept its principles and leadership. But the Party recognises without any reserve that not only the situation which precedes insurrectional struggle but also all phases of substantial growth of Party influence amongst the masses cannot arise without the expansion between the Party and the working class of a series of organisations with short term economic objectives with a large number of participants. Within such organisations the party will set a network of communist cells and groups, as well as a communist fraction in the union.

In periods when the working class is passive, the Party must anticipate the forms and promote the constitution of organisations with immediate economic aims. These may be unions grouped according to trade, industry, factory committees or any other known grouping or even quite new organisations. The Party always encourages organisations which favour Contact between workers at different localities and different trades and their common action. It rejects all forms of closed organisations.

7. In any Situation, the Party refuses at the same time the idealist and utopist outlook which makes social transformation dependent on a circle of „elected« apostles and heroes; the libertarian outlook which makes it dependent on the revolt of individuals or unorganised masses; the trade union or economists' outlook which entrusts it to apolitical organisations, whether they preach the use of violence or not; the volunteristic and sectarian outlook which does not recognise that class rebellion rises out of a series of collective actions well prior to a clear theoretical consciousness and even to resolute will action, and which, as a result, recommends the forming of a small „elite« isolated from working class trade unions or, which comes to the same, leaning on trade unions which exclude non communists. This last mistake, which has historically characterised the German K.A.P.D. and Dutch Tribunists [The members of Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (KAPD) in Germany and of the Dutch group of „Tribune« review, lead by Gorter and Pannekoek, that definitely abandoned the C.I. in 1921.], has always been fought against by the Marxist Italian Left.

The differences for reasons of strategy and tactics which led our current to break away from the IIIrd International cannot be discussed

without reference to the different historical phases of the proletarian movement.

III. Historical Waves of Opportunist Degeneration

1. It is impossible, unless we want to give way to idealism or to mystical, ethical or aesthetical considerations which are in complete opposition to Marxism, to assert that in all historical phases of the proletarian movement the same intransigence is necessary, that any alliance, any united front, all compromise is to be refused on principle. Quite on the contrary, it is only on a historical basis that questions of class and party strategy and tactics can be solved. For this reason, it is the development of the proletarian class throughout the world between the bourgeois and the socialist revolutions which must be considered, and not particularities of time and place that nourish casuistical politics and which leave practical questions to the whim of groups or steering committees.
2. The proletariat itself is above all the product of capitalist economy and industrialisation; like communism it cannot be born of the inspiration of individuals, brotherhoods or political clubs, but only of the struggle of the proletarians themselves. In the same way, the irrevocable victory of capitalism over those forms which have preceded it historically, that is the victory of the bourgeoisie over the feudal and land-owning aristocracy and over the other classes characteristic of the old regime, be it Asiatic or European or of other continents, is a condition for communism.

At the time of the Communist Manifesto, modern industrial development was still at its beginnings and present only in a very few countries. In order to speed up the explosion of modern class struggle, the proletariat had to be encouraged to struggle, armed, at the sides of the revolutionary bourgeoisies during the antifeudal insurrections or those of national liberation. In this way the workers' participation in the great French revolution and its defence against the European coalitions right up to napoleonic times, is part of the history of the workers' struggle and this in spite of the fact that from the very beginning the bourgeois dictatorship ferociously quelled the first communist inspired social struggles.

Because of the defeat of the bourgeois revolutions of 1848, this strategy of alliance between proletariat and bourgeoisie against the classes of the old regime valid, in the eyes of Marxists, until 1871, in view of the fact that this feudal regime still persists in Russia, in Austria and in Germany and that the national unity of Italy, Germany and the east European countries is a necessary condition of Europe's industrial development.

3. 1871 is a clear turning-point in history. The struggle against Napoleon III and his dictatorship is in fact directed against a capitalistic and not a feudal form; it is at the same time the product and proof of the mobilisation of the two fundamental and enemy classes of modern society. Although it sees in Napoleon an obstacle to the bourgeois development of Germany, revolutionary Marxism goes immediately on the side of the anti-bourgeois struggle which will be that of all parties of the Commune, first workers' dictatorship in history. After this date, the proletariat can no longer choose between contending parties or national armies in so far as any restoration of pre-bourgeois forms has become socially impossible in two big areas : Europe to the confines of the Ottoman and tsarist empires on the one hand, and England and North America on the other.

A. Opportunism at the end of the 19th Century

4. If we disregard Bakouninism during the first, International and Sorelism during the second, as they have nothing to do with Marxism, the social-democratic revisionism represents the first opportunist wave within the proletarian Marxist movement. Its vision was the following: once victory by the bourgeoisie over the old regime was universally secured, a historical phase without insurrections and without wars opens up before humanity; socialism becomes possible by gradual evolution and without violence, on the basis of the extension of modern industry and due to the numerical increase of workers armed with universal suffrage. In this way it was tried (Bernstein) to empty Marxism of its revolutionary contents, pretending that its rebellious spirit was inherited from the revolutionary bourgeoisie and not belonging to the proletarian class in itself. At this time, the tactical question of alliance between advanced bourgeois parties and the proletarian party takes on a different aspect to that of the preceding phase; it is no longer a question of helping capitalism to win, but to make socialism derive from it with the help of laws and reform, no longer to fight on the barricades of the towns and in the country against menaces of restoration; but only to vote together in parliamentary assemblies. That is why the proposal of alliances and coalition and even the acceptance of ministerial posts by workers' representatives is from then on a deviation from the revolutionary path. That is also why radical Marxists reprove all electoral coalition.

