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Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

### Contents:

Report of the French Commission—Comrade Trotzky.

Chairman Kolaroff. I declare the session open. Comrade Trotzky has the floor to report for the French Commission.

Trotzky. We have before us the most difficult and important question, that of our French Party.

The French Communist Party is passing through a very severe crisis. And strangely enough this crisis of the Party coincides with the crisis of the French bourgeoisie and its government. I say strangely, because as a general rule it is precisely the crisis in the bourgeois organism which creates a favourable situation for the development of the revolutionary party. The revolutionary parties usually thrive upon disruption of the bourgeois society.

I conclude from the coincidence of these two crises that the French Party has not yet achieved this autonomy of organisation and action, this absolute independence from capitalist society necessary to profit freely and largely by the crisis in this society. I will come back to this later in more detailed fashion.

What is the cause of this crisis, the existence of which no one denies? Some people mention the stagnation and even the decline of our membership. The circulation of our newspapers and publications, especially of the "Humanité" has diminished. Our organisations are

apathetic. These are the most striking and most evident and indisputable symptoms of this crisis.

There are others. Factional strife rules the Party. These factional conflicts, the sharp and often personal polemics are further exceptional symptoms however, have not all the same value for the development of our French Party.

The decline in our membership is not a great danger if it is only temporary and represents nothing more than the Party gathered into its rank in the first period, certain elements which do not belong to us by their mentality and their point of view, and that they are being eliminated to stabilise the unity and the determination of the Party. Even the diminished circulation of our press is not a great danger. It may be only a temporary feature caused by the change in the political situation.

It is a well recognised fact in the history of our parties that their line of development is not direct, that there is an inevitable ebb and flow, that during the flourishing period the Party must develop greater action among the masses while during the slump, it may become self-centered and exclusive in order to develop its organisation, to define its ideas and prepare for the future conflicts.

The most significant fact is this regime of factions and the factional strife. What

is the source of these factions? Who is responsible for this regime?

We may answer in the same way as has been done in the French Party press by an analysis of the situation. I will quote a comrade whom we all know well, Comrade Frossard, who in an article entitled "Will it never end?" in the "Humanité" of 16th of July, wrote "What Byzantines we are. What hair-splitting debaters! What miserable polemists! And how we must pity those real heroes who have to read us!"

This is taking rather a gloomy view. But those phrases present only an external description of the situation in the Party. Why are we Byzantines, hair splitters, miserable polemists? This is a question which demands an answer. Furthermore we ask who is responsible for the polemics, general and personal?

The comrades who belong to the same group as Frossard, point to the Left as responsible for these polemics, and for the regime of factions. But this factional regime is often denounced by comrades who themselves belong to the factions and consider this regime as a purely artificial manifestation, in no way based upon ideas and which does not serve to our political purposes. Allow me to read this passage from an article by Daniel Renoult, which appeared in the "Humanité" of September: "As my friend Duret has said, it is only in and through action that a serious and just classification may be made; no one ever answered these words".

On the one hand we see the bitter struggle of the factions, and on the other that the representatives of the two factions affirm that these groupings are purely artificial and that is only in some future action that we may establish the just classification of the tendencies within the Party. I do not think that this analysis is correct.

First of all one should ask how it is that those comrades who deny the ideological and political form of these factions belong themselves to one of the three more important factions of the Party. Secondly, we should ask ourselves if the argument that we should wait for some action to make a just classification of the tendencies has any worth. If they mean revolutionary action, that is the struggle

for the conquest of power by the working class, then we were wrong to break away from the dissidents who affirm that this split was dictated by an outside will and not by the internal needs of the Party.

But the whole life of the Party must be a connected chain of actions leading to the final one, the conquest of the power by the proletariat.

We agree that the present groupings are not final; we do not believe that it is necessary to discuss the correctness of this affirmation. I believe that there will always be a classification by tendencies and that when the final revolutionary action comes, the great majority of the members of every faction will find themselves united. But it is unjust to the French Party which is made up of various tendencies and does not exist outside of these tendencies to declare that this grouping is artificial. There must be an important reason for the existence of these conflicting factions.

The final grouping, some people say can take place only in action. But it was through action that the International has attempted for a year and a half to produce the regrouping in the French Party, and the International propose two ways to achieve this. It was the action in and through the Trade Unions and the United Front.

To conduct an action, one must have a clear idea of it, and be supported by the majority of the Party. Every time we proposed the regrouping of the Party in some action, there always arose immediate obstacles to this action. Some people would not agree to the methodical and organised action of the Party in the most important and largest organisations of France, nor the United Front.

It has become a platitude that one cannot develop any action except through the United Front, by some common action, in any country where one does not possess the confidence of the great majority of the working class, where the proletariat is still divided into various political and Trade Union factions, where the members of these factions organised in the Trade Unions and in the Party are only a very small part of the working class. If one rejects this form of action, which is not a piece of fiction, but a necessity, one

rejects the action itself. To complain after this of the classification into tendencies is simply absurd. You know comrades, that during the last year there has been a standing conflict between the International and the French Party, i. e. the majority represented by the centre and the Renault group.

We tried to make our French Party understand the necessity of the United Front; but, as Comrade Zinovjev said yesterday in the French Commission, we were opposed by the argument that the International, under the form of the United Front, was compelling the French Party to return to class collaboration, to Millerandism. These are the extremes to which the misunderstandings on this question led.

The French bourgeois press is now making use of this argument; it is our punishment for our sins. We are punished by having our enemy take over our false formulas make them more definite, and turn them to their own political advantage. The following appeared in the "Temps".

"It is not yet certain that this humiliating docility will suffice to appease the anger of Moscow; not every one can practice in letter and spirit the policy of the International which always varies according to the interests of the Soviet Government and the circumstances which the leaders of this government must face in order to conceal as far as possible the failure of pure Communism".

The bourgeoisie has not invented this formula. They have borrowed it from some member of a faction in our Party, they have condemned and used it against the whole Party.

A few days ago, Frossard, who also opposed the United Front, came to the reformists to propose an action in accordance with the principles of the United Front. In the answer of the dissidents, we find the terminology which we know so well, which we have read so many times in the press of our Party and which has become the instrument of our enemies.

But what is worse is that we waited a whole year and left the idea of the United Front to the dissidents themselves. The French Party is not the promoter of this formula among the proletariat;

the dissidents are already competing with us in this field. One need only read the articles on the re-establishment of Trade Union unity in the "Populaire".

We see then that the regime of factions is not artificial and accidental, created by outside will; it is the product of the action, — or absence of action — which is not accidental either in the French Party.

As for the policy of the French Party, you must acknowledge that the responsibility, unhappily, does not fall upon the Left Wing of the Party but upon the International itself. We were not able to execute our action because we did not clearly point out the grounds for it. We must remove every ideological obstacle to this action through polemics. This is why the International itself has taken the initiative in the polemics.

In studying the policy we have been following during the last two years towards the French Party, I looked up a speech I delivered in June 1921, at a meeting of the Enlarged Executive on the French question: a year and a half ago. I must acknowledge that I was struck by the fact that we were still marking time.

I will recall only the essential passages of this speech:

"We do not see in our press, in our speeches any signs of the severance between the Communist Party and the whole bourgeois society. It may happen that the workers will tell us: 'What are you doing there? Why do you not speak the Communist language? You are only vague shadows, hardly clearer than the Longuet shadows, and fundamentally the same'. I added: 'We must recognise and appreciate this further fact that the attitude of the Party towards the syndicalists is altogether false'.

I said further: "Friendly, but energetically we must tell the French Communist Party: 'We do not ask you to undertake any revolutionary action without knowing whether the situation is favourable or not. But what we do demand is that you break away, not only formally, but in your ideas, in your sentiments, in your whole policy from your old attitude and your old relations with the capitalist society and its institutions'."

Does it not seem as if those words had been spoken only recently, during the discussion on Freemasonry?

I will quote some more: "What we demand is that your revolutionary will should find expression in your Press, in Parliament, in the Trade Unions, and it should find its supreme expression ultimately upon the barricades of Paris".

This is the way we dealt with the question in the Executive. I was voicing only the viewpoint of the Executive which was unanimous on this question. This was a year and a half ago. We have fought against the conservative spirit which represents the past, for the revolutionary spirit which represents the future. One cannot say that we have been wholly successful. Some changes have taken place in the Party. The present crisis, however painful, is a death blow to the conservatism of the Party.

Of course, if the Party does not find the force necessary to overcome this crisis, it may cause a setback to the revolutionary development of the French proletariat. But we have no reason to be pessimistic about the possibilities before the French Party. I reiterate the crisis was a result of the factional fights within the Party on the one hand and of the struggle of International against conservatism, on the other. The seriousness of the crisis and its painful character, are due to the fact that conservatism within the party has remained very strong, too strong indeed.

In Tours, we have drawn into our ranks representatives of different views and ways of thinking which have not become Communistic. This is the cause of the factional strife which is nothing else than the struggle of the future against the past.

It has often been pointed out that many objective factors outside the Party prevented the more rapid evolution of this Party, such as the French traditions and the individualism of the French workers. But a Party which aims to become a Party of struggle must not place itself above the internal struggles confining itself to a mere historical record of causes hindering its advance.

