

Tasks and Characteristics of the New Party

AN ANALYSIS OF MASS MOVEMENTS
A CRITIQUE OF THE OLD PARTY VIEW
OUTLINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM
THE TASK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS
NOW

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TASKS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW PARTY

THESES ADOPTED AT THE CONFERENCE OF THE
COMMUNISTENBOND 'SPARTACUS', HELD IN DECEMBER. 1945

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Foreword to the first edition (1945)

We felt the need [for a text] in which the objectives of the Communist League "Spartacus" were presented to the interested persons in a way more appropriate than is possible in a periodic publication. The League decided to work in this direction. It is from this consideration that this document appears, containing our views on the task and essence of the new party.

Where this document is built up from theses, the argument is undoubtedly strongly compressed. Moreover, so many new experiences are [lessons] gained in the daily labor struggle that it is desirable to elaborate on many points in other writings. In doing so, an attempt will be made to link up strongly with the practice of the struggle. However, this publication provides an excellent basis for this coming work. For this reason, we hope that a large demand will make it easy for us to carry out further plans systematically and promptly.

The Communist League "Spartacus"

Tasks and Characteristics of the New Party

The structural change of capitalism requires an analysis of the role and nature of the party

1. Today's critique of the old parties is not just a critique of their practical politics or the behavior of the leaders, but a critique of the old party conception as a whole. It is a direct consequence of the changes in the structure and objectives of the mass movement. After all, the task of the (revolutionary) party lies in its activity in the mass movement of the proletariat.

2. The negative criticism of the old conception of the party, as well as the positive formulation of a new one, must, therefore, be based on an analysis of the mass movement, of the causes of its temporary defeat, as well as of the conditions of its revival into new forms. Such an analysis is all the more necessary since, according to the old, inherited views, the conditions for the development of the mass movement had to be more favorable now than ever before. In addition to the misery caused by the Second World War, which is much deeper and greater than that after the First, there is the immediate threat of a Third, even more, destructive war; furthermore, the workers' consciousness has hardly been tamed by League of Nations and similar illusions. The need to liberate the working class from the bonds of capitalism is, therefore, more compelling than ever, while on the other hand, several strike actions have already shown that the apparatus of oppression, in particular the army, is not totally reliable for the bourgeoisie. Nor can the lack of revolutionary mass movements be explained by the erroneous politics of the so-called workers' leaders, since they are hardly heard by the workers when they start moving. Nor can the absence of these movements be explained by a general "apathy" of the class. The causes are much deeper and can only be understood by social analysis. They lie in the changed social situation, as a result of which a mass movement of the worker in the old forms and with the old objectives has become meaningless. Our criticism of the old views of the party and our attempts to arrive at a new view, which must be based on an examination of the development of the mass movement, must, therefore, begin with general social analysis.

3. However, such an analysis should not only cover the present period but, if it is to lead to a real understanding of the bankruptcy (in a revolutionary sense) of the old workers' movement, it must also include the period of growth and development of this movement. It must, therefore, be an analysis of the social development during the entire evolution of capitalism.

The rise of capitalism, the bourgeois revolution, and the first labor movement

4. Mainly in the 16th and 17th centuries, the original accumulation of mercantile capital took place in the organized piracy and looting of overseas regions. This capital, thus concentrated in the hands of wealthy merchants and banking institutions, found its way into the various manufacturing companies created during this period. At this stage, the capital mainly needed strong state power to protect the development of domestic and foreign trade and to ensure the growth of manufacturing. The young bourgeoisie, therefore, sought help from the monarch, who himself often became the largest capitalist entrepreneur in the country. This was the period of Elisabeth (England), of Colbert (France), of "enlightened despotism" (Germany, Austria). Only in Holland, where at that time the struggle between capitalism and the old feudal system had already come to an end, could the organization of state power take place in the typically bourgeois form of the republic.

5. However, the period of state-protected and organized domestic and foreign trade and production, necessary to provide capital with the necessary strength and expansion in the domestic and foreign economy, had to come to an end, after capital had overcome its early weaknesses. This was mainly when machine-based industry began to emerge. The need for protection gave way to that of unbridled opportunities for competition and exploitation. Now the bourgeoisie must crush the remnants of the old feudal economic organization, the old restrictions imposed by the guild regulations, and the new [restrictions] of the mercantilist state. Now it is conquering state power to establish "human rights", i.e. to free capital from all political-economic ties. This was the time when the political party developed as an organization of the radical wing of the bourgeoisie which, in its struggle against the obstacles to the development of its economic system, broke the old social formation and liberated broad sections of the working population from servitude and oppression. This political party is the organization with which the bourgeoisie mobilized the masses of the population to establish its own rule. This exclusively political character of the bourgeois revolution is typical because any economic organization is alien to the now developing liberal capitalism. In the economic field, the "laissez-faire, laissez aller", the unrestricted rights of exploitation and trade, applies.