B. Opportunism in 1914

5. The second tremendous opportunist wave hits the proletarian movement when war breaks out in 1914. Most of the parliamentary and trade-union leaders as well as strong militant groups, and in some countries whole parties present the conflict between national States as a struggle which might bring back the absolutism of the feudal system and which might lead to the destruction of the conquests of the bourgeois civilisation and

even of modern productive system. They preach solidarity with the national State at war, the result of which is an alliance between Tsarist Russia and the advanced bourgeoisies of France and England.

The majority of the Second International therefore falls into the war opportunism from which very few parties, one of which is the Italian socialist party, escape. Worse, only advanced groups and fractions accept the position of Lenin who, having defined the war as being a product of capitalism and not a conflict between the latter and less advanced politico-social forms, draws the conclusion that the „holy union« must be condemned and that the proletarian party should practise a defeatist revolutionary policy within each country against the belligerent State and army.

6. The Third International rises on such historical position, against both social democratism and social-patriotism. In the Communist International, not only are no alliances concluded with other parties for parliamentary power, not only is it denied that power may be assumed by legal means, even if in an „intransigent« way [Here is referred to the „intransigence« displayed by the Italian Socialist Party that only consisted in refusing a parliamentary support to bourgeois governments, but which did not explicitly exclude the possibility of a legal and gradual ascent to power.], by the only workers' party, but all agree that the past idyllic phase of capitalism must be followed by armed violence and dictatorship.

No alliances are concluded with the governments at war - even a „defensive« war, upholding a class position even in this case - but all efforts are made by defeatist propaganda on the front to turn the imperialistic war between States into a civil war between classes.

7. The revolutionary reply to the first wave of opportunism had been: no electoral, parliamentary or ministerial alliance to obtain reforms. The reply to the second was, since 1871: no war alliance with the State and bourgeoisie. The fact that these reactions came with a big delay prevented the proletariat from making full use of the turning point and crisis of 1914-18 and of setting up the struggle against war and for the destruction of the bourgeois State.
8. There was only one exception, an imposing one: the October 1917 victory in Russia. Russia was the only remaining great European State still ruled by feudal power where capitalist forms of production had as yet penetrated but little. The proletarian party was numerically weak, but it had a tradition of doctrinal steadfastness and had been in opposition to the two consecutive waves of opportunism in the Second International. At the same time it had been capable, from 1905 onwards, of setting down

the problems put by the simultaneous development of a bourgeois and a proletarian revolution.

In February 1917, the proletarian party struggled with the others against Tsarism, but in the phase which immediately followed, it was forced to fight not only against the bourgeois liberal party but also against the proletarian opportunist ones, which had openly gone over to the enemy, and it triumphed over all of them. It then became the centre of the reconstitution of the revolutionary International.

9. The effect of this formidable event is to be found in irrevocable historical results. In the last European country placed outside of the geo-political area of the West, an uninterrupted fight leads a proletariat, whose social development is far from being complete, to power. Liberal-democratic forms of the western type, set up during the first phase of the revolutions are brushed aside and the proletarian dictatorship faces the immense task of accelerating economic development. This means that the still present feudal forms must be overthrown and that the recent capitalistic forms must be overcome. The realisation of this task calls above all for victory over the gangs of counter-revolutionary insurgents and the intervention of foreign capitalism. It calls not only for the mobilisation of the world proletariat for the defence of soviet power and to direct the assault on the western, bourgeois powers, but for the extension of the revolutionary struggle to continents inhabited by coloured people, in short the mobilisation of all forces able to carry on an armed fight against white capitalist metropolises.
10. In Europe and America strategical alliance with left bourgeois movements against feudal forms of power is no longer possible and has given way to direct struggle by the proletariat for power. But in underdeveloped countries the rising proletarian and communist parties will not disdain to participate to insurrections of other anti-feudal classes, either against local despotic dominations or against the white colonisers.

In Lenin's time, there are two historical alternatives: either the world struggle ends in victory, that is by the downfall of capitalistic power at least in a large advanced part of Europe, and this would permit Russian economy to be transformed at a fast rhythm, „jumping« the capitalistic stage and quickly catching up with Western industry, already ripe for socialism, or the big imperialist centres stay put, and in this case the revolutionary Russian power is forced to restrain itself to the economic task of the bourgeois revolution, making the effort of immense productive development, but of a capitalistic, not a socialist character.

11. It was quite obvious that only a quick grasp of power in Europe could prevent the violent fall of the Soviet State, or its involution into a capitalistic State within a historically short time. However, after the

serious shock following the First World War, the bourgeois society was quickly consolidated, the communist parties having failed to be victorious, except for a few attempts which were rapidly crushed. This led the communist parties to ask themselves by which means they could ward off the social democratic and opportunist influences which continued to exert pressure on large sections of the proletariat.

There were then two methods at strife: the first - that of the Italian Marxist Left - considered that those parties of the Second International which openly continued an unrelenting struggle at the same time against the communist programme and against revolutionary Russia, and it fought them on a class front as being the most dangerous enemy detachment; the other consisted of falling back on devices, strategical and tactical „manoeuvres« to turn the masses influenced by the social democratic parties, towards the communist party.