I will borrow a very excellent argument from Comrade Vaillant-Couturier. He said: "You pretend that you have to deal with

workers permeated with individualism, which prevents the organisation of a revolutionary Party. But was this French individualism any obstacle to the capitalists during the war? Did it present an obstacle to the Social Patriots? No. By the power of the police and the army, and more especially, by the power of public opinion, they exercised great pressure upon the pretended individualism of the French worker and forced him into the trenches where he remained for four and a half years."

The bourgeoisie has been able to overcome this individualism for its own interests. Does this individualism become wholly invincible when we must overcome it in the interests of the proletariat itself?

This is an impossible argument. It may be true that there is an individualistic side in each worker, especially developed among the French worker on account of his history. But there is also a collective side to his nature. You must learn to appeal to it by showing him that we will lead him into an action which requires all the self-abnegation, all the courage of which he is capable, and you will see that he will be willing to sacrifice not only his material interests, but also his life when the struggle demands it.

But this must be done. When I hear a Communist say that we can do nothing because the workers are so individualistic, I answer that such an argument only arouses suspicion of the Party or of the group advancing it and proves their importance.

#### The trade union question.

We have spoken much on this Trade Union question during the Congress and we met the same obstacles, some echoes of which appeared in the minutes of the Paris Congress, on the part of the centre and the Rehoult group.

I will quote to you several statements of our Comrade Jacob who is a member of the trade union delegation. His Paris Congress speech is extremely characteristic and important, and I say it in all friendship, it is completely wrong and dangerously wrong.

Comrade Jacob is a member of the Party and at the same time a full fledged member of the trade union organi-

ation. This is how he defines the role of the Party in the working class movement:

"The Party must not impede the activity of the trade unions, and certain paragraphs of the Managing Committees' resolution cannot help impeding this activity. Manuilsky and Lepe have said that the Communist Party has not done its duty in the strike. We say however that the Party had nothing to do with it..."

This is a very dangerous state of mind. It might be said that this statement was a mere temperamental exaggeration. Perhaps! However it is very characteristic of the mentality of our Party. Those are Party members, not friendly trade unionists like Monmousseau and Monatte, and these members say to the Party: "You have nothing to do with such an event as the Havre strike".

You know that those who intervened in the Havre strike were: Mayer, a bourgeois radical, the deputy Siegfrid, since deceased; and also M. Poincare's guns. Such are politics. There was only one Party which did not intervene in this strike as a party. The Party did of course a great deal for the strikers; it collected large sums for the support of the strikers, and many articles were written. However, the Party did nothing in Havre to advise the strikers and make clear to the workers its political attitude or let them know that the Party was there to look after their interests and to do their bidding without in the least interfering with the action of the trade union.

I was told by comrades who are here that there were some local trade unionists who said to the Party: do not come here, as your presence will compromise us with the government which will say that we are carrying on a communist strike, which is probably dictated by Moscow.

Thereupon, the Party took its leave. I am fully aware that there are conditions under which the Party must make concessions even to the most backward mentality of the masses or of their local representatives during a strike. But in that case, one would have stated in the "Humanite": we offered our services to the strike leaders in Havre, to which they replied: we have relations with

Mayer and Siegfrid: do not compromise us in their eyes! Well, in that case we will retire, but we warn you that you have to do with bourgeois politicians who will betray you. There is only one Party which will be with you at the time of the great struggle, and that is the Communist Party.

If you had spoken thus from the very first day of the Havre strike or during its development, after the tragic events and the massacres of August 28, your authority would have been enhanced, as you had foreseen the development of events.

However, our Party did not take up this attitude. We gave in to the trade unions. Comrade Frossard declared that we could do nothing on this field, and another communist who is working within the trade unions, comes along and says that the Party has nothing to do there.

This is a very sad and dangerous state of affairs, for from such an attitude is only one step to adopting the mentality of our Comrade Ernest Lafont who, in his speech delivered at the Paris Congress, got his inspiration from "Lagardallism". You know what "Lagardallism" is. It is not syndicalism, but a mixture of some scraps of syndicalist ideology and political trickery. And there is Ernest Lafont: the trade unions are a secondary matter, and I was made for this secondary matter.

Lagardalle is a great philosopher, and he is not an official of capitalist organisations. And our Party continues in this opportunist reformist and non-revolutionary attitude basing itself on this philosophy according to which the revolution must be made outside the Party, and Ernest Lafont hits upon a very happy formula and says: "what have we, lawyers to do with trade union affairs!"

And Comrade Jacob, who is neither a lawyer nor a lagardellist but a good communist and trade union worker says: "Yes, the Party has nothing to do with it."

Such a coincidence is extremely dangerous.

This danger also lurks in the declaration signed by my friend Monatte, and by Comrades Lonzon, Chambellan and others.

One can understand Monatte, who is not a member of the Party, when he says: "We are revolutionary trade unionists,

which means we consider that the trade unions will play the chief part in the revolutionary struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

This declaration is of recent origin, and appeared after the Paris Congress in the "Lutte de classe," edited by Comrade Rosmer, with an editorial comment.

I can understand such statements on the part of Monatte who is not in the Party but I fail to understand Lonzon, Chambellan or Clavel, Yvonne or Ortanges who belong to the Party and are at the same time members of the Executive Committee of the C. G. T. U.

What is the meaning of this: "we attribute an essential role to the trade unions in the revolutionary struggle for emancipation"? Which trade union? We know various trade unions in France. Is it a question of the Jeuhaux trade union? Evidently not. Then perhaps of the trade union of our Comrade Monmousseau? Perhaps. But are you not aiming at the unification at the fusion of these two trade unions. Monmousseau is at present general secretary of the C. G. T. U. However, we had yesterday an administrative committee of this C. G. T. U. which was entirely in the hands of the authors of the Besnard, Verdier, etc. pact.

Are we to believe that under their leadership the proletariat can move towards revolution? Do you seriously believe that the trade unions are destined to be the leaders of the working class? Do you believe that the trade union under the leadership of reformist, confusionists and communists who do not want to submit to the discipline and the doctrines of their party, is the foremost working class organisations in the world, or is it a trade union inspired by the communist ideas which we represent? You are making use of a trade union formula after you have stripped it of its revolutionary and ideological meaning, and you say: the trade union is the foremost and most important thing in the world!

This would be so, if it were a question of a trade union led by the best elements of the working class, well organised, class conscious and getting their inspiration from the doctrine which represents the interests of the revolutionary struggle. But such a union does

not exist, and certainly not in France. It must be brought into being. By what means? By collaboration between comrades who do not belong to the Party and those who are of it, and by organising the élite of the working class, imparting to it communist ideas, and through it permeating all the working class organisations with these ideas.

You allow non-party workers who are not revolutionary and who are full of the most backward prejudices to enter the trade unions, such as, for instance, the Catholic workers. You are obliged to do it because the trade unions would have no value and would only be a replica of the Party if it had in its midst only such elements as communists and trade unionists who are kept out of the Party by some minor prejudices.

However, this would not be worse, because the Party is, or at least should be, more homogeneous than the trade unions, which contain communists who do not submit to the discipline of their Party and trade unionists who have no party and are afraid of the Party, although they stand in need of analysing their ideas and their methods and do not have a political party to do it.

If the trade unions were nothing else, they would be one of the worst editions of a political party.

The importance of the trade unions consists in its majority, comprising elements which are not yet under the influence of the Party, but it is self-evident that there various strata in the trade unions: the thoroughly class conscious strata and the conscious strata which are still afflicted with prejudices and which are endeavouring to form the revolutionary conscience.

This being so, who is to be the leader?

We must not forget the rôle of the Pact. It must be a warning for every French worker, even the most backward and simple. This Pact can only be explained by the failure of the Party on the trade union field, where some anarchist elements and elements which are coqueting with Anarchism have made a secret 'pact' in order to assume the leadership of the movement. The trade unions have brought into being an élite which needs some one to give a directive to their ideas. These ideas are not sponta-

neous, they do not fall from the blue sky. These ideas must be given continuity, they must be verified by experience, analysed and criticised, and this work must be done within the Party.

The greatest objection which is made to-day, is the subordination of the trade unions to the Party.

Yes, we do want to subordinate the working class conscience to the revolutionary ideas. We aspire to that. It is really stupid to say that we can act by pressure from outside, pressure which would not be based on the free will of the workers themselves, or that the Party can bring pressure to bear on the trade unions which are, or at least must be numerically much stronger than the Party. It is the reactionaries of all countries which always said that the Party and the trade unions want to subject the working class to their will.

Let us take the most reactionary and perfidious press in France, in Germany, in America, in fact everywhere, and we will find in it always the same statements. It is the working class organisations which, against the desire of the working class get hold of its actions, impose on it their will and which end, by their manoeuvres, in subjecting the working class to the trade unions.

And what is your answer to this? You say: No, we offer our services to the working class and we gain the confidence of the trade unions. The more advanced section of the working class joins the trade unions and the wide mass supports the trade unions in the struggle, and subsequently enters the trade unions.

Is it not the same with the Party? We want to gain the confidence of the workers organised in the trade unions. Is it not our right, nay our duty to come forward in every action, and especially in difficult actions as the most courageous militant elements, in order to encourage the workers and to occupy the most difficult posts which entail the greatest risks, in order to show that the communists are always and everywhere the most faithful elements of the revolutionary struggle? Is not this our duty and our right?