6. The bourgeois revolution took place with purely political means of struggle. Its weapons were the armed rebellion, the conquest of parliament, the physical destruction of the class enemy. Already in the bourgeois revolution, however, independent movements of the proletariat emerged, which had an entirely different character (such as the textile workers' strike in Lyon). The workers did not renounce their political means of struggle but linked them directly to the economic ones. For while capital must strive for unlimited exploitation, the proletariat opposes this very exploitation. In the working class, therefore, we find from the very beginning the joint involvement in economic actions, in a fight against exploitation. At the same time, movements are emerging that are striving for a new economic organization of society, without exploitation, where producers want to control

production and distribution in full democracy and cooperation. Despite their half utopian character, these directions have a great influence on the thinking and actions of the working class these days.

7. We also find a desire for economic organization among the small craftsmen leftover from the Middle Ages. In their case, however, it takes the form of attempts to create a society of small independent producers, who wanted to protect themselves against the development of, and domination by, big business (Proudhon) using certain general social regulations. In the socialist utopias of those days, we find both elements, the proletarian as well as the petty-bourgeois mixed. This is a natural consequence of the origin of the working class from proletarian small craftsmen.

8. When industrial capitalism expanded in the first half of the 19th century, when exploitation by the introduction of the machine of mechanical production exceeded the limits of the physically possible, when, on the other hand, the class consciousness of the workers and their mental resistance strengthened by completely breaking all ties with the petty-bourgeois past, as it still existed in the period of manufacture, the workers' struggle against exploitation by capital begins to take place. This struggle has as its first goal to organize the workers into their very own power against capital. In this period the trade unions emerged as economic battle- and power organizations. Also, the workers tried to form themselves into political power., organizing themselves as a political movement to try to conquer a parliamentary representation. Also, they strove to increase the physical and moral strength of the working class by enforcing labor legislation. The workers' means of action are the armed rebellion and directly related to it, the general strike. In this way, the mass movement of the workers develops in their attempt to achieve the first formation of power, already directly in a fierce general struggle against the ruling class. (The Chartist movement in England, the great mass movements of the proletariat on the mainland before and after 1848). In the minds of the workers, there was a view that these movements were only the first steps towards the creation of power, the further objective being the general abolition of exploitation, the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power.

9. By necessity, these mass movements of the proletariat were primarily directed against the stronghold of the political power of the bourgeoisie: against the state. In line with the practice of these mass movements and also with the tradition of the bourgeois revolution, the idea that the conquest of state power was the first step towards the establishment of a communist society became firmly established in their minds. This view finds its purest formulation in the Communist Manifesto. Even after 1848, this tendency continued to prevail in the mass movement of the proletariat and was expressed in the theoretical concept of the First International.

10. In this period of the development of mass action, the political party of the working class began to play an increasing role. Since the workers had not yet become the overwhelming majority of the population, the political party still appears as the necessary organization which served to drag the majority of the population into the action of the workers in the same way as the party of the bourgeoisie did in the bourgeois revolution. The party thus appeared as the political representation of the power of the working class; by becoming the head of the state, the proletariat would conquer the power of the state. Marx's view that "the liberation of the workers must be the work of the

workers themselves" does not at all contradict the conceptions of power struggles and eventual rule by the proletarian party during this period.

11. The defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871, sealed the defeat of this first phase in the development of the class movement of the workers. The development in Germany led to the growth of a new nationally-organized capitalism, strong enough in its development possibilities to save French capital from the downfall of the revolution. On the other hand, the class movement of the proletariat was still too weak, too mixed with petty-bourgeois struggles, to pose a real threat to capital. In the Paris Commune, it was shown that the state, the oppressive apparatus of the ruling class, the protector of the bourgeoisie's exploitation possibilities, cannot be conquered by the proletariat. The state is hostile to the revolutionary aspirations of the workers not only in its leadership but in its entire being. For the function of the state is to rule and oppress the working population; this function determines both the structure of its apparatus and the attitudes and behavior of its countless civil servants. The workers of the Paris Commune were therefore forced to break this bourgeois state and to establish their own power organization. However, in this first attempt, based on the still weak economic attachment and strength of the working class, they were not yet able to overcome capital definitively.