12. To justify the latter method the experiences of the Bolshevik policy in Russia were falsely explained, diverging from the correct theoretical line. In Russia the offers of alliance with petit-bourgeois and even bourgeois parties were historically justified by the fact that by banning all these movements Tsarism compelled them to an insurrectional struggle. In Europe, on the contrary, even when proposed purely as a manoeuvre, common action was only to be carried on legal lines, be it on trade-union or parliamentary ground. In Russia, the phase of liberal parliamentarism had been very short (the year 1905 and a few months in 1917) and the same goes for legal recognition of the trade union movement. In the rest of Europe, instead, half a century of degeneration of the proletarian movement had made these two fields of action propitious ground to drowse revolutionary energies and corrupt the workers' leaders. The guarantee lying in the firmness of the Bolshevik Party in its principles and its organisation was one thing, while that given, according to Moscow, by the existence of a revolutionary power in Russia was quite another, as owing to the social conditions under which it came into being and to the international relations, this power was precisely the proletarian organism which lay most open (history has but shown it too well) to the renunciation of revolutionary principles and policy.
13. The left of the International (to which the great majority of the Communist Party of Italy belonged before it was more or less destroyed by the fascist counter-revolution which was favoured chiefly by the mistake of historical strategy) upheld that in the West all alliances or proposals of alliances with socialist or petit-bourgeois parties should be refused at all costs; in other words that there should be no united political front. It admitted that the communists should widen their influence within the masses by taking part in all local and economic struggles, calling on the workers of all organisations and of all faiths to develop them to the

maximum, but it refused that the party's action should be subordinated to that of political committees of fronts, coalitions or alliances even if this subordination was to restrict itself to public declarations and be compensated by internal instructions to militants or the party and by the subjective intentions of the leaders. Even more strongly it rejected the so-called „Bolshevik« tactics when it took the shape of „workers' government«, i.e. the launching of the slogan (become in some instances a practical experiment, with ruinous consequences) of coming into the parliamentary power with mixed majorities of communists and socialists of the various shapes. If the Bolshevik party could draw up with no danger the plan of provisional governments of several parties in the revolutionary phase, and if that allowed it to go to the firmest autonomy of action and even to outlaw the former allies, all that was made possible only by the diversity of situation of the historical forces: urgent need of two revolutions, and destructive attitude, by the State in force, towards any coming to power through a parliamentary way. It would have been absurd to transpose such a strategy to a situation in which the bourgeois State has a half a century hold democratic tradition, and parties that accept its constitutionalism.

14. The results of tactics applied by the communist International between 1921 and 1926 were negative, which did not stop the latter from advocating more and more opportunistic methods between the IIIrd and Vth International Congresses and the Enlarged Executive Committee in 1926. The Communist International's method was, to change its tactics according to situations which were analysed in a most whimsical fashion, new stages of capitalism being discovered every six months. The C.I.'s revisionism lay, at the bottom, essentially in this voluntarism which it had in common with all preceding revisionisms. Reformists in 1900 already reasoned thus: from now on the situation excludes all possibility of insurrection; let us not wait for the impossible, let us try to achieve concrete reforms by legal means, economic conquests by using the trade unions. The failure of this method provoked reaction from the anarchosyndicalist current which was also voluntarist. Surprise attacks from bold minorities were substituted for political party struggle under the pretension that the political course could be determined and the general strike imposed on the D-day. In the same way, seeing that the West-European proletariat did not attack the bourgeois State, the Communist International fell back on devices, which of course modified neither the objective situation nor the balance of power but only weakened and corrupted the workers' organisation. The confusion between the communist programme of revolutionary taking of power and the support or participation by the communists in „workers« governments, springing from parliamentary majorities, reduced the effects of Lenin's restoration of revolutionary principles to nothing and disarmed the world proletarian party ideologically with no other practical effects than the

ludicrous experience of Saxony and Thuringia where two policemen were enough to overthrow the government communist leader.

15. The confusion in matters of internal organisation compromised no less the success of the difficult task of selecting the revolutionary members from the opportunist ones in the different parties and countries. The error consisted in believing that the left wings torn away from the Old social democratic parties would make forces of the communist party easy to handle, whereas in fact they could but keep up the permanent crisis within the communist organisation. Under the pretext of winning over large groups of workers, compromises were made with the leaders, continually changing the people holding responsibility and this even when engaged in active struggle, when continuity in organisation was more than ever essential. Instead of demanding individual membership to the sections (the new International once constituted was to function in a continuous, stable manner as world Party), mergers were arranged with fractions and groups from opportunist parties calling themselves „communist« wiping out frontiers between followers and enemies of communism, breaking the continuity of action of the revolutionary party and recording therefore nothing but failures on an international scale. The Left always claimed unity and continuity of the Communist organisation in the face of all these dissolving practices.

The overthrow of the structure of the parties under the pretext of „bolshevisation« was another reason for the Left to differ from the leadership of the International. The territorial organisation of the party was changed for a network of factory cells. This narrowed the political horizon of the members who had the same trade and therefore the same immediate economic interests. In this way, the natural synthesis of the different social impulses which would have helped to make the struggle a general one, common to all categories, was not achieved. As this synthesis was lacking, the only factor of unity was represented by the top executives whose members became in this way officials with all the negative characteristics of the old socialist party system.

The criticism which the Italian Marxist Left made of this organisation must not be mistaken as claiming the return to „internal democracy« and to „free election« of the party leaders. It is neither internal democracy nor free elections which give the Party its nature of being the most conscious fraction of the proletariat and its function of revolutionary guide. It is instead the matter of a deep discrepancy of conceptions about the deterministic organicity of the party as a historical body, living in the reality of the class struggle; it is a fundamental deviation in principles, that made the parties unable to foresee and face the opportunist danger.