Read on this subject, Comrade Soutif's article in the last number, or last but one

of the "Communist Bulletin", which appeared after the Paris Congress. There is a certain fashion in France to criticize the International, one bows down before the International, and at the same time one deals a blow at the Left, especially in questions on which the Left represents faithfully the ideal of the International. In this article, Soutif says: "this resolution (this was Rosmer's resolution which I find excellent) says that the Communist Party claims to be the best interpreter of the aspirations of the working class, and the most capable organ for assuring its liberation. The majority of the Managing Committee of course, rejected this motion.

Evidently, the Managing Committee of a party which pretends to be the guardian of working class interests, must reject such an assertion. And this was stated in the organ of our Party by a member of the Managing Committee who denounced the left for having committed the crime of assuming that our Party can look after the interests of the working class better than any other Party.

This is beyond any understanding. How can we expect to gain the confidence of the working class, if we allow ourselves to be denounced in this fashion in our own organ and by members of our Managing Committee? Can such a state of affairs be tolerated for weeks? A live party which wants to gain the confidence of the working class, ought to immediately teach the A.B.C. of Communism to the author of this article.

This is not the only article, but one of a long series of articles which we denounced in letters, pourparlers and in telegrams.

And the consequences were—the Havre strike and the general protest strike towards the end of the Havre strike, after the massacres of August 28.

You are acquainted with all these events. The Havre strike lasted 110 days and finished with a massacre. They killed four working men; and a number were wounded. Now I am going to show you some documents which will be preserved in the history of the French working class movement. They are clippings from "l'Humanité". It is the appeal of the C. G. T. U. and the Federation of Trade

Unions of the Seine. This appeal was published in "l'Humanité" on Monday. The Havre murders are announced to the working class; and the general 24 hours strike is called for Tuesday, the next day. Added to this is the statement that "the building workers have decided to strike to-day while waiting" for the general strike\*. This means Monday already!

The Party had nothing to do with the Havre strike, as our comrade Jacob has said. It was an economic question; they economically killed four workers and wounded several — so it was purely a Trade-Union question. So, of course, there are industrial organisations which take care of this sort of thing. It is the building workers for example, "while waiting" which means sabotaging real action by jumping into a strike which they call a general strike.

What did the C.G.T.U. do? It bowed to the Building workers. Why? Because it did not want to give up its place to the anarchists who claimed to be more revolutionary than the others, and who would say "we called the general strike and the syndicalists and semi-communists of the C.G.T.U. have sabotaged our great movement" — which was not really a movement but just a slogan for the movement.

They helped to commit this error; and what did the Party do? The Party gave way to the C.G.T.U. It was a perfect chain of errors. Who commenced the whole affair. It was some young anarchists — who were perhaps not so much to blame! — who went to the headquarters of their organisation and said: "We have got to do something". They found a comrade who answered: "Yes, of course we must do something; let's call a general strike".

And the C.G.T.U. obeyed; and the Party obeyed. The Party which had little to do with the Havre strike, which remained like a superfluous organism outside of this conflict between the Havre workers and capitalist society. And when the Party did intervene it humbled itself before the C.G.T.U.

And the result was a debacle—a complete fiasco. Why? Because it was predetermined, predestined, and the articles which I am about to read to you claimed to organise the whole working class of

France between Monday and Tuesday for a general Strike. Was this possible?

Even in a country where we are in control of the telegraphic system and the radio system, as here in Russia where the Party is strong, where the Unions work in full agreement with the Party, and where there are neither parties nor unions opposed to ours, such a thing would be impossible. For instance, when we wanted to organise a demonstration in honour of the Fourth World Congress, we had to explain to the workers what the Fourth Congress was. Among the soldiers who passed you on the 7th November there was a certain enthusiasm which you have perhaps noticed. What caused this? There were among them young peasants who do not know geography very well and who are ignorant of what was going on in France, of what was going on outside Russia. So we had to explain to them what the Fourth World Congress was. And what were we asking them to do after all? Just to pass before the foreign delegates and extend them their fraternal salute.

But you, who demanded that the French working class proceed to the General Strike, it was your business to explain to the working class what was going on at Havre, and not just to use the simple formula "a government of murderers.."

In France they manufacture such formulas better than in any other country. But this was not enough; it was necessary to explain to every working man and women, to the agricultural workers and peasants, what had been going on at Havre: That they had killed four working men now, after having killed a million and a half of them during the war. They should have been shown photographs of the dead, if possible; they should have been shown the portraits of the children of these murdered workers. You should have immediately sent out, comrades who understand these questions and the life of the working class, and who have met the families of the dead workers and shared their grief so that they might later recount this horror to the working class.

It was necessary to mobilise immediately, in Paris and all over the country, a thousand of your best communists and revolutionary trade unionists—hand in

hand with the C.G.T.U.—and send them all over the country; not just in every corner of Paris, but all over the country, in the towns, and the agricultural districts. Thus an intensive propaganda could be made. At the same time there should have been published an edition of three of four million pamphlets, appeals which would inform the working class of what was going on, and calling on them to protest.

But should one immediately plunge into a 24 hours general strike? No! The whole working class must be set in motion by an intensive propaganda which can only be carried out by diligence and application. The first condition is that the whole matter be explained to the working class.

Why did they not do this? They were afraid that the indignation of the working class would not last for three or four days. This showed an absolute lack of faith, the typical lack of confidence of the bureaucracy of our revolutionary unions and of our communists in their attitude towards the working class. (Applause).

As I said, the story had to be told to the working class; the facts should have been given to them. The miners of the Pas de Calais had already started work, had descended the pits and only learned afterwards that a strike was declared. Naturally the movement was completely paralysed and compromised beforehand. And I doubt whether there could have been any other result.

And then we had to save—naturally, not for always—the dissidents, the reformists, the Jouhauxists. Why? It is quite simple, comrades: the bourgeoisie in killing four workmen put its friends, the dissidents and reformists, in an extremely difficult situation. With reforms, with conceptions of a national bloc, with the participation of Jouhaux in bourgeois gatherings which sought to better the lot of the workers—you can still dupe the workers. That is why the Havre massacre was almost a mortal blow for our enemies.

What should have been done? In every edition of "l'Humanité" for a fortnight all possible propaganda and agitation should have been used, demanding of the reformist C.G.T. and of the dissidents, "What do you propose to do now? This

is not a matter of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. We are not proposing that to you now, although, of course, we are its faithful partisans. But what are you to do against the bourgeoisie which has just killed four working men? What do you propose to do against the Government, against Poincaré?"

This is a question which should have been repeated every day and repeated by the agitators of the Party in the trade unions, at every street corner, in every part of France, in every village where there was a working man or woman; and this should have been continued for one or two weeks. This would have been a great event in the French movement. But instead of doing this, they compromised the whole situation. They launched this mad appeal for a general strike. One does not announce on Monday that a general strike will take place on Tuesday, as naturally the Dissidents and Reformists would find a pretext for evading the issue and saying: "We shall not participate in such a risky enterprise."

And, as the general strike was compromised in advance, they decided to give one day's wage for the relief of the murdered man's dependents. And even this they hardly did. But every one seems to have forgotten the crime of their passivity because the attention of the workers was concentrated on the general strike which was so dangerously compromised.

And then, the "Temps" wrote: "The checking of the general strike constitutes an encouraging sign for the future."

And the "Temps" was quite right. And "l'Humanité" said "The bourgeoisie will profit by this unheard of passivity of the working class."

It was indeed a formidable check; but on the morrow they stated that it was a great success in spite of this. And this position was indefensible they went on to say: "The bourgeoisie will profit by this unheard of passivity of the working class." They always throw the responsibility on the shoulders of the working class. When the C.G.T.U. or the party meet with a defeat they always impute the blame to the working class. This is a custom which the working class should not tolerate. The workers should invite their leaders to analyse their mistakes, in order to learn something from their

experience of the struggle. It is really time for this, comrades.

We have had in France a very great event, of which the proposed protest strike was only a poor imitation. This was the action of the 1st of May 1920. At that time the Party was not yet a Communist Party. The split had not yet taken place in the unions. But the forces were the same on the political as well as the industrial field. The Left elements did not prepare for this movement. And those of the Right did all they could to compromise and crush it by their treachery. They succeeded. You know how much importance the 1st May 1920 has in the history of post-war France.

At one stroke the revolutionary spirit of the working class was lowered and the stability of the bourgeois regime was augmented. A great change was produced as a result of the loss of this general strike.

Now two years and three months have passed since this very obvious lesson, and they seek to repeat this error in the form of a great protest against the Havre massacre. Naturally, only the disillusionment and the lethargy of the working class could result from this; and it has inevitably helped to conserve reformism and Jouhaux' brand of syndicalism.

Why? Because the party did not know what advice to give; because it did not intervene by analysing the situation, as it should have done, and inviting our comrade Monmousseau — who does not belong to the Party and who does not wish for an organic relationship between the two forces—to decide what we should do together. They should have told him: "You propose a general strike for tomorrow, but this is quite impossible. You will only compromise it and create an unfavourable situation in the class struggle."