Liberal capitalism. Reformism. The state as caretaker of the working class

12. The influence of the defeat of the Paris Commune on the development of the labor movement goes in two directions. First, it means the provisional end of the attempts to destroy capitalism by revolutionary means. The reformist tendencies in the workers' movement began to develop - weakly at first, but more strongly after 1900 as the organization of capital became more and more powerful. The political party ceased to be a power formation of the working class; it became the diplomatic representation of the workers in capitalist society. As a loyal opposition, it participated in parliament, participated in the organization of capitalist society. The trade unions became the representatives of the workers in the economic field. As the necessary counterpart in the regulation of the conditions of exploitation, the employers' unions soon emerged. This new development was made possible by the fact that capital had outgrown the period of unorganized exploitation and competition; it was precisely the victory of German national capital that accelerated this development. Individual capitalists were no longer strong enough to maintain their competitiveness; the first steps for the organization of capital were therefore taken through agreements between the various capitalist companies. Then there was also the possibility of concluding such agreements with the workers, and the trade unions were the appropriate mediation bodies for this purpose. The workers' party acted as the political body, representing the workers in the general regulation of exploitation conditions in the so-called labor legislation. This period was thus characterized by the fact that the working class was given a recognized place within the capitalist system, with recognized rights. At the same time, however, it discarded its fundamental opposition to this system, leaving as a "socialist ideal" the view that the working class, comprising

the absolute majority in society, would finally conquer the state by democratic means to establish socialism.

13. The social democratic party, which develops during this period, adapts its structure perfectly to its practical activity. It, too, takes the form of bourgeois sham democracy, with the party congress as parliament and the day-to-day administration as ministers. Here, too, real power lies with the boards of directors which are in daily contact with the representatives of the capitalist state and which hold all the party's levers of power. Here, too, under the guise of complete democracy, there is in reality a complete separation between the masses of members and the party leadership, resulting in the total powerlessness of the former membership.

14. In addition to, and in contrast with, this reformist practice of the workers' movement, the fundamental criticism of this development developed in its revolutionary wing. Furthermore, the defeat of the Paris Commune also meant the end of the first phase in the development of the mass movement of the proletariat. But this did not mean that the revolutionary struggle belonged forever in the past; On the contrary, this struggle had to be fought on a higher stage of capitalist development as well. Now that the state had increasingly become the unmasked representative and defender of the interests of capital, and that for the first time (in Germany) it had also acted outwardly as a direct power organization of capital, and since the workers of the Commune were already in the initial phase of the struggle forced to destroy this state organization, the revolutionary struggle of the workers had to come to the height of its development; no longer was it aimed at conquest, but at the destruction of this bourgeois state. Criticism of the old, state-socialist ideas was started (Marx, Wilhelm Liebknecht) and the first ideas for the organization of a communist society, with the abolition of wage labor as a fundament, were developed.

15. While the practice of the workers' movement moved entirely in the reformist direction, the theoretical work of the revolutionary wing in the years 1871 to 1914 contributed a great deal to make possible the later fundamental criticism of the old workers' movement. However, the revolutionaries' ideas were too far removed from reformist practice to get a grip on the great mass of workers. In the face of the great shining successes of social democracy, they had little chance. They were not only election victories, but also an ever-increasing expansion of labor legislation. The great mass of workers did not and could not see that this improvement in its position had only been made possible by the developing boom of capitalism and that it would have to jump just as inexorably into an absolute and accelerated deterioration when capitalism came to the end of its productive expansion. Consequently, the state-socialist view that the state was designated as the caretaker of the working class became more and more ingrained in the workers. As a result, the fundamental criticism of the revolutionaries, for whom the apparent improvement in the position of the working class was only the expression of its impoverishment relative to the much faster growing added value and capital power, could not be accepted by the workers.