16. Analogous deviations took place in Russia where, for the first time in history, the difficult problem of organisation and internal discipline of the communist party which had come to power and whose membership had enormously increased, arose. The difficulties met in the internal social-struggle for a new economy and revolutionary political struggle outside of Russia provoked contrasting opinions between Bolsheviks of the Old Guard and new members. The Party's leading group had in its hands not only the party apparatus but also the whole State apparatus. Its opinions or those of the majority within it were made good not by means of party doctrine and its national and international tradition of struggle, but by repression of the opposition by means of the State apparatus and by strangling the party in a police like manner. All disobedience towards the central organ of the party was judged as a counter-revolutionary act warranting, besides expulsion, punitive sanctions. The relationship between Party and State was thus completely distorted and the group which controlled both was thus able to enforce a series of surrenders of principles and of the historical line of the party and world revolutionary movement. In reality the party is a unitary organism in its doctrine and its action. To join the party imposes peremptory obligations on Leaders and followers. But joining and leaving is voluntary without any kind of physical compulsion and shall be so before, during and after the conquest of power. The party directs alone and in an autonomous way the struggle of the exploited class to destroy the capitalist State. In the same way, the Party, alone and autonomous, leads the revolutionary proletarian State, and just because the State is, historically, a transitory organ, legal intervention against party members or groups is a pointer to a serious crisis. As soon as such intervention became a practice in Russia, the party became crowded with opportunistic members who sought nothing more than to procure advantages for themselves or at least to benefit from the protection of the Party. Yet they were accepted without hesitation and instead of a weakening of the State there was a dangerous inflation of the Party in power.

This reversal of influences resulted in the opportunists getting the upper hand on the orthodox; the betrayers of revolutionary principles paralysed, immobilised, accused and finally condemned those who defended them in a coherent way, some of whom had understood too late that the party would never again become a revolutionary one.

In fact, it was the government, at grips with the hard reality of internal and external affairs, which solved questions, and imposed its solutions on the Party. The latter, in turn, had an easy time in international congresses to impose these solutions on the other parties which it dominated and handled as it liked. In this way the directive of the Comintern lines became more and more eclectic and conciliatory with

respect to world capitalism. The Italian Left never questioned the revolutionary merits of the party which had led the first proletarian revolution to victory, but it maintained that the contributions of the parties still openly struggling against their bourgeois regime, were indispensable. The hierarchy which could solve the problems of revolutionary action in the world and in Russia must therefore be the following: the International of the World communist parties - its various sections, including the Russian one - finally the communist government for internal Russian politics but exclusively along party lines. Otherwise the internationalist character of the movement and its revolutionary efficiency could not but be compromised.

Only by respecting this rule could a divergence of interests and objectives between the Russian State and the World revolution be avoided. Lenin himself had many times admitted that if the revolution broke out in Europe or the world, the Russian party would take not second but at least fourth place in the general political and social leadership of the communist revolution.

17. We cannot say exactly when the opportunistic wave which was to bear away the Communist International, originated. This was the third wave, the first having paralysed the International founded by Marx and the second which had shamefully brought about the fall of the Second International. The deviations and political errors discussed in paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 above, threw the world communist movement into total opportunism which could be seen from its attitude towards fascism and totalitarian governments. These forms appeared after the period of the great proletarian attacks which, in Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bavaria and in the Balkan States, followed the end of the Ist World War. The communist International defined them as employers' offensives with a tendency to lower the standard of living of the working classes economically, and politically as initiatives aiming at the suppression of democratic liberalism, which it presented, in a turn of phrase doubtful to Marxists, as being a favourable milieu for a proletarian offensive, whereas communism has always considered it as the worst possible atmosphere of revolutionary corruption on the political level. In reality, fascism was the complete proof of the Marxist vision of history: the economic concentration was not only evidence of the social and international character of capitalist production, but it urged the latter to unite and the bourgeoisie to declare Social war on the proletariat, whose pressure was as yet much weaker than the defence capacity of the capitalist State.

The leaders of the International on the other hand created serious historical confusion with the Kerensky period in Russia, leading not only to a serious mistake in theoretical interpretation, but to an inevitable overthrow of tactics. A strategy for the defence and conservation of

existing conditions was outlined for the proletariat and communist Parties, advising them to form a united front with all those bourgeois groups which upheld that certain immediate advantages should be granted to the workers and that the people should not be deprived of their democratic rights. The groups were in this way much less decided and perspicacious than the fascists and thus very feeble allies.

The International did not understand that Fascism or National Socialism had nothing to do with an attempt to return to despotic and feudal forms of government, nor with the victory of the so-called right-wing bourgeois sections in opposition with the more advanced capitalist class from the big industries, nor an attempt to form an autonomous government of the intermediate classes between employers and proletariat. It did not understand either that freeing itself from a hypocritical parliamentarism, fascism inherited on the other hand wholly the pseudo-Marxist reformism, securing for the least fortunate classes not only a living wage but a series of improvements of their welfare by means of a certain number of measures and state interventions taken, of course, in the interest of the State. The Communist International thus launched the slogan „struggle for freedom« which was forced upon the Communist Party of Italy by the president of the International from 1926 onwards. Yet nearly all the militants of the party had wanted for four years to lead as autonomous class policy against fascism refusing coalition with all democratic, monarchistic and catholic parties in favour of constitutional and parliamentary guarantees. And it was in vain that the Italian Left warned the leaders of the International that the path it had chosen (and which ended finally with the Committees for National Liberation !) would lead to the loss of all revolutionary energies, and demanded that the real meaning of the antifascism of all the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parties as well as the pseudo-proletarian ones should be openly denounced.