I am quite sure that our friend Monmousseau would have replied: "I am quite willing to consult with you, but my organisation is autonomous and will take those decisions which appear to it advisable."

But it is not really necessary to sit together round that table and exchange advice and analyse the situation.

The C. G. T. U. also simply bowed to the decision of the Building Workers.

After the 1st of May 1920, we lost more than two months, and time is precious in the class struggle. The Bourgeoisie does not lose any time. But in this case, we have lost two years at least and there are comrades who actually claim that we have gained time.

During the Paris Congress our comrade Frossard characterised the relations of our Party to the International by using the following formula: "We must gain time."

The General Secretary of the Party, who was already secretary at the time of the Congress of Tours—and consequently the most qualified person to represent a party—expressed himself thus according to a report appearing in "L'Humanité" entitled "The Crisis": — "What are the causes of this crisis? For two years I have been divided between my loyalty to the International and the Interests of my Party. There is in me a permanent conflict, a crisis of duty. If I assume different attitudes, it is because I am not sure of myself." (Loud and continued Applause).

This is just the way that they applauded when the comrade most qualified to represent the Party said: "I am torn between my loyalty to the International and my loyalty to the Party. These are two loyalties which do not coincide, which are contradictory. And if you maintain that I am vacillating, that I assume two different attitudes, it is because I am torn between these two permanent antagonisms." And after he said that there was prolonged applause, according to the report in "L'Humanité".

And then this comrade said:

"I say that, in the face of certain inapplicable decisions of the International, I have wished to gain time. I have preferred to do this rather than break up my Party."

Therefore, of course, there was a certain incompatibility between the International and the French Communist Party. The General Secretary of the Party, found himself, in a condition of permanent conflict and he concentrated on gaining time in order to save his party from destruction. This is serious enough. Each time that I read this clipping I have the same shock, because it is so unexpected.

What is this—they belong to the International for two years now, and then say that a resolution of the International will destroy the Party. Well then why do they belong to the International? We do not understand why. We cannot understand why.

When I received the number of "L'Humanité" containing this article and I read it for the first time, I said to myself, "This is a preparation for the rupture with the International."

We know comrade Frossard sufficiently well. He is not the sort of man to allow himself to be carried away by his temperament: He is a man of coolness and calculation, and if he says — not merely in passing, but even in the Congress of his party, and speaking as the General Secretary—that during two years he has done nothing but "gain time" because the International has passed resolutions damaging to his Party, I ask whether one can understand this in any other way than that he is preparing for a rupture with the International? (Applause).

The case becomes more serious yet, if one considers the fact which preceded his address. In the motion known as the Frossard-Souverine motion, signed by Frossard and presented to the Party Congress, we read:

"We must recognise in the light of experience, that the survivals of the social democratic spirit of the old party, and failure to recognise the value of the resolutions of the Communist International, have stood in the way of the growth and perfection of the Young Communist Party."

It was not until the eve of the Congress that they declared that what had most damaged the French Party was the failure to appreciate the value of the resolutions of the International.

It was a question of the value of the resolutions of a United Front and the Trade Union work. Frossard signed them, and the ink of the signature was not yet dry when he declared that the resolutions of the International might break the back of the Party.

If anyone understands this attitude, let them explain it. We have awaited this explanation from the eloquent lips of Comrade Frossard. We invited him to Moscow; we repeated our invitation by

letter and telegram and even in resolutions of the Executive. Unluckily we were not successful. We would be very happy to have an explanation of this attitude which seems to us neither very consistent, nor very clear.

To give you an idea however brief of the relations of the International to the French Party (and more especially its Executive Committee and its General Secretariat) to show you how the Executive nearly destroyed the French Party, allow me to enumerate to you—it will be of little interest and very dry—the letters, the telegrams, and resolutions which we have sent. It is a catalogue in itself. I am not speaking of private letters; in full agreement and with the consent of the Executive, I have distributed among the members of the large commission copies of the letters which I have sent in my own name to the French comrades.

I will only enumerate the official documents. In June 1921, the Enlarged Executive met at which I delivered the speech from which I have already quoted you some passages.

In July 1921, after the Third World Congress, the Executive passed three resolutions on the control of the press, the work in the Trade Unions, and the dissolution of the Third International Committee. Let us take up these resolutions. Was it the resolution on the control of the press which menaced the Party because Fabre and Brison were using their authority as members of the Party for their personal ends and were compromising the Party? Was it not time to put a stop to this policy of certain members holding important positions collaborating with the bourgeois press which poisons the mind of the people?

Here are two resolutions which did not menace the French Party, but only a few, arriviste, journalists in the French Party. These resolutions were not applied.

I have told you something already about our debate on the questions of work in the Trade Unions.

Of the three resolutions, only one was carried out; that on the dissolution of the Committee of the Third International.

If we have made mistakes, and we have made many, I believe that our primary error was our too great confidence

## BULLETIN OF THE IV CONGRESS

in the good faith of the comrades who led the French Party during that period.

On July 26th 1921, we sent a confidential letter of the Executive to the Central Committee containing friendly criticism and suggestions on the parliamentary activity of the Party, the relations of the International, the parliamentary reports in the "Humanité" (Comrade Marthe Bigot's declarations to the Commission confirmed the correctness of our criticism); on the relations to the syndicalists the work in the Trade Unions, and the reorganisation of the Central Committee.

This was the first time we proposed in written form, the creation of this terrible oligarchy known as the Political Bureau of the Central Committee. Our letter furthermore contained criticism on the structure of the Party, the failings of the "Humanité" and the control of the press.

On the 1st of October 1921, we sent a telegram to the Party inviting Frossard and Cachin to come to Moscow.

On the 15th of December 1921; Open Letter of the Executive to the Marseilles Congress containing criticism of and suggestions on the weakness of the leadership of the Party, its discipline, its Trade Union policy, the control of the press, the Right Wing, and the "Journal du Peuple".

This was not the beginning: the beginning had been made in the conversations with the delegates on the Third Congress. Then followed the resolution on the control of the press in July 1921, when the Fabre question came up for the first time. We tackled this question a third time on December 15th. 1921. Of course, we "exaggerated" the importance of Fabre, but all those we expelled are now grouping themselves around the "Journal du Peuple"; the abcess is forming, but this time outside of the Party with the help of the now famous race for suburban mayors.

Suggestions on the penetrations of the Party in the factories the introduction of workingmen in the leading bodies of the Party, the indifference of the Party towards the International.

December 19th. 1921,—confidential letter to the Central Committee containing criticism and suggestions on the tolerance

shown towards the "Journal du Peuple". For the third time the decisions of the Executive were not carried out; Brison continued to be tolerated, the relations of the Party with the International, the Presidium and the Political Bureau of the Party were not changed. If you ask me why I do not mention the answers it is because none were sent.

January 9th. 1922,—resolution on the resignations Marseilles; telegram calling the representatives of the Party to Moscow.

This commences a new series.

January 13th. 1922: Telegram repeating the invitation to the French delegates in connection with the crisis.

January 23, 1922: Telegram calling Frossard and Cachin to Moscow and announcing the inclusion of the French question in the Agenda of the Enlarged Executive of February.

January 24, 1922: Telegram demanding the presence of Frossard and Cachin, and emphasising the unfavourable impression created by their absence.

January 27, 1922: Telegram again demanding the presence of Frossard "whose absence would create a very bad impression upon the Executive", and announcing that the meeting of the Enlarged Executive would be postponed for a few days to enable Frossard to be present at the opening.

During those few days, when we were preparing to bring the French question before the International and the affiliated parties, we questioned each other daily by telephone:

"Well Zinoviev, do you believe he is coming?"

"How do I know?"

"Well, Trotzky, do you believe he is coming?"

"I do not know anything about it."

We wait, we send telegrams. If we could have gone to Paris at once to consult with our friends there, each one of us would have desired to be the first to take the train (Applause).

We had to discuss, analyse, and solve the difficult problems of the French Party. We sought to invite its most representative leaders to discuss the problems with us. We sent five telegrams to the leaders of the French Party to induce them to come to Moscow.

During the same period, we had the interview between Radek and Cachin in Berlin to induce him to come to Moscow.

February 1922: meeting of the Enlarged Executive. Resolution on the French crisis. Criticism of opportunism of the Left Bloc, of petty bourgeois pacifism of apathy towards the Trade Unions, of the defects of the Party leadership and of federalism. The Centrist Delegation agrees to expel

Fabre.

This is the fourth time that the question of the re-admission of those who resigned in Marseilles, and of the application of the Trade Union theses of Mar-

seilles is brought up.

April 1922; National Council of the

French Party.

May 9, 1922: Expulsion of Fabre by

the Executive (the question had come up

four times; the Executive finally applied

Articles 9 of the Statutes).

May 12, 1922: Confidential letter to the

Central Committee with criticism and

suggestion on the following questions:

Lack of Party Policy;

Growing influence of the Right

Wing Passivity in the Fabre affair

(for the sixth time);

The silence of the "Humanité" on

burning questions;

Passivity towards the Anarchists

and the Syndicalists;

Hostility to the United Front, campaign of the "Humanité" and the "International" sabotaging the action of the Comintern;

Undisciplined action of the Party with respect to the decisions of the Comintern;

Unwillingness to apply resolutions adopted by the various French delegations in Moscow;

Recalling the various previous attempts at conciliation of the International;

Invitation to clarify the relations between the French Party and the International.