16. The 1914 catastrophe revealed the conflict that had grown over decades between the reformist workers' movement and the workers' anti-capitalist tendencies. The reformist workers' movement was no more than the representative of the workers' interests within capitalism; in its

practice, its method, its structure, its objective, it was entirely bound to capitalism. Just as it had been the loyal representative of the workers in peace, it remained so in war. Only in those countries where capitalism had not yet reached its full development and reformism had therefore not become the dominant practice (Russia, Italy) did social democracy turn against the war. In the other countries, it supported the national bourgeoisie in its warfare, thereby drawing the only possible consequence of its development in the past. For the workers, however, this meant that the old workers' movement no longer acted as the defender of its real interests. The outbreak of the world war meant that the phase of relative impoverishment had been succeeded by that of absolute impoverishment. This new development had to bring the workers back into revolutionary resistance against capital. As a result the workers also came into conflict with social democracy.

The revolutionary state socialist period of the workers' movement

17. In the revolutionary struggle that broke out as a result of the world war, workplace organizations² and workers' councils spontaneously emerged as an organ of workers' democracy within companies and local political democracy. In the minds of the workers, however, there was still the view that for the organization of the economy as a whole, the state was the indispensable means. This view was the product of the whole preceding period of class struggle, of a practice during the First, as well as during the Second International. Nor was there anything in capitalist society that could drive this idea out of the minds of the workers. Capitalism had not yet arrived at its own organization of production on a large scale; the contradiction with the organization by the producers themselves had not yet become a tangible practice. Moreover, the workers' councils and workplace organizations did not find a single starting point for such an organization. Thus, it could not be otherwise, or power had to fall back to a quasi-socialist party, which had to try to organize production in the name of the workers. The transfer of real power to the state organization, which was simply taken over from the old bourgeois state, meant, however, the continuation of the capitalist system of exploitation. And the new quasi-socialist government had no choice but to adapt to the demands of this system. It could not even implement the nationalization and planned economy desired by the workers until the need for it had grown through the development of capitalism itself.

18. The state-socialist view gained new authority as a result of the development in Russia. In Russia, the national bourgeoisie was weak, and there was no class of craftsmen. Under these circumstances, private capitalism could not develop here and, under the pressure of foreign intervention and the need to master domestic disorganization, a system of state domination,

² Translation of the Dutch 'bedrijfsorganisatie', which was derived in turn from the German 'Betriebsorganisation' (BO). This commonly-used term had a specific meaning for the German and Dutch Communist Left, indicating the informal autonomous organization of workers' struggle at the places of work (companies) and their formal organization at 'shop'-level after the revolution. The BO often has been translated into 'factory organization', and even re-translated into German as 'Fabriksorganisation', a narrower term that was misused to suggest council communism had a view limited to the factory chimney.

conceived by many as socialism or at least as a first step in the development towards socialism, developed as a result of the revolutionary struggle of the peasants and workers. The Russian revolution gave the state socialist view a revolutionary aura, and this contributed a great deal to obstructing the real revolutionary awareness of the workers.

Three main tendencies in the workers' movement

19. In this way, the mass action of the workers fell into three main tendencies. The first, the reformist direction, thought to have taken the decisive step towards socialism by giving power to the social democratic party. Anything that threatened the government power of this party seemed to them a threat to socialism, and so they turned vehemently against the more revolutionary currents which, in their opinion, created the possibility of the bourgeois counter-revolution through the disruption of social democratic party rule. The bolshevik direction, on the other hand, saw in the old social-democratic officials the long-term allies of capital, who had hopelessly compromised themselves during the war. They believed that only a truly revolutionary party (in the sense in which they understood it) could push the state in a socialist direction. They, therefore, wanted to proclaim armed insurrection as a means of expelling the social-democratic clique in government and establishing their own power. The third tendency, on the other hand, refused to relinquish the established council power and fought desperately to maintain it. However, as it was unable to resolve the major issue of the organization of the economy, it was unable to cope with the other two tendencies.

20. As with the social democratic party, the structure of the bolshevik party is the expression of its practice, and its objective. It wants to establish socialism through the power of the state, not by the gradual erosion of capitalism, but by the physical destruction of the bourgeoisie. Its organization could not be sham democratic either, but only undisguised dictatorial, centralistic. This is also a consequence of how it wants to mobilize the working class, in other words, by uniting it directly under its command.

21. The contrast between social democracy and Bolshevism is one of method, while in their final goals there is a certain degree of agreement. Both believe that socialism can be realized by the organization of a state-planned economy. Their differences relate only to how state power must be organized, i.e. how the de facto dictatorial power of the state must be made acceptable to the masses. They both agree in rejecting the autonomous organization of power of the workers. The bolsheviks must, therefore, be seen more as opposition within, instead of as an independent movement against social democracy, which term is then used as the general characteristic of the state-socialist conception.