The line of the communist party is by its nature an offensive one and in no case may it struggle for the illusory preservation of conditions peculiar to capitalism. If, before 1871, the working class had to fight side by side with bourgeois forces, this was not in order to hold on to certain advantages, nor to avoid an impossible return to old times but in order to help in the total destruction of all out- grown political and social forms. In everyday economic policy, just as in general politics, the working class had nothing to lose and therefore nothing to defend. Attack and Conquest, those are its only tasks.

Consequently, the revolutionary party shall interpret the coming of totalitarian forms of capitalism as the confirmation of its doctrine and therefore its complete ideological victory. It shall take an interest in the effective strength of the proletarian class in relationship to its oppressor in order to get ready for the revolutionary civil war. This relationship has

ever been made unfavourable only by opportunism and gradualism. The revolutionary party shall do all in its power to stir up the final attack, and where this is impossible, face up without ever slating a „Vade retro Satana«, as defeatist as stupid because it comes to begging foolishly for tolerance and pardon from the enemy class.

C. Opportunism after 1926

18. In the Second International, opportunism took on the form of humanitarianism, philanthropy and pacifism culminating in the repudiation of armed struggle and insurrection and, what is more, finding justification for legal violence between States at war.

During the third opportunist wave deviation and treason of the revolutionary line went as far as armed fighting and civil war. But even when opportunism wants to impose a given government against another in one country by means of an armed struggle aiming at territorial conquests and strategical positions, the revolutionary criticism remains the same as when it organises fronts, blocks and alliances with purely electoral and parliamentary designs. For instance the alliance of the Spanish Civil War and the partisan movement against the Germans or the fascists during the Second World War was without doubt betrayal of the working class and a form of collaboration with capitalism, in spite of the violence which was made use of. In such cases, the communist party's refusal to subordinate itself to committees made up of heterogeneous parties should be even firmer: when action passes from legal agitation to conspiracy and fighting it is still more criminal to have anything what so ever in common with non proletarian movements. We need not recall that in the case of defeat, such collusions were concluded by the concentration of all the enemy's forces on the communists, whereas in the case of apparent success, the revolutionary wing was completely disarmed and bourgeois order was consolidated.

19. All demonstrations of opportunism in the tactics imposed on European parties and carried on inside Russia were crowned during the Second World War by the attitude of the Soviet State towards the other belligerent States and by the instructions which Moscow gave to the communist parties. The latter did not deny their assent to the war, nor did they try to exploit it in order to organise class action aiming at the destruction of the capitalist State. On the contrary, in a first stage Russia concluded an agreement with Germany: then while it provided that the German section should do nothing against the hitlerite power, it dared to dictate self-styled „Marxist« tactics to French communists who were to declare the war of the French and English bourgeoisie as being an imperialistic aggressive one, and made these parties lead illegal action against their State and army; However, as soon as the Russian State came into military conflict

with Germany and its interest lay in the strength of those opposed to the Russian state, the French, English and other parties concerned received the opposite political instruction and the order to move to the front of national defence just like the socialists, denounced by Lenin, in 1914. Much more, all theoretical and historical positions of communism were falsified when it was declared that the war between the western powers and Germany was not an imperialistic one but a crusade for liberty and democracy and that it had been so from the start, from 1939 on, when the pseudo-communist propaganda was entirely directed against the French and English.

Thus it is clear that the Communist International, which at one time had been formally wiped out in order to give extra guarantees to the imperialist powers, was at no time used to provoke the fall of any capitalist power and not even to speed on the appearance of conditions necessary for the taking over of power by the proletariat. Its only use was to collaborate openly with the German imperialist bloc, the opposite bloc having preferred to do without its help when Russia came over on its side.

It is therefore not a simple question of opportunism but rather a total abandonment of communism, proved by the haste with which the definition of the class structure of the bourgeois powers changed at the same time as did Russia's allies. Imperialist and plutocrat in 1939-40, France, England and America later became representative of progress, freedom and civilisation, having a common programme with Russia for the reorganisation of the world. This extraordinary turning did not prevent Russia from the moment of the first disagreements in 1946 and from the start of the cold war, to heap the most fiery accusations on the very same States.

It is no wonder therefore that, beginning by simple contacts with the social-betrayers and social-patriots rejected the day before, continuing with united fronts, workers' governments (renouncing to class dictatorship) and even blocs with petit-bourgeois parties, the Moscow movement fell, during the war, into total enslavement of the policy of the „democratic powers«. Later it had to admit that these powers were not only imperialist but just as fascist as Germany and Italy had been before. It is therefore no wonder either that the revolutionary parties which had met in Moscow in 1919-1920 had lost any remainder of their communist and proletarian nature.

20. The Third historical wave of opportunism unites all the characteristics of the two preceding ones in the same measure as present capitalism includes all forms of its different stages of development.

After the second imperialist war, the opportunist parties, united with all the bourgeois parties in the Committees of National Liberation take a part in government with them. In Italy, they even partake in monarchist cabinets, postponing the question of the Republic to more „suitable« times. Thus they repudiate the use of the revolutionary method for the conquest of political powers by the proletariat, sanctioning a purely legal and parliamentary struggle to which all proletarian pressure is to be sacrificed in view of the conquest of public power by pacific means. In the same way as during the first year of the conflict they did not sabotage fascist governments, nourishing their military strength the supply of first necessity, they postulate the participation in national defence governments sparing all trouble to the governments at war.