At the same time, telegram to Frossard demanding his presence at the meeting of the Enlarged Executive in June.

June 1922, Meeting of the Enlarged Executive Resolutions on:

The structure of the Party;  
Its International discipline;

The Seine Federation;  
The trade Union question;

The United Front;

The Left Bloc;

The Party Press;

The factions in the Party;

The guilt of Daniel Renoult;

The Fabre affair (for the seventh

time);

The Congress of the Party;

The necessity for a stronger

Central Committee.

July 1922; Three telegrams demanding the expulsion of Verfeuil, Mayoux and Lafont from the Party.

July 1922; Letter to the Seine Federa-

tion on:

Federalism and Centralism;

Article 9 of the International Sta-

tutes;

The Fabra Affair (for the eighth

time);

Discipline.

September 1922; Message to the Second Congress of the French Communist Party dealing with the questions enumerated in the preceding letters.

October 1922 (6th); Supplementary mes-

age to the Congress of Paris concerning:

The new vote on the 21 conditions;

The expulsion of Verfeuil.

November 1922; Several telegrams in-viting Frossard and Cachin to attend the Fourth Congress.

All theses letters, telegrams, proposi-tions and suggestions sent by us during a year and a half, as a rule were not replied to. This is the time comrade Frossard claims to have gained. We claim that this time will be inscribed in the history of the French Party as a total loss, on account of the passivity and the political inertia of the responsible leaders of the Party during that period.

Let anyone tell me which among these suggestions could be detrimental or dan-gerous to the Party. Why was it necessary to gain so much time in the expulsion of Fabre which was such a simple and indispensable act, and in its solution of the problems of the management of the press, of the political bureau and especially of the activity in the Trade Unions and the United Front?

No one claims that the members of the International are infallible; but let anyone show that the International has made

any mistakes in these suggestions, propositions and resolutions. And let anyone prove that the French Party has profited by the neglect of the suggestions of the International. Let anyone prove to us that anything has been won by this refusal to act on the motions of the International.

When the general secretary of the Party declares that he has gained time against the International which menaced to destroy the French Party, it is evident that the permanent propagandists must say the same thing in even simpler fashion. For instance, comrade Auclair declared to the Youth that the decisions of the International were based upon a trickery—this is his own expression.

When we ask Frossard whether he had delegated Auclair as propagandist he answered that this was only a temporary measure, - which is true.

But after the Congress of Paris we still see the same comrade in the same office, and when we object to our French comrades of the Centre they reply that we are exaggerating. We exaggerated in the case of Fabre, we exaggerated with Auclair, we exaggerated with our propositions for the United Front and the activity in the trade unions, we exaggerated in the matter of the management of the Press—we always exaggerate.

But it is natural that we should oppose such anti-communist manifestations as the actions of Fabre and Auclair, or the collaboration with the bourgeois Press. Each of these facts has its roots in the traditions of the Party. It is false to represent them as unimportant: they are symptoms which show clearly the character of a comrade. What more certain symptom do you want that a man is not a communist? When Frossard declares that the resolution of the International threatened to destroy the French Party, and when Auclair adds to this that those resolutions are based on trickery, what can be the opinion of the less enlightened members of the Party?

We have precise testimonials brought to us by our Comrade Louis Sellier—who must not confound with Henri Sellier who was expelled from the Party. Louis Sellier was for a time representative of the French Party in Moscow. When he returned to France he was offered the post

of Second General Secretary, which proves that this comrade is highly thought of in the French Party. We made his acquaintance in Moscow and we share this good opinion of him.

In "l'Humanité" of August the 27th, 1922, under the title, "Let us Liquidate Certain Absurd Legends," he wrote:

"There are certain comrades among us who are certainly very clever. They begin by affirming, with their hand on their heart, that they were and remain completely devoted to the Russian revolution. But..." and now begins a series of menacing, solemn and absurd "but's" and "ifs"..."But if Moscow desires to reduce the Party to the condition of a small mercenary and servile sect, if it wishes to rob the Party of the smallest traces of independence, if Moscow wishes to establish a permanent guillotine within the Party..." He says further:

"We would fail in our elementary duty if we did not shout to our comrades of the majority, of the Centre that they are being led astray by all those assinine statements about Moscow some of the most insidious of which we have reprinted above. Moscow does not want the Third International to fail as the Second failed".

It is Louis Sellier who wrote this. We must shout to the comrades of the Centre that Moscow does not desire to create a small mercenary and servile sect. It is a member of the Centre who says this. Louis Sellier reports this declaration: "If Moscow wishes to rob the Party of all traces of independence... etc.," We have heard similar words in the large French Commission; the dignity of the French Party would be menaced by certain interventions of the International. These are sentiments, a mentality which is wholly foreign to us and which we do not understand.

Last February a Commission met here on the Russian question. This Commission was presided over I believe, by Comrade Marcel Cachin. It was a question of some minor disorder within our Russian Party. Unhappily, this commission did not meet in Paris because we cannot hold our Congress in Paris. One day perhaps we shall be able to do so. It was held in Moscow. This Commission was composed of foreign comrades who

had to decide on a most painful question for our Party, the workers' opposition. Zinoviev, myself and several other comrades were censured by the Commission, we gave our advice. We felt encouraged by the fact that an International institution, a supreme power existed, and none of us felt humiliated by the authority of the Party. On the contrary, one was indeed happy to be able to solve an important question with the aid of the Communist International.

The intervention of this Commission had an excellent result for our Party, as the Workers' Opposition ceased as the result of it.

Well, what is the dignity of a Party. The interest of the Party is the supreme law before which all of us must bow. This is the dignity of the Party and of each member of the Party. (Applause).

I have insisted on this point because at the Paris Congress this bogey of the dignity of the Party was brought forward. You all know the situation created by the Paris Congress. Some months before the Congress we had proposed the formation of a bloc of the two strongest fractions. The Centre and the Left, against the Right; and with a certain attitude—shall I say a waiting attitude—towards the Renault-Donical group.

What was the idea of this plan? It was quite simple. The struggle of these various groups had been predicted by the Executive. Comrade Louis Sellier told us over and over again that if the Conservatism of the Centre persisted, the formation of factions was inevitable, as a necessary and healthy reaction within the Party to prevent it sinking in a slough of apathy.

At the same time that this inevitable process was going on, we had to render it possible for the Party to participate in outside work. The Renould Duret faction at that time was putting up a most energetic opposition against the United Front. There was then no possibility of collaborating with this faction, though the Executive was aware that it contained some excellent working class elements who were firmly opposed to parliamentarianism and collaboration with the Dissidents and reformists—that is to say, they were workers animated by a real revolutionary spirit but were

badly informed. Towards this tendency we assumed a waiting but critical attitude.

At the same time we never neglected the fact that, despite this or that error of the Left, it was the Left which represented the forward movement of the Party in opposition to conservatism and passivity.

On the other hand, we never neglected the Centre, despite their errors which threatened the very foundations of the Party. This faction included a number of excellent working class elements who could be grouped on a basis of revolutionary action. We therefore proposed a bloc between the two large groups, the Centre and the Left, in order to facilitate the task of the Paris Congress which was precisely to define the ideas of the Party and to create Central organs in order to direct it. The factional struggle brought the Party to an impasse. They had to propose a combination which could by no means be perfect, but which provided a more or less convenient solution for the coming year.

This bloc was to proceed against the Right, on the grounds of certain resolutions inspired by the communist spirit and drawn up by the Left. The negotiations with regard to this bloc began in Moscow, with Comrade Louis Sellier, Comrade Louis Leclercq, and Frossard, representative of the Centre.

We always insisted that this bloc should be founded on a revolutionary basis. It should be energetically directed against the Right in order to solve this problem finally and definitely. Thus we had the possibility of vigorous action and the Party would have been able to present itself before the Fourth Congress as a Party much more disciplined and capable of leading to action.

This was said and repeated a thousand times; if the Centre opposes us, if it lets itself be led by reactionary elements, by lethargy and "gaining time" we think it will decay, and its decay will provoke the most serious crisis for the whole Party.

Now I do not wish to speak here of the negotiations which took place in Paris for the constitution of central organs for the Party. The various factions dashed themselves against obstacles without being

able to surmount them. When there are disputes among two factions, questions of organisation are always very painful. Both sides made excessive demands. This is inevitable and always occurs. But the rupture came about through some proposals which were quite plain, not through the exaggerated demands of the Left, as has been said but on the proposal for parity presented by the representatives of the Executive.

The Centre preferred to break off negotiations and postponed the question of parity until the National Congress. And it was there on 17th October that comrade Ker made his great speech on this subject. He stated his case in the following way: "We want to know if the French Party is not free to choose the man who is to direct it". This is taken from the report in "L'Humanité" of the 18th October.

At the time when the negotiations had just been broken off on the initiative of the Centre, they said to the provincial delegates, who were not yet acquainted with the proposals of the International: "We want to know whether the French Party is not free to choose the man who shall direct it".

