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For the Victory of the People, for the Program of the People's Front*

By MAURICE THOREZ

Tomorrow, four years will have passed since Thaelmann spoke in our town, in the Bullier Hall, Paris, to assure us of the fraternal sentiments which unite the workers of France and Germany, to express our common desire to unite our efforts forever so that the cause of the working class, the cause of liberty and of peace should triumph in our two countries and throughout the world.

Thaelmann, having fallen into the claws of the Nazi butchers, has been suffering for almost four years in his prison cell.

Having learned the tragic lesson of the events in Germany, the workers of France responded to the appeal of our Communist Party.

Our Party has fought so that the working class, united by the agreement arrived at between Communists and Socialists, rallied around one united General Confederation of Labor, with a membership of almost 5,000,000, will resist the assaults of the fascist bands, will defend the menaced liberties of the people, and will obtain satisfaction of their demands.

Our Party has fought for the triumph of the idea put forward by the Popular Front, namely, unity for bread, for liberty and for peace.

And, in doing so, our Party has efficiently contributed to the grand victory which the people of France gained on April 26 and May 3 last.

THE WORK OF THE POPULAR FRONT

The Popular Front has procured substantial advantages for the workers of our country. The working class, by taking proper action, and through the activities of the Chamber of Deputies and the government, has obtained increases in salaries, has obtained all the benefits of social legislation, namely, collective agreements, paid holidays, which made it possible this year for the old workers to take a vacation for the first time, and the 40-hour week.

The victims of the emergency acts, the small officials and the municipal workers and employees, have obtained the restoration of their previous rates of pay which had been cut down by the Doumergue-Laval decree.

The working people of the middle strata who, up to the present, have been the least favored section, have obtained the following: for the small merchants and artisans—cessation of persecutions, cessation of compulsory sales by auction, and new credit facilities; for the peasants— the Grain Bureau which has permitted them to revalue the price for grain, and has favorably influenced the rise in the price of other agricultural products.

THE COUNTER-ATTACK OF REACTION

The fascist rebellion against the Spanish republic has galvanized and rallied together the forces of fascism throughout the world, and, particularly, in France.

* From the speech delivered on October 30, 1936, at the meeting of the functionaries of the Paris District of the Communist Party of France.

In the economic field, we can observe the sabotage of social legislation, numerous violations of collective agreements, dismissals from work, sabotage of the national economy, and a rise in the high cost of living.

In the political field, in spite of the decree to dissolve the fascist leagues, we can observe the restoration and increased activity for groups which are preparing for civil war.

But we must also record that the insolence of reaction and fascism, the difficulties which confront the Popular Front, are also, as Comrade Zyromski justly wrote in the *Populaire* of October 15: "The result of the non-fulfilment of obligations, the retreat and capitulations of the government in the face of fascism at home and abroad."

In a recent speech at Toulouse, our Comrade Leon Blum was asked: "Is it possible or not, in France as it is today, to have social progress and economic prosperity side by side, to reconcile social justice and civil peace?"

Leon Blum replied to this question in the affirmative.

We Communists also believe in the victory of our people over the forces of reaction and war, but we tell them clearly and frankly: on condition that we henceforth give up the road of capitulation.

IN DEFENSE OF BREAD

I have pointed out that the Popular Front has made an effort to increase the purchasing power of the working masses by increasing wages, restoring previous rates of pay, affording benefits, etc.

But what the working masses have forced reaction to grant them, with one hand, has been taken away with the other hand as a result of the rise in the cost of living.

[Comrade Thorez goes on to quote a number of figures showing the considerable increase in the cost of living brought about by big capital since the month of May, which nobody can contest, and which threatens to annul the victories won, the increases in wages obtained by the working class last June. He then goes on to an analysis of the economic program of the Popular Front, showing that many of its essential points have not yet been realized.]

THE AGITATION OF THE FASCISTS

One of the *Temps* correspondents has admitted in the columns of his newspaper that the so-called "nationalists" were also armed.

Parcels of pamphlets and newspapers have been sent openly through the post to the soldiers belonging to these groups. But note should be taken of the fact that *I'Humanite*, *Populaire*, and *Ouvre* are still prohibited in the army.

The fascist officers take advantage of the difficulties attached to military service and tell the soldiers that "the Popular Front is to blame...."

It has been proven that la Rocque has numerous cells in the army barracks, in the air force, and at staff headquarters. At the same time, we regret to have to state that measures are adopted against militant Communists!

DEFENSE OF PEACE

[Thorez recites the demands of the Popular Front which have still to be realized in the sphere of the struggle for peace:]

The appeal for collaboration among the people and especially, the working masses, to maintain and to organize for peace.

International collaboration within the framework of the League of Nations, for collective security by establishing who is the aggressor, and for automatically and universally applying sanctions in the event of aggression.

Constant efforts for the transfer from armed peace to peace unarmed.

Nationalization of the war industries and the suppression of profits derived from the private manufacture of arms.

The abolition of secret diplomacy; international action and public negotiations to draw into the League of Nations those countries which have withdrawn from it without, however, violating the constitutional principles of the League of Nations Covenant.

Careful application of the measures provided by the League of Nations Covenant for the peaceful adjustment of treaties which are a danger to the peace of the world.

The extension, notably to Central Europe and the East, of the system of pacts which are open to all countries, in accordance with the principles of the Franco-Soviet pact.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

I would like to tell you of the opinion expressed in the weekly *Vendredi*, the editorial board of which is largely composed of Socialist Party sympathizers. In an editorial article entitled "The Responsibility of the Radicals", the *Vendredi* writes:

"For four months we have been seeing the catastrophic consequences of the Laval policy developing, but nothing has been attempted to redress these wrongs. Our diplomacy seems dead....