Opportunism continues its fatal evolution, sacrificing, even formally, the Third International to the enemy of the working class, to subsequent imperialism, in favour of the subsequent „reinforcement of the United Front of the allies and other United Nations«. Thus the historical anticipation of the Italian Left made in the first years of the Third International came true. It was ineluctable that the gigantic opportunism which had gained the workers' movement would lead to the liquidation of all revolutionary instances. Consequently the reconstitution of the class strength of the world proletariat has been very much delayed, made more difficult and will require a greater effort.

21. In the same way as Russia, supported by the opportunist communist parties of other countries, had fought on the side of the imperialists, she joined them in the occupation of the vanquished countries to prevent the exploited masses from rising, and this without losing the parties' support. On the contrary, this occupation with counter-revolutionary purpose was fully justified by all the so-called socialists and communists during the Yalta and Teheran conferences. Any possibility of a revolutionary attack of the bourgeois powers was reduced to nothing in the countries that had won the war as in those that had lost. This confirms the position of the Italian Left which regarded the second War as imperialist and the occupation of the vanquished countries as counter-revolutionary, and foresaw that the second war could not be followed by a revolutionary revival.

22. In accordance with the counter-revolutionary past the Russian and affiliated parties have modernised the theory of the permanent collaboration between classes proclaiming the peaceful co-existence and competition between capitalist and socialist States. This position, after the former which reduced the class struggle to a so-called struggle between socialist and capitalist States, is their final insult to revolutionary Marxism. If a socialist State does not declare a holy war on capitalist States, it at

least declares and maintains the class war inside the bourgeois countries, whose proletariat prepares theoretically and practically for the insurrection. This is the only position which conforms with the programme of the communist parties who do not disdain to show their opinions and their intentions (Manifesto of 1846) and openly urge on the violent destruction of the bourgeois power.

Hence, States and parties which admit or even assume hypothetically peaceful coexistence and competition between States instead of propagandising the absolute incompatibility among the classes and armed struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat, are capitalist States and counter-revolutionary parties, and their phraseology only masks their non-proletarian character.

The Persistence of such ideologies within the working class movement is a tragical holdback of any class revival and the proletariat must pass beyond them before the class struggle can take place.

23. Another aspect which made the political opportunism of the third wave still more shameful than the preceding ones was its shameful attitude towards pacifism, defence of guerrilla warfare; pacifism again, but spiced with the anti-capitalist phraseology of the cold war and finally the insipid total pacifism of coexistence. All these turnings went side by side with the most scandalous variation in the definition of the English and American powers: imperialist in 1939, democratically „liberating« the European proletariat in 1942, imperialist again after the war, pacifist rivals in the competition between capitalism and „socialism« today. True Marxists know, that the American imperialism has taken up since the first World War from the English „despot« the role of principal white guard of the world, as Lenin and the Third International many times emphasised during the glorious period of revolutionary struggle.

Inseparable from social pacifism, pacifism taken on its own makes the most of the workers' hatred of imperialist wars. Defence of peace which is a common propaganda of all parties and all States, bourgeois or pseudo-proletarian is however as opportunist as is the defence of the fatherland. Revolutionaries should leave one as the other to U.N.O. who is horror struck at the mention of class struggle, but is itself, like the League of Nations, a league of Robbers.

In putting pacifism higher than any other demand, today's opportunists show not only that they are outside the revolutionary process and have fallen into total utopia, but that they do not come within reach of the utopists Saint Simon, Owen, Fourier and even Proudhon.

Revolutionary Marxism rejects pacifism as a theory and means of propaganda and subordinates peace to the violent destruction of world imperialism; there will be no peace as long as the proletariat of the world is not free from bourgeois exploitation. It also denounces pacifism as a weapon of the class enemy to disarm the proletariat and withhold them from revolutionary influence.

24. Throwing bridges to the imperialist parties to set up governments of „national union« has now become a customary praxis of the opportunists who carry it out on an international scale in a gigantic superstate organism, U.N.O. The great lie consists in making believe that provided that the war between States is avoided, class collaboration can not only become reality but bring its mawkish fruits to the working class, the imperialist and class State becoming a democratic instrument for the public wealth.

Thus in the Peoples' Democracies, the opportunists have set up national systems in which all social classes are represented, with the pretence that in this way their opposing interests can be harmonised. In China for instance where the four class block is in power, the proletariat, far from having assumed political power, is subjected to the incessant pressure of the young industrial capitalism, having born the cost of „National Reconstruction« just like the proletariats of the other countries. The disarmament of the revolutionary forces, which was offered to the bourgeoisie by the social-patriots of 1914 and the ministerialists such as Millerand, Bissolati, Vandervelde, MacDonald and Company who were fustigated and eliminated by Lenin and the Communist International, grows blurred in the face of the scandalous and impudent collaboration of the present social patriots and ministerialists. The Italian Left which already in 1922 was opposed to the „workers' and peasant government« (password which was given the meaning of „dictatorship of the proletariat« but which fostered a fatal ambiguity or worse meant something quite different) rejects all the more the open class collaboration which present day opportunists do not hesitate to advocate; the Italian Left claims for the proletariat and its party the unconditional monopoly of the State, the unitary and undivided dictatorship of the proletarian class.