What does this mean. It was the Centre which carried on negotiations with the Left for the purpose of deciding the composition of the central organs; it was the Centre which stated that these negotiations could not succeed; it was the Centre which found that the intervention of the International Executive was needless and dangerous; and instead of saying: "We are not in agreement with the other faction on the personnel of the central organs", they started all kinds of rumours about the negotiations, to the effect that "We want to know whether the French Party is not free to choose the man who shall direct it". Now this was denouncing the Left on the one hand and the representatives of the International on the other, on the grounds that they wanted to deprive the French Party of its right to enjoy autonomy as a Party. This most unjust accusation is very dangerous from the point of view of the prevalence of nationalist and anti-internationalist aspirations.

This idea is repeated in the appeal signed by the New Executive Committee composed of members of the Centre. The

day after the Paris Congress they said: "The Fourth World Congress will examine the situation of the Party... It now finds itself engaged in a struggle which centres around the point as to whether this Congress be deprived of its right to choose those men in whom it has confidence and who are charged with the duty of representing it in the directing organs of the Party".

Comrades, if it were necessary to provide every national section with explicit instructions for such action, to advise on the organisation of a Party, to supervise the tendencies of a Party, each part would be able to ask if it were free to look after itself, or if it were not menaced by the deprivation of its rights.

"In what does the right of a Party to govern itself consist? In the present case it consisted in that the two factions, then reunited, and which formed the overwhelming majority of the Party, should have got together to draw up a joint list of candidates, agree upon the composition of the Central organs of the Party, and present this list to that Party Congress telling them: "This is what we propose to you; this is what we advise you to accept; because in the present period of the threatened decay of our Party, this is the best way out".

But they did not present the question in this manner. After having carried on negotiations with the Left and with the International as if these bodies were institutions threatening the dignity and sovereignty of the French Party, and after the nerve-racking tumult of the Congress, in an appeal signed by the Executive Committee, they said: "The World Congress which must deal with the question as to whether the national Party Congress has the right to choose its own Executive Committee or not."

But nobody questioned the right. And we see that this right is realised. We see that these same comrades did not dare to propose to the Party Congress, in the situation into which they had led it, that it should affirm and fully realise its solidarity by electing a regular Executive Committee. They themselves proposed that only a provisional Executive Committee be elected. Why? Because they themselves had impaired the sovereignty of the Party; and they did not dare ask

this Congress to elect an Executive Committee. After that there was nothing left I do except to turn to the International Congress in order to restore the fabric rent through the errors of the Centre.

Comrades, I already told you that I would not go into the history of the Paris Congress. Nevertheless there was an incident which I consider necessary to bring to your knowledge. It was the incident which brought before the Large Commission by our comrade Clara Zetkin. It is a most painful incident because it is connected with the name of Jean Jaurès. I find it necessary to say a few words about this, not because I wish to reproduce the scene that took place in the Congress, but in order to introduce a serious theoretical question.

According to the report made to me a motion was presented by the Internal Commission of the Party Congress, whose secretary was a young Comrade of the Left. This motion proposed the exclusion of Henri Sellier—who, in truth, deserved it—on the grounds that Sellier founded his ideas on a democratic conception which was of the Jaurès tradition.

Now everyone will agree that it was not necessary no speak of Jaurès in a resolution of this kind, even in an indirect manner. They made a big political incident of this clumsiness, not only in the Party Congress, but in the Party Press after the Congress.

A resolution was hastily drawn up. They transformed it into a factional question, and asked: "Are you for or against the Jaurès tradition"? That is the way in which the question was put. I do not believe that this was to the advantage, either of the memory of Jaurès or of the Party.

We have all known Jaurès, if not personally at least by his political prominence. We all know him as a monumental historical figure, who will remain in history as one of the most beautiful of human characters. And we can say now, and we shall be able to say tomorrow, that every oppressed class, and above all the advance guard of oppressed peoples and classes,—the Communist International, may lay claim to the memory and personality of Jaurès. Jaurès belongs to us; he belongs to revolutionary parties, to the oppressed peoples and classes.

But Jaurès played a certain part, in a certain period, in a certain country, in a certain party, in a certain tendency of this party. This is the other aspect of Jaurès.

The history of his political activity is better known to our Comrade Marcel Cachin and to myself.

Before the war there were two tendencies in the French Socialist Party. The leader of the other tendency was Jules Guesde, who was also a great and noble figure in the history of the French and the international working class movement. There was a great fight between Jaurès and Guesde; and in this fight, it was Guesde who was right, as opposed to Jaurès.

This we can never forget.

When we are told that we separate ourselves from the Jaurès tradition, this does not mean that we confide the personality of Jaurès and his memory to the soiled hands of the Dissidents and Reformists. It only means that there have been great changes in our policies.

We shall fight the survivals of those prejudices which are now called the Jaurès traditions in the French working class movement.

It was a great disservice to the working class of France to have made a theoretical battle out of this incident, as though communists really could blame the democratic and socialist traditions of Jaurès.

Léon Blum once more the books of Jaurès: his "Socialist History of the Great Revolution", his book the "New Army", his speeches, and one always feels refreshed by his fine spirit, his great faith; but, at the same time, one sees also the great weaknesses which have characterised the 2nd International. And we are not the defenders of the weaknesses and prejudices of the 2nd International, of this 2nd International which was represented, in its most genial form, by Jaurès. We are not the defenders of these false ideas; but, on the contrary, we shall fight against this tradition; we must fight it and substitute for it communist ideology.

Comrades, the Large Commission which you have appointed to study the French question, after a long and sometimes passionate discussion, has created a sub-

committee charged with the question of organisation, and with the elaboration of a proposed resolution. You have received our proposal in writing. We were inspired by two ideas in drawing it up.

We had to condemn the political errors committed by the faction in power in the French Communist Party, the Centre.

We must point out the mistakes made by the Daniel-Renoult-Dondicard faction.

And we must recognise that, whatever the secondary mistakes made by the Left faction, it is the Left which has properly represented the International, its ideas, its suggestions, in the most important questions concerned with the life and struggle of the French working class.

It is this which we have recognised in our political resolution.

With regard to our proposal for organisation and the make up of the Central organs of the Party, we have endeavoured to ascertain the relative strength of the different tendencies and to adopt the composition of the central organs to the present situation of the Party. Naturally, we do not usually proceed in this manner. We absolutely reject the principle of proportional representation, because such a principle always threatens the transformation of a Party into a federation of factions. It is an encouragement for every group which wants to create a faction. It is a very bad institution for a Party and its activity.

But we are in a situation which has been created by a historical past of which I have said a little—sufficiently I trust—for you to understand our policy.

Now in this situation we have asked for proportional representation, for the Executive Committee and other central bodies of the Party. The sub-committee which drew up this proposal was composed of comrades Zetkin, Bordiga, Kolaroff, Humbert-Droz, Katayama, Manuilsky and myself.

The Large Commission, to which we have presented the proposal which we drew up after deep discussion, has unanimously adopted all proposals, whether of a political or organisational nature; and we ask this Congress to do the same and unanimously conform to the resolutions.

### Freemasonry.

During the discussion in the Large Commission, a new question arose. It was the question of Freemasonry which up to the present has been ignored in the life of the Party. We have never written arguments on this subject, and it has never been mentioned in the Press, that in the Communist Party and also in the revolutionaries of reformist trade unions, there are a number of comrades who belong to the Freemasons.

When this fact became known to the Commission, we were stupefied, as no foreign comrade could possibly suppose that two years after Tours, the French Communist Party could contain in its midst comrades belonging to organisations the character of which it would be superfluous to define in a World Communist Congress.

I have tried first of all to make these things public in an article in the Congress organ, the "Bolshevik". In order to write this article, I had to search my memory for long-forgotten arguments against Freemasonry, which I had completely forgotten as an existing force. I shall not bore you with a repetition of these arguments. It is true however, that in France the liberal bourgeoisie, which has very mediocre leaders and a very poor press, uses the secret institutions of Freemasonry, above all to disguise its reactionary character, its perfidy, its ideas, spirit, and politics. Freemasonry therefore, is one of its institutions and instruments.

About a year and a half ago we said to the French Party: "One does not see that chasm which should be created by our Press and our speeches between the Communist Party and the whole of bourgeoisie." (Applause).

Unfortunately, this question was not raised immediately after the Tours Congress. It only came before our commission had taken cognisance of these facts; it immediately included them in the agenda of its work as facts of the greatest importance.

We now see that not only does this chasm not exist, but there are bridges ready built to be used in the event of its creation—bridges well constructed, somewhat camouflaged, these are the bridges of Freemasonry, of the League for the Rights of Man. In this way there is a connection between Freemasonry and the Party institutions, the editorship of the paper, the Executive Committee and the Federal Committee.

Apparently our friends make speeches

and write articles on the necessity of crushing this corrupt society by means of the class struggle, led by the proletariat which shall itself be led by a Party absolutely independent of bourgeois society.

They are revolutionary to the bitter end, and then they go into the Masonic Lodges to embrace those older brothers who represent the master class.

It is difficult to understand such mentality and such actions. Some comrades said: we are also of the opinion that every communist must put himself entirely at the disposal of the Party and must not work at all for other institutions, other ventures and other organisations etc. This is not the only reason. If a Communist is musical, if he goes to concerts and theatres, we cannot expect him to sacrifice these pleasures if the situation does not require such a sacrifice. If he is the father of a family and wishes to devote part of his life to his children, although we may ask much of him, we cannot demand that he should neglect his children. But it is not a question of things like that. It is a question of dividing his work, his attention and his life between two institutions or two occupations.