22. During and after the revolutionary movements which followed the First World War, a whole new concept developed among some of the workers, in line with the work of the revolutionary theorists between 1871 and 1914, and driven mainly by the practice of this mass movement. They

began to realize that workplace organizations and workers' councils had a much broader task than just organizing corporate democracy and local political democracy; they had to take the entire political and economic management of society into their own hands. As a result of the revolutionaries' criticism of developments in Russia, the view was growing that the abolition of private ownership of means of production was not sufficient for the establishment of a communist society, since the concentration of these means of production in the hands of the state had not abolished the separation between producer and means of production. As a general objective, they pursued: the abolition of wage labor, being an expression of the separation between producer and production process; the introduction of working time accounts as the basis for a new, transparent economic organization; workplace organizations and workers' councils as the foundation of democracy in society. However, the need for a planned economy based on council democracy, as well as the practical ways in which the working class had to implement this program, was not sufficiently expressed.

23. These weaknesses in the theoretical formulations in those days were not accidental. They were the expression of the lack of organization in the capitalist economy. The need to introduce a planned economy did not seem so inevitable, it seemed as if general regulations could suffice. At the same time, there were no concrete starting points for such an economic organization, from which the workplace organization and workers' councils could be derived. As a result, the theoretical formulations had to remain limited within the same framework in which the revolutionary mass movements also found their limits.

24. The new conceptions of communism found their expression in a new concept of the party's tasks and characteristics. The slogan "all power to the workers' councils", could not be reconciled with either of the two directions of social-democratic-ism . The role of the party was now limited to that of a clarification and propaganda organization. It no longer aspired to establish the rule over the class. However, because the mass movements had not yet made progress in this direction, this tendency was again increasingly forced to criticize the old ideas in principle, without being able to develop its own positive point of view in practice. As a result, it came more or less into the position of the revolutionaries of the period 1871-1914: while providing valuable theoretical work, its ideas could not yet fertilize the real class struggle; and thus they could not assume the concrete form which they should be given as real, material power.

Organization of capitalism by the state. Irreconcilable opposition of the whole apparatus to the working class

25. In the period between the two world wars, and especially after the great crisis of 1929, a new organization of capital grew, and the contradictions between the increasingly large capital groups developed to such an extent that only an organization of capitalism as a whole by the state could save capitalist power. The period of liberal capitalism was definitively over. Based on private exploitation, it was not the organization of a planned economy but a limited organization in which production is deliberately pushed in a certain direction. The direction was that of the production of means of war to maintain and expand state and capitalist power. It was accompanied by the complete subjugation of the working class by the organization of an enormous apparatus of oppression. Instead of being the "caretaker" of the workers, the state emerges as the organizer of the absolute impoverishment of the working class.

26. The Second World War itself, and the period of capitalist exploitation and oppression that followed it, catastrophically accentuated this trend. The working class is still faced with the stark choice of radical annihilation of capitalism or their physical downfall.

The upcoming new mass movements

27. The mass movements that must come can no longer develop based on the conquest of the capitalist state. The state has too clearly become the mortal enemy of the working class. This is true, regardless of whether the ministerial seats are occupied by official-bourgeois, official-socialist, or official-communist party members. In all cases, the struggle of the workers takes place in irreconcilable opposition to this state, not only against the governments but against the whole apparatus, including old parties and trade unions. Since no fundamental opposition to the organization of the capitalist economy by the state is possible based on state-socialist views, the mass movements must develop not only in conflict with the official bodies of these old parties but also against their entire vision.

28. However, mass movements can no longer develop based on council democracy in the limited sense of 1918 and its aftermath. Workers' councils and workplace organizations can no longer limit themselves to the organization of corporate democracy and local political democracy. On the contrary, the most essential part of their task is the organization of the entire economy of society. In the first place, they must arrive at general social regulations that are intended to organize production and distribution using the working time account in a completely transparent manner. But this is not enough. For it is not enough for the working class to bring about a fair distribution of the

consumer goods produced. Exploitation under capitalism, and certainly at this highest stage of capitalism, takes the form of the production of a large mass of goods which do not serve to satisfy people's needs but, on the contrary, to destroy them. The revolution of the workers must therefore not only stop the production of surplus value for the capitalist, but it must also change the physical form of the product in which this surplus value takes shape. Production for destruction must be transformed into production for needs. It is only by doing this that the working class truly can put an end to the exploitation that takes place because most of its labor is spent in the fabrication of a product that is worthless, indeed pernicious, for sustaining the life of the working class.