IV. Party Action

1. Since its birth, capitalism has had an irregular historical development, with alternating periods of crisis and intense economic expansion.

Crises are inseparable from capitalism which will not however cease to grow and to expand so long as the revolutionary forces will not deal it the final blow. In a parallel way, the history of the proletarian movement presents phases of impetuous bounds and phases of withdrawal provoked

by brutal defeats or slow degeneracy during which the renewal of revolutionary activity may be decades away. The Paris Commune was violently put down and its defeat opened a period of relatively pacific development of capitalism which gave birth to revisionist or opportunistic theories whose very existence proved the falling back of the revolution. The October revolution was slowly defeated over a period of regression, culminating in the violent suppression of those who had fought for it and survived. Since 1917, the revolution is very much absent and today it does not look as though we are on the threshold of the renewal of revolutionary revival.

2. In spite of such recurrences, the capitalist mode of production expands and prevails in all countries, under its technical and social aspects, in a more or less continuous way. The alternatives of the clashing class forces are instead connected to the events of the general historical struggle, to the contrast that already existed when bourgeoisie begun its rule on the feudal and precapitalistic classes, and to the evolutive political process of the two historical rival classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat; being such a process marked by victories and defeats, by errors of tactical and strategical method. The first clashes go back to 1789, arriving, through 1848, 1871, 1905 and 1917, to the present day; they gave the bourgeoisie a chance to furbish its arms against the proletariat in the same measure as its economy developed.

On the contrary, the proletariat, in the face of the gigantic extension of capitalism, has not always known how to use its class energy with success, falling back, after each defeat, into the net of opportunism and treason, and staying back from the revolution for an ever lengthening period.

3. The cycle of victorious struggles and of defeats, even the most drastic ones, and the opportunistic waves during which the revolutionary movement is submitted to the influence of the enemy class constitute a vast field of positive experiences where the revolution matures.

After the defeats, the revolutionary comeback is long and difficult; but the movement, although it is not visible on the surface, is not interrupted, it maintains, crystallised in a restricted vanguard, the revolutionary class demands.

The periods of political depression of the revolutionary movement are numerous. From 1848 to 1867, from the Second Paris revolution to the eve of the franco-prussian war, the revolutionary movement is nearly exclusively incarnated in Marx, Engels and a small circle of comrades; from 1872 -to 1879, from the defeat of the Commune to the beginning of the colonial wars and the return of the capitalist crisis which leads to the

Russian-Japanese war of 1905, and then to the 1914 war, the conscience of the revolution is represented by Marx and Engels. From 1914 to 1918 during the first World War during which the Second International crumbles, it is Lenin with some comrades of few other countries, who represent the continuity and victorious progression of the movement.

1926 introduced a new unfavourable period for the revolution which saw the liquidation of the October victory. Only the Italian Left communist movement has maintained intact the theory of revolutionary Marxism and the promise of a revolutionary come-back can have crystallised in this movement alone. During the second World War the conditions became still worse, the whole proletariat adhering to the imperialist war and the false Stalinistic socialism.

Today we are at the bottom of the depression and a come-back of the revolutionary movement cannot be envisaged in the near future. The length of the period of depression which we are experiencing corresponds to the seriousness of the degeneration as well as to the greater concentration of the capitalist forces. The third opportunistic wave unites the worst characteristics of the two preceding ones at the same time as the process of capitalist concentration in which the enemies strength lies is much stronger than after the first World War.

4. Today, in spite of depression and the limitation of the means of action at its disposal, the party, following the revolutionary tradition, has no intention of renouncing the historical preparation of the resumption on a large scale of the class struggle, which more formidable than all preceding ones, will profit by past experience. Restriction to activity does not imply the renouncement of revolutionary objectives. The party admits that in certain sectors its activity is quantitatively reduced, but it intends as far as possible to fulfil all its different tasks, and it does not renounce to any of them.
5. The principal activity today is the re-establishment of the theory of Marxist communism. At present, our arm is still that of criticism: therefore the party will bring forward no new theory, but will reaffirm the full validity of the fundamental theses of revolutionary Marxism, amply confirmed by facts and falsified and betrayed by opportunism to cover up retreats and defeats. The Marxist Left denounces and combats the Stalinists as revisionists and opportunists just as it has always condemned all forms of bourgeois influence on the proletariat. The Party bases its action on anti-revisionist positions. From the very moment of its appearance on the political scene, Lenin fought against Bernstein's revisionism and restored the original line, demolishing the factors of the two revisions - social democratic and social patriotic.

The Italian Left denounced from the very start the first tactical deviations inside the Third International as being the first symptoms of a third revision, which has been fully accomplished today, uniting the errors of the first two.

The proletariat is the last class to be exploited in history and no system of exploitation will follow capitalism: this is the very reason why the doctrine which is born with the proletariat itself can be neither changed nor reformed. The development of capitalism from its origin up to now has confirmed and confirms the Marxist theorems laid out in the fundamental texts of the proletarian party. The last 40 years have brought nothing new and all that they have „taught« us, is that capitalism has a tough skin and that it must be overthrown. The central focus point of the actual doctrinal position of our movement is therefore the following: no revision whatsoever of the primary principles of the proletarian revolution.

6. Today, the party registers social phenomena scientifically in order to confirm the fundamental theses of Marxism. It analyses, confronts and comments on recent and contemporary facts, repudiating the doctrinal elaboration tending to found new theories or to indicate the insufficiency of Marxism as an explanation of the phenomena.