If you represent this question in this manner to the working class it will never understand why the International takes an interest in it. We must prove the complete, absolute and implacable incompatibility between the revolutionary spirit and the spirit of the Masonic petty bourgeoisie—the instrument of the big bourgeoisie. (Applause).

Unfortunately, this question was not raised immediately after the Tours Congress. It only came before our commission had taken cognisance of these facts; it immediately included them in the agenda of its work as facts of the greatest importance.

We are told that we are exaggerating. It is still the same thing. It is still the Fabre case which is continually reappearing. Fabre is immortal. Even after having been killed once by the Communist International, he comes up again always under another name, in another guise and even in the guise of Freemason.

We are told that we exaggerate. We think on the contrary that we are this

time confronted with a question which can become a lever for bringing about an efficacious and immediate change in this party.

There are other important questions: the question of the trade unions and the question of the united front. It is on this basis that the working class movement is developing, but the parliamentary tradition of the French Party was crystallised in the class of deputies, journalists, lawyers and intellectuals, and this crystallisation has constituted, to a certain extent a State within the State.

It is especially the spirit of opportunism which is strongly developed among these intellectual elements, whose brains are sometimes clouded by recollections of various situations through which they have passed, and which are at present unintelligible.

A vigorous shaking up is required. It will be particularly salutary in this section of the Party, and not only for the Party, (which is of course the first consideration) but for the useful elements which are naturally to be found in this leading section, elements which are certainly too much influenced by tradition, too conservative and which are thinking of yesterday or the day before yesterday instead of concerning themselves with the future.

Then will come the great shock, for it is not a case of the leading section of the working class. It is a question of relations, habits, aptitudes and of the morals of individual comrades belonging to this leading section.

Many officials of the Party frequent the Masonic lodges. Naturally, they do not conceal their communism as they hide their Free Masonry when they are with us. They however present their communism in a garb agreeable to the bourgeois brothers and adapted to the delicate and refined senses of this society. Maeterlinck the poet, said once that by hiding one's soul among the astral bodies, one ends by losing oneself. Well, in a milieu such as this and having modified one's opinions to suit the exquisite taste of these brothers who are experts in radical politics, one is likely to lose forever one's true character of a revolutionary communist.

This is why this question is so important as far as the leading sections of the

Party are concerned. Of course, the Managing Committee will immediately rouse nine-tenths of official public opinion in France against it, as soon as it will accomplish the task which we expected to accomplish. We can already foresee with a certain amount of revolutionary joy that these reactionary, Catholic Freemason circles of the Léon Daudet type, or of the type of the friends of Herriot, backed by their entire press, will throw themselves against the International and the Communist Party. And comrades of the Managing Committee, if you will come with excuses, and explanations, saying that Freemasonry in itself is not a bad thing, but that one must not divide one's heart between the Party and Freemasonry because the Party needs the fourquarters of your heart, you will create for yourself an intolerable situation. On the contrary, the Party must have the courage to acknowledge that it has committed a mistake by tolerating a situation in which very valuable comrades, owing to a painful inertia, have belonged to Freemason lodges. Having once recognised its mistake, the Party must proclaim an implacable struggle against this machine which threatens to envelop the revolutionary movement. The League of the Rights of Man and Freemasonry are bourgeois institutions which lull the class consciousness of the representatives of the French proletariat. We declare an implacable war against them because they constitute a secret and perfidious part of the bourgeois machinery.

If the Managing Committee will act with such implacable energy in this matter, it will rouse against itself the dissidents, the Leon Blums and the Catholics who will defend the Freemasons. Freemasonry will have some catholic excommunications, in order to pronounce its malediction against the communists. The Party will have against itself quite a mixture of the bourgeoisie of all shades. But, the Communist Party will remain staunchly opposed to all this political trickery, this deceit of bourgeois society, like a revolutionary bloc which defends the supreme interests of the proletariat.

I am convinced that if you administer this salutary shock, you will find that after two or three months your Party will be in a different position from that

in which it appears to-day before the IV World Congress.

Probably, an out-cry will be raised against "the orders" from Moscow. There will be great talk again about freedom of thought,—but of Freemasonic thought, for the same comrades will clamour again. However, do the comrades who are indulging in polemics for freedom of thought and of opinion, contemplate the inevitable divergencies within the communist rank? Certainly not. They would like to include the pacifists, the Freemasons, the propagandists of the sacred law of catholicism, the reformists, the anarchists and the syndicalists. This is what I call freedom of thought.

These men, who are mostly intellectuals, spend nine-tenths of their time in bourgeois circles. They are engaged in pursuits which sever them entirely from the working class. Their mentality is affected by the six days which they pass in these surroundings.

They return to their Party on Sundays, having forgotten its principles, they endeavour to pick them up again by criticising and especially by doubting. They say that they demand for themselves freedom of thought. Then a resolution is passed which is imposed upon them. Thereupon, they return to their own milieu and the whole story begins again. These people are amateurs and dilettanti and among them there are many place hunters.

These must be eliminated. The Party is nothing but a means of obtaining a post or a mandate.

It is for this reason that we have laid down that nine-tenths of the public elective posts, which the Party may secure, must be held by working men, and not even by working men who have become party officials, but by those who are still either in the workshop or at the plough.

The working class must be shown that hitherto it was deceived, and that the various parties which used it as a spring board for making a career. We must also explain to the working class that our Party look upon the parliamentary field as part and parcel of its revolutionary field.

It is the working class which is the

chief actor on this field, and therefore we must introduce into parliament its best and most capable representations, capable of being the mouth-piece of its wishes and aspirations, supplementing them of course by some faithful and reliable comrades with a certain amount of education and training. However, the overwhelming majority of our parliamentary, municipal and cantonal factions must consist of the workers themselves, especially in France in view of its customs, ideas, and habits.

### The Press.

We must put an end to the regime which considers the press as a happy hunting ground for talanted journalists. It is all very well for a journalist to be talented, but the press is nothing but an instrument of our struggle, an instrument which must be as autonomous as possible, representing the collective will of the workers and reflecting the ideology of the working class, and not the particular ideas of individuals.

From this viewpoint, "le Populaire" represents very adequately the traditions of the parliamentary party.

I have here before me a leading article of the "Populaire" with an editorial comment. The chief editor says: "I must remind the readers of the "Populaire" that the responsibility for the opinions expressed in leading articles appearing in the paper rests entirely with the authors of these articles.

Such are their habits; the responsibility for the articles rests only with their writers. The workers are asked to contribute their pennies to a newspaper which advertises its socialism and which makes it a general rule that no one is responsible for the leading articles but the writers of these articles.

Now, with us the party takes the responsibility for the articles. The journalist should be anonymous and at the disposal of the party. And if the gentlemen of the journalistic caste—I partly belong to them myself—will tell us that their personal dignity would be offended by such a procedure, we will tell them that it is the highest possible dignity for a communist journalist to be the most faithful instrument, and as far as possible

an impersonal one of the mentality, of the policy and of the fight of the working class.

### Our Work among the Peasants.

I must particularly mention these two questions. First of all, the question of our work among the peasants.

This question was treated at the Paris Congress in a more disgusting manner than all the other questions of principle that were discussed at that Congress. The discussion of this question was started by comrade Joules Blanc, who said that it would be possible to prove from the letters received from peasants that they were imbued with a revolutionary spirit, making it improper to call them "petite bourgeoisie," and that to write pamphlets describing the peasant class as petty bourgeoisie would be doing bad service to the propaganda of the Party.

The same objection was raised by Comrade Renaud Jean and I consider it necessary to say a few words aenent our work among the peasants.

The term 'petty bourgeoisie' is not an insult. It is a scientific term which has its meaning in the fact that the producer is the possessor of his means of production. He is not altogether divorced from his means of production, and he is therefore not a wage labourer.

This is what the term 'petty bourgeoisie' means.

If in the course of a propagandist's speech—not a scientific lecture—a peasant should ask me: 'Am I a petty bourgeois?' I would tell him—and I believe it would not be a shock for him to be told so—that one often meets with peasants who cannot be distinguished from the proletariat except by their possessing the means of production, which causes them to be more individualistic than the workers.

I take this experience to be proper and necessary in order that we should not deceive ourselves as to the character of the peasant class, in order that we should not deceive the workers. But, notwithstanding the difference of life and mentality between these two classes, this expression should by no means hamper our action among the peasants.

The other question is the colonial ques-

tion. I do not know whether the resolution on the section of Sidi-bel-Abbes, in Algeria, was quoted here. This resolution by a group which pretends to be communist is a great scandal, even if it was adopted only by a small group. It says: "On the question of the colonies, it (the section) is in complete disagreement with the theses of Moscow... The native communist federations alone are qualified to determine the local tactics of communist action. The Algerian communist federations would not under any circumstances permit publication in Algeria of manifestoes whose spirit and letter, while involving their responsibility, were not framed by themselves".

This means to say that the International should not intervene too closely in the internal questions of the party. Here we have a colonial section that is rebellious against its party and against its International. It declares that in matters affecting the natives it would recognise only its own rule.