29. Such a conversion of production, which covers most of the economy of society, can not happen arbitrarily, in a disorganized way. On the contrary, it must be carried out in a planned manner. In reality, as early as 1918, the working class was faced with the same task, although at that time the need was less obvious than it is today. Even then, however, council democracy would only have been able to overcome if it had been able to proceed to organize a planned economy. The fact that this was not possible at that time is not only a consequence of a lack of understanding among the workers about the necessity of such an organization. The capitalist economy had not yet built up the administration which was indispensable as the basis of such an organization. The workers' councils, therefore, did not find any concrete starting point for such a measure.

30. Today, now that capitalism itself has carried out the organization of economic life, the possibilities are completely different. It is true, however, that these parts of the capitalist state, which are involved in the regulation and administration of the economy, are equally hostile to the struggles of the workers and cannot simply be "taken over"; on the contrary, they must be destroyed; the fact that they are already at the service of the organization of the economy of destruction makes this necessary. The fact remains, however, that the production capacity of the various branches of the economy has been accurately administered, the fact remains that the supply of raw materials is channeled through organized chains of distribution, and the fact also remains that, in the regulation of relations between the various enterprises, not only the profitability of the individual enterprises but also the functioning of the whole has become a certain factor. Furthermore, in each company, we can find accurate data on the production time spent on each component. In various institutes, a special study is made of the various production methods, which are examined for their effectiveness. All these administrative results, all these results of business economic and technical-scientific research are indispensable material for a planned economy to be introduced by the working class. One of the most important tasks of council power will be to appropriate the results of the research and to continue and push them in the interest of the working class in a direction that corresponds to a switch of production to people's needs.

31. The lack of mass movements on a large scale after the catastrophe of the Second World War is due in no small part to the need for the working class to prepare themselves for this new task and to the great difficulties they encounter in doing so. Today, the struggle for the conquest of power is indissolubly linked to the working class's ability to tackle the major problems of the planned economy based on council democracy. Workplace organization alone is not sufficient for this, and workers' councils, with the limited function they had in the previous revolution, cannot help here

either. In previous revolutions, workplace organizations have ensured corporate democracy, workers' councils have organized local political democracy, but only rarely have they intervened in the field of the economy, and then only concerning regulation of distribution. The planned organization of the economy was entirely outside their sphere of interest.

Workplace democracy.

Workers' councils and workplace organizations

32. In the coming revolutionary struggle for the conquest of power, the working class must develop new organs, organizations that take workplace democracy as their starting point, but that has a much broader scope of action than the individual workplace. Just as capitalism has forged the whole economy into an indissoluble whole to which the functioning of the individual enterprise has been made completely subordinate, so the workers' industrial democracy can only exist if it can overcome the limits of the individual workplace and forge a solid bond between them. The organization needed for this purpose cannot be established by decree, nor can it be born spontaneously without prior preparation. The unity of the workers is natural and spontaneous only within the individual company; the unity across borders must be conquered in difficult struggles. In their actions against organized capital, the workers must form and consolidate this new unity, and ever-deepening and widening of their organized unity provides the basis for a further deepening and widening of the struggle. It is necessary, however, that the workers control these very organizations, which summarize the unity between the different companies, as otherwise the entire industrial democracy, including that of the individual workplaces, would be doomed to failure. Since every action stands or falls with this organized unity between workplaces, since the workers in each workplace depend entirely in their actions on the active support of the comrades in other workplaces, it is entirely out of the question that an organization which does not exercise the links between the different workplaces as a function of the fighting workers themselves can remain an instrument in the hands of the workers in any other respect.

33. The new organization can only develop in an unrelenting struggle against organized capital. Every defeat, every victory, every attempt to prevent capital from turning a victory into another defeat, demands cooperation, organized cooperation between the struggling workers in the different workplaces, inter-locally, even internationally. As the struggles of the working class develop on a broader basis, the bourgeoisie's counteraction also moves on a broader front, thus necessitating a further and broader organization of the struggle. In this way, action and organization grow hand in hand. And at the same time, the awareness of the workers grows that this organization is necessary and that it can only be successful if the workers keep it entirely in their own hands. For this too is an experience that is repeated time and again in the struggle. In this struggle, in addition to the temporary successes, the working class will have many more defeats to endure, defeats that can be so heavy that all that has been achieved so far is seemingly destroyed. But even the heaviest defeat, is not complete, the struggle that has been, the organization that has been, lives on in the minds of the workers.