The same work, demolition of opportunism and deviationism as accomplished by Lenin (and defined in „What is to be done«) is still at the basis of our party activity thus following the example of militants of past periods of setback of the proletarian movement and of reinforcement of opportunist theories, that found in Marx, Engels, Lenin and in the Italian Left, violent and inflexible enemies.

7. Although small in number and having but few bounds with the proletarian masses, in fact jealously attached to its theoretical tasks, which are of prime importance, the Party, because of this true appreciation of its revolutionary duties in the present period, refuses to become a circle of thinkers or of those searching for new truths, of „renovators« considering as insufficient the past truth, and absolutely refuses to be considered as such.

No movement can triumph in the historical reality without theoretical continuity, which is the condensation of the experience of past struggles. Consequently, the Party denies anyone claiming to be Marxist the liberty to elaborate (or better to lucubrate) new schemes or explanations of the contemporary social world. No member of the Party, be he the most highly formed intellectually, has the liberty individually to make analyses, critics or perspectives: the Party defends the integrity of a theory which is not the product of a blind faith but the very science of the proletariat, edified with secular materials, not by thinkers but by history

itself reflected in the historical conscience of the revolutionary class and crystallised in the revolutionary party: facts have but confirmed the doctrine of revolutionary Marxism.

8. In spite of the small number of members which corresponds to the counter-revolutionary conditions, the Party continues its work of proselytism and of oral and written propaganda, it considers the writing and the distribution of its press as its principal activity in the actual phase, being one of the most effective means (in a situation where there are few and far between) to show the masses the political line they are to follow and diffuse systematically and more widely the principles of the revolutionary movement.
9. It is events, and not the desire or the decision of militants, which determine the depth of the Party's penetration amongst the masses; limiting it today to a small part of its activity, the Party loses no occasion to intervene in clashes and vicissitudes of the class struggle, well aware that there can be no restart so long as this intervention has not greatly developed and even, has not become the dominant form of Party action.
10. The acceleration of the process depends not only on deep social causes, that is to say historical crises, but also on the proselytism and propaganda of the party, even with the reduced means at its disposal. The party excludes the possibility of stimulating this process by devices and manoeuvres towards groups, leaders or parties which usurp the title of proletarian, socialist or communist. These manoeuvres, typical of the tactics of the Third International at a time when Lenin was obliged to retire from political life, had no other results than to break it up as a theory and as an organised force, each „tactical experiment« adding to the disintegration of the party. We therefore leave it to the Trotskyist movements and to the IVth International to be proud of and make use of such methods which they erroneously consider as communist ones.

There are no ready-made recipes to speed up the restart of the class struggle. No manoeuvres or expedients exist which will make the proletariat recognise the voice of the class. Such manoeuvres and expedients would not let the Party appear such as it really is but would represent a misrepresentation of its function to the detriment of the real starting up of the revolutionary movement which is based on the maturing of facts and a corresponding adjustment of the Party capable of doing this only because of its doctrinal and political inflexibility.

Insisting on Marxist determinism, the Italian Left has always denied that the party could keep up its influence on the masses by means of expedients, and has always denounced this false theory as a deviation of principles. Along the lines of past experiences, the Party therefore

withholds from making and accepting invitations, open letters or agitation slogans aiming to form committees, fronts or agreements with other political organisations whatever their nature.

11. The Party does not hide the fact that when things start moving again this will not only be felt by its own autonomous development, but by the starting up again of mass organisations. Although it could never be free of all enemy influence and has often acted as the vehicle of deep deviations; although it is not specifically a revolutionary instrument, the union cannot remain indifferent to the party who never gives up willingly to work there, which distinguishes it clearly from all other political groups who claim to be of the „opposition«. The Party acknowledges that today, its work in the unions can be done but sporadically; it does not renounce however to enter into the economic organisations, and even to gain leadership as soon as the numerical relationship between its members and sympathisers on the one hand, the union members or a given branch on the other is suitable, so long as the union in question does not exclude all possibility of autonomous class action.
12. The international current to which we belong cannot be characterised by its abstaining from voting, although the „abstentionist fraction« of the Italian socialist party played a preponderant part in the foundation of the Italian section of the IIIrd International, whose struggle and opposition to the Communist International on much more fundamental issues we vindicate.

The capitalist State taking on a constantly more evident form of class dictatorship which Marxism has denounced since the beginning, parliamentarism loses necessarily all importance. The elected organs and the parliament of the old bourgeois tradition are no more than survivals. They have no content any longer, only the democratic phraseology subsists and this cannot hide the fact that at the moment of social crises, the State dictatorship is the ultimate resource of capitalism, and that the proletarian revolutionary violence must be directed against this State. In these conditions the Party discards all interest in elections of all kinds and develops no activity in this direction.

13. The cult of the individual is a very dangerous aspect of opportunism; it is natural that leaders who have grown old, may go over to the enemy and become conformists, and there have been but few exceptions to the rule. Experience has shown that revolutionary generations succeed each other rapidly. That is why the Party accords maximum attention to the young people and makes the greatest possible effort to recruit young militants and to prepare them for political activity, without any personal ambition or personality cult. In the present historical moment, deeply counter-revolutionary, the forming of young leaders capable of upholding the continuity and revolutionary tradition over a long period is necessary.

Without the help of a new revolutionary generation the starting up of the movement is impossible.