The resolution goes on to say:

"A victorious upheaval of the Moslem masses in Algeria, unpreceded by a similar victorious uprising of the proletarian masses in the mother country, would lead in Algeria to the fatal return of a regime that would be akin to feudalism, which can never be the goal of communist activity".

Now we come to the bottom of it. A revolution should not be permitted among the natives in the colonies, even a victorious one, because by committing the folly of overthrowing the rule of the French bourgeoisie, one would get back feudalism, and the French Communists in Algeria cannot tolerate the idea of a revolutionary upheaval among the poor natives who would free themselves from the French bourgeoisie to fall back into feudalism.

One could not tolerate for two hours, nor for two minutes, such comrades that have the mentality of slave drivers, and who wish that Poincaré might retain for them the benefits of capitalist civilisation. For Poincaré is the actual spokesman of such a group, and by his oppression, saves the poor natives from feudalism and barbarism.

Every act of treason tries always to mask itself under the plea of indepen-

dence, of autonomy, of freedom of action. There is always a protest against intervention by the International or even by the French Party itself. We see already of the party in an article, for which only the writers are responsible: "The decommission of the communist party" says the writer, "renders the time opportune of passing to a vigorous offensive, etc." The dissidents predict a great growth for their party. Here is a prophecy which will never come true. On the contrary, one may safely predict, without fearing the stenographer's art, that if the parties should remain as they are now, with the two tendencies before the working masses, with their respective adherents, like two established churches with their respective hierachal bureaucracy, it may indeed go on for a great many years. But the moment there is a radical change in the communist party, and it takes a different trend, when the workers can see in the party the preparation of the proletarian revolution, one may predict the inevitable death of the dissidents in company with the reformists of the C. G. T.

And I tell you with perfect certainty, that the reformist C. G. T. will not be killed by the forces of the C. G. T. U. Oh, no, there is only one grand mighty and really revolutionary party, which embraces the best elements of the working class and which will bring about the undoing of the political and syndicalist reformism. You will soon see it.

During the first weeks of the fight against freemasonry, or against the League of Rights of Man, there will be backsliders and deserters who will go over to the dissidents. The latter are sure to be well received by their new friends, but they will get nothing but condemnation from the communist party. (Cheers.)

It is a question of vigorously and energetically carrying out the painful operation, in order to accelerate the process and to inaugurate a great campaign for a revolutionary party.

On behalf of our commission, we propose to you a program of action which was submitted by the left and unanimously adopted by the commission, with only secondary corrections.

It furnished the basis for starting im-

mediately a great work for the party by removing the elements which hamper revolutionary action. Let it not be said, above all, that these immediate demands might be the cause of a new reformist wave in the French movement. At this period of the decomposition of bourgeois society, the immediate demands become the key-note of the really revolutionary movement. This movement should have its starting point in factory committees or councils, under the obligatory formula of the United Front, in order to furnish all the possibilities of successful action, and with the slogan of the workers' government, which is particularly necessary in France.

It's time to quit wrangling about these questions, because these squabbles can only enrage the workers' who are already sufficiently restless.

The idea of a Blum-Frossard government is only a symbolical term, used for the purpose of brevity, but it is really a question of a combination between parliamentarians for the purpose of constituting a possible government. In order to obtain a majority in parliament for the Communists and dissidents, it is necessary that the working class shall vote for the Communists and dissidents; and to achieve this, the dissidents should part company with the left block, with the bourgeois society. First of all, it must be shown to the French working class that it should sever all connections with the bourgeoisie, and oppose any bourgeois bloc under whatever form. In face of it should sever all connections with the strike at Harve and the massacre of workers, we tell the workers that under a workers' government there would not have been such a massacre, and our representation in parliament must tell the working class, that it ought not to tolerate a government of Poincaré or of the left bloc, but only a government which represents the working class and is made up of workers.

As Communists, we strive with all our might for a workers government created by a revolutionary movement but if the workers think that such a government could be created by parliamentary methods, we tell them: "Go ahead and try it, but in order to do it, you must first of all break away completely from the left bloc and from the bourgeois combi-

nation; there should be only one bloc of the working class. If you break away completely from the bourgeoisie, but still believe in parliamentary methods, we tell you that we have no faith in this method, but we will support your action if you will separate yourselves from the bourgeoisie. If we were asked whether it were possible to form a coalition government made up entirely of workers representatives, I would reply: "Of course it is, but not on the basis of a parliamentary combination, but only on the basis of a great movement embracing the entire class struggle of the proletariat, as well as the parliament.

The essential thing is that this movement should imbue the working class with a simple idea that it can create a workers' government, a government by the workers and for the workers.

If you would ask us: "Have you any guarantee that the dissidents will not betray us?" — I would answer: You can never be sure of that. It is for this very reason that in creating a revolutionary workers government jointly with them, we must watch them with the same attention and distrust as if they were our worst enemies, and the moment that we see their disloyalty and treason, we must have done with the left wing social-revolutionaries who represented the peasantry in the workers' government created by us, and whom we had to throw overboard in order to maintain the government in the hands of the working class.

The slogan of the workers' government signifies in the first place the absolute independence of our party. This independence must be achieved as quickly as possible.

In France, the centre will be responsible during the next few weeks for this energetic action in the ranks of our French communist party. I am sure that the painful explanations which we had with our French comrades in the commission, and which I submit to you in the shape of a report cannot be repeated again. The danger was clearly indicated in the speech of comrade Frossard, which I have already quoted and interpreted. It is the business of the centre to definitely obviate and remove this danger. I see no reason for a break. On the contrary, I believe the situation is extremely

favorable for our French Communist Party. The national block is breaking down; there is absolute an impossibility of exacting the reparations. The left bloc finds itself in a difficult situation, and I believe that our party holds in its hands the future of France, which means the future of humanity at large. We feel confident that, inspired by such grand and glorious prospects, the centre will do its duty to the last, and by the time the next Congress will meet, we will have a unified, homogeneous revolutionary party, faithful to its duty until the complete triumph of the revolution of the French proletariat. (Prolonged cheers).

Kolaroff.—The meeting will be closed after the translation of Comrade Trotsky's speech. The next session will take place tomorrow at eleven; the question on the agenda remains the same.

The session closed 4 p. m.

I have a few announcements to make before closing the session:

At six o'clock, meeting of the Presidium;

At seven o'clock meeting of the small Italian Commission with the maximalist faction.

All the Commissions which have not yet terminated their work are requested to meet tonight to bring their task to an end. Their secretaires must call them together. Monday December 4th, at six o'clock, will take place in the Great Theatre the opening of the International Congress of the Youth.

The Moscow Soviet invites the Delegates to a banquet tomorrow, Saturday, in the Great Theatre. The invitation cards will be distributed in the dining room.

# BULLETIN

## OF THE IV CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

No 29.

Moscow.

December 8th, 1922.

### Twenty-Ninth Session.

December 2nd. 1922.—1 p.m.

Chairman: Comrade Kolaroff.

**Contents:** Declarations by French Delegation on Report of French Commission. Declaration by Brazilian Delegation. Concluding remarks by Comrade Trotsky. Adoption of Political and Organisational Resolution on the French Party. Report of Spanish Commission. Adoption of Resolution on the Spanish Communist Party. Report of Danish Commission. Adoption of Resolution on Danish Communist Party. Revision of the Thesis on the Reorganisation of the Executive. Adoption of revised Thesis on Reorganisation of the Executive. Report of Communist Youth Commission. Adoption of Resolution on Young Communist International Expression of Sympathy with the Imprisoned Comrades in France.

**Speakers:** Cachin, Renoult, Souvarine, Jean, Cabellan, Trotsky, Humbert-Droz, Kuusinen, Eberlein, Schueller.

Kolaroff Chairman: I declare the session open. The French Delegation has the floor to state its position on the Report of Comrade Trotsky and the propositions of the commission.

Marcel Cachin: I only wish to read the declaration of our faction on the report and the ensuing comments:

To make an end of the crisis which ruled within it the whole French Party appealed to the Fourth Congress and has left the decision in its hands. It has agreed to submit to its decisions. We submit ourselves to the discipline of the Congress.

We wish to renew before you the declarations which we have made in the French Commission.

The report excessively criticises a majority of the Party. They are too one sided because they do not affect the Left. There is no statement on the resignations which followed the Congress at Paris or the attack against the members of the Majority; on the contrary, the representatives of the Centre are accused of being the main authors of the crisis.

We cannot accept this accusation. Moreover, the speakers interpretation of

a phrase of Frossard's at the Paris Congress as forced and abusive. The truth is that, like all of us he has met with many difficulties in carrying out the decision of the International, which difficulty we have been able to overcome. With the best will in the world, we and Frossard have nevertheless had to take these difficulties into account.

Today the problems placed before us by the Comintern are being solved as is expected of us. The organisation of the Party is being centralised, we have split with the Right, we will carry out the United Front.

Tomorrow the problems of the relations between Party and Trade Unions will also be solved in accordance with the terms formulated at this Fourth Congress and the Profintern. Frossard's role in St. Etienne has been very important to bring about this very happy result.

We shall carry out strictly and in the spirit of the International the resolutions on Free Masonry and the other institutions mentioned in the report.

In this way, the directives of the Comintern are and will be observed more