Only there [in the minds of the workers] is the understanding that mistakes made, shortcomings, must be avoided in the subsequent actions, that in the future the struggle must be organized even more broadly, even more vigorously. And also the organization itself is seldom completely destroyed. Of the former connections organized by the masses, a few threads remain, maintained by conscious revolutionaries in the various companies. These threads form the starting point around which the new organization can crystallize in later actions. Then it seems, as if the new organization suddenly rises out of nowhere, seemingly spontaneously, whereas in reality the earlier mass action from which the weak connecting threads have remained as the remnants, had to precede it as a necessary condition.

34. Thus there is an indissoluble link between the three elements of the workers' liberation struggle, the growth of mass action, the growth of the organization, and the growth of consciousness. All three must persevere, not only against the political and economic power of the capitalist state but also against its allies in the form of the old parties and trade unions. Time and again they try to break the struggle of the workers. They try to take the wind out of its sails by advancing demands and opening negotiations, hoping in this way to keep the proletariat away from the autonomous action with which the workers surprise capital without announcement. And when, in some cases, these organizations seemingly support the struggle, they are even more dangerous. By attracting all the functions exercised by the struggling workers, they make these workers defenseless. The intervention of these organizations and the residual trust of the workers in their usefulness, which has not yet been completely lost, will lead to many more defeats. But the workers will also learn from these defeats. They will learn the absolute necessity to keep control of the struggle in their own hands, including the organization of the connections between the companies. In this way, the workers will be forced again and again to build up their organization, materially in real power formations, spiritually in the minds as awareness of its absolute necessity and the nature of its content. Thus in the struggle, the organization grows materially and spiritually and with the organization, the struggle grows.

35. There is no difference between this struggling organization and the organization that the workers will have to use to regulate the economy, once the class struggle has reached the height at which the workers can progress to such measures. In the struggle, they develop an organization that can also be used for this purpose. Precisely because this organization is also necessary for the exercise of power and because it can only develop in a protracted struggle against capital, the "heroic period" of the proletarian revolution, in which the proletariat could, by a single major action, try to subjugate the whole of society, is definitively over. The practice of mass action has forever broken with the illusion, taken over from the bourgeois era, that the revolution can be one great heroic act. On the contrary, it becomes a laborious process of struggle, of organization, of consciousness in the continuous succession of what seem to be victories or defeats.

No victory, no defeat, however, is definitive because they are all just the starting point for further struggle until the workers can assume the various social economic and political functions through their organization.

Tasks and characteristics of the new party

36. In this process of becoming conscious and conscious struggling, the revolutionary party fulfills a great and necessary task. Its task consists in the first place in supporting this consciousness. The lesson, to be drawn from victory and defeat and of which individual workers become more or less aware, is formulated by the party and brought to the masses using its propaganda. It is "the idea" that becomes material power as soon as it seizes the masses. This transforming material power of the idea, as it was formulated by Marx, can only become reality, when it is pronounced loud and clear, when it becomes a conscious common part of the workers' thinking. For this to happen, it is a precondition that an organization exists which brings the thinking of individual workers to a pure, deliberately expressed formulation. The party which has to do this is neither the command post over, nor the center of thought of the workers; it is, however, a central point where all the germinating thoughts unite, where the developing consciousness of the workers is concentrated and expressed. Conceived in this way, the party cannot develop in opposition to the workers; it gets its life's juices from the struggling and in terms of consciousness, growing class, it can only live as long as this intimate connection with the class remains.

37. This general process of consciousness and the related activity of the party has many aspects. What every worker feels, the untenability of the situation, the absolute necessity to destroy capitalism, has to be summarized by the party in clear formulations. The question must be examined in its context, the answer must be given with scientific clarity and inevitability. Equally clear must be the position taken on the organization of communist society and its essential characteristics, the abolition of wage labor and exploitation (including exploitation by the state), the organization of the economy by council democracy based on labor time accounts. The need for the organization of a communist planned economy must be demonstrated, as well as how it can be achieved by the working class. This is an almost unexplored area for the party's activity, which is of the greatest importance. It is necessary to clarify how the proletariat is to build its power organization. All cunning attempts by the bourgeoisie and its accomplices to contaminate the workers' organizations with its influence must be unmasked. The creeping bacillus of the slow dismantling of the workers' right of self-determination must be traced and identified. The party's task in the process of awareness and education is multifaceted. It must always be vigilant against the dangers that threaten the struggle of the workers. As the most consciously committed, the most educated part of the class, the party steps in to recognize the threatening dangers first, to recognize opportunities for new power organizations first, and it must fight for its understanding to be substantially utilized by the workers, by propagating it with words and, it is necessary, to intervene so that its example pushes the working class upwards in its struggle.

38. The practical intervention of the party in the class struggle is not the least important part of its task. Certainly, it can intervene only as part of the class and not in opposition to it. Certainly, its action can only serve to deepen and extend the area of power of council democracy, not to take functions away from the workers. The latter would violate its entire conception, its entire structure, the practice of its entire propaganda, and its daily actions. However, where the workers hesitate to

implement certain measures, the members of the party, as revolutionary workers at the workplaces, can and must take the initiative when the implementation of these measures is possible and necessary. When the workers want to leave the outbreak of action to a trade union board, the communists in question must take the initiative for their action. When, at a higher stage of the struggle, workplace organizations and workers' councils shy away from the question of the organization of the economy, the communists concerned must not only remind them of this necessity, but they must also study these issues themselves and convene workplace meetings to discuss them. In this way, their activity takes place in the struggle and, as the driving force of the struggle, when it stagnates or threatens to run astray.

39. There is no other limit to the activity of the party than the one that expresses its commitment to the class. Helping a mass action, by one's initiative, to get over the dead point, when the masses, by a certain difficulty to be overcome, recoil back, and, holding on to the connections made by the mass action when it is repressed, all this can belong to the tasks of the party. However, all this activity has a revolutionary meaning in the development of mass action only when the party acts as part of the class and is also considered and recognized by the workers as the most consciously fighting part of its class. For a degeneration of the party in the sense that it will withdraw functions from the workers they should keep it in their own hands, there is no other guarantee than the connection to the class and the revolutionary disposition of its members. When this relationship does not exist, when the party is an organ outside the class, it has no choice but to place itself outside the action, in a defeatist manner, or to subordinate the workers to its imposed leadership. Thus, the party can only be truly revolutionary if it is anchored in the masses in such a way that its action is indistinguishable from that of the proletariat in general, except in the sense that the conscious will, aspiration, and insight of the working class is crystallized within it.

40. The new task of the party in the mass movement, the new conception of the purpose of this movement, also determines the structure of the new party. Its members must be autonomous activists with their insight and judgment. Bound to the general and principled views of the party, which are also their views, they have to defend and implement them under all circumstances. They do not know the cadaveric discipline of the unwilling submission to decisions; they only know the obedience from their inner conviction, which originates from the principled view, and in case of an organizational conflict this conviction is the decisive factor. But such conflicts will be rare since also the organizational decisions are only an expression of the members' conviction of principle and of their willingness to realize this conviction in concrete forms. The members take an active part in the deepening of the understanding which is not only carried out through theoretical study but also, and above all, through constant participation in the class movements of the proletariat. In reality, these two elements of awareness are indissolubly linked, for experience gained in the struggle can only really be made useful through the connection with theoretical insight, whereas theoretical study, on the other hand, can only be fertilized by the practice of class struggle. Each party member, therefore, has to participate actively in the class struggle and, at the same time, has the equally important duty of theoretical education. Only the connection between these two elements of awareness and struggle makes him a worthy member of the communist party.

41. This self-activity of the members, this general education, this conscious participation in the struggles of the workers make any creation of a party bureaucracy impossible. By organizational means, however, it would be impossible to find adequate measures in the absence of this self-activity and schooling on the part of the members; but in that case, the party would no longer be considered a communist party. The real communist party, for which the self-activity of the class is the supporting idea, is the party in which this idea has become flesh and blood among its members. For this reason, it would be necessary to deprive the members of their independent judgment and their own activity, against which being a communist in the full sense of the word is a sufficient guarantee. A party with a communist program may yet degenerate, a party consisting of communists never. That is why every member must work himself up to this level, because only by demanding the most of himself will he enable the party to fulfill its historical task in the struggle of the workers.