"Not a single serious action has been adopted. Everything goes on as though it had been decided to leave the field open to those who are a menace to France and to peace...."

We are in full agreement with what the *Vendredi* wrote October 30.

But it is not only Delbos, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but the government as a whole, as the Prime Minister Comrade Leon Blum has repeatedly admitted, that carries the responsibility for the foreign policy pursued today.

Who was it—when Dr. Schacht came to Paris, the day after Germany had introduced a term of two years' military service—that approved the ceremonies for the reception of Schacht, which we consider incompatible with the policy of safeguarding the peace and security of France?

It is Comrade Leon Blum who bears the responsibility for the bogus neutrality that is assassinating our brothers in Spain.

THE HITLER MENACE

Let us look at the facts first of all concerning the menace which Hitler constitutes for the whole world and for France.

This is not merely our own opinion, the opinion of the Communists, but also of the Labor and Socialist International and Comrade Leon Blum who, in commenting on the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the Second International, wrote the following in *Populaire* on August 30, 1933:

"The International is thus taking upon itself the responsibility of leading a sort of coalition of free governments against Hitlerism."

We Communists have repeated a thousand times that we are for unity with all peoples, including Hitler Germany, within the framework of the definite principles laid down in the League of Nations Covenant and included in the program of the Popular Front.

But it was precisely Hitler himself who left the League of Nations so as to be free to

rearm as he wanted to. He has rejected the idea of collective security.

And now Herr Hitler is trying to prevent the French Communists from speaking in their own country; he has dared to send his representative to the Foreign Ministry to protest against the report which I delivered at Strasbourg. He pretends that I have injured the German people!

On the contrary, at Strasbourg, as always, everywhere, our old Comrade Cachin and I not only did not insult the German people, but demanded that fraternal relations be established between the German and French peoples.

We paid homage to the Germany of Marx and Engels, to the Germany of Bebel, Liebknecht and Thaelmann.

There was a time when Germany radiated the thoughts of her philosophers, her savants, her artists, her poets and musicians.

Today Herr Hitler has nothing better to export than his concentration camps.

STOP THE BLOCKADE AGAINST REPUBLICAN SPAIN

We have already demanded, first of all jointly with the General Confederation of Labor and later on with the support of public opinion, respect of international law, the end of the humiliating blockade imposed against the Spanish Republic.

The Socialist comrades in Spain wrote the following in their letter to our brother Socialists in France:

“The position adopted by the Soviet Union at the London Committee of Non-Intervention revealed the unique farce which this convention constitutes for certain of the nations who have signed it, a farce for which the Spanish proletariat will have to pay with their own blood....

“The Soviet Union offered suitable occasion to rectify this serious mistake. France can recover her freedom of action, which, she should never have lost, and which would permit the Spanish government to buy from French industries all that is required to defend those institutions which the people have established for themselves. This attitude, moreover, would appear to be essential by virtue of the Franco-Spanish trading agreement which was only recently signed....”

Unfortunately, the only reply we know of that has been given by the Socialist of France has just been offered by Comrade Severac in *Populaire* of October 28. Comrade Severac wrote:

“The proletariat of the world has no reason to believe that its pressure upon the governments will have any very immediate effect.”

We cannot believe that this is to be the final reply. We cannot believe that the Socialist Ministers, including our Comrade Leon Blum, regard the resolution of their International as a mere scrap of paper.

We would like to hope that they will raise this question without delay both in the government and before the whole country.

It is understood that, notwithstanding the refusal of the leaders, joint working class action and action by the Popular Front as a whole must be organized.

Everything must be done so that the cause of liberty and peace will triumph with the Spanish republic throughout the world!

THE POPULAR FRONT MEANS ACTION

For us, the Popular Front was not a mere electoral coalition; it is not, nor can it be, a

simple parliamentary coalition, an enlarged edition of the old blocs with all their weaknesses and disastrous consequences. The Popular Front is a movement, is action, with repercussions, naturally, in the parliamentary and governmental sphere.

The Popular Front is the action which made fascism recoil after February 6; it is the action which, if the joint program is fully applied, must ensure the success of the Popular Front.

This is why our Party has always been and will remain attentive to the tempo of action of the working class, in order that the peasant masses and other middle strata are not left behind, so that a gulf will not be formed between the proletarians and peasants, and also so as to avoid the possibility of there being any risk of a split in the working class itself.

This is why we said on June 10: "We must know how to stop a strike at the moment when the chief demands have been obtained satisfactorily." That is why we, always in solidarity with the strikers, have said that "it is better, at this moment, not to adopt this form of struggle" in view of the development of the campaigns by the reactionaries which cause doubts and alarm to arise among the small people who fear the possibility of the workers occupying the factories.

MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, WE REQUIRE UNITY OF ACTION

We want to make still stronger the close ties which unite us, in particular, with our Socialist brothers in the Popular Front.

In spite of the prohibition set upon us and the attacks made by the Pope and his cardinals, we shall continue to extend a hand to the Catholic workers.

If we are attacked by them with such vigor, it is as I declared to the editor of the *Revue Catholique* precisely because our appeal for unity has been heard, and we know that there have been big results.

We shall continue to extend a hand to the former members of the "Croix de Feu" and the National Volunteers, to those who have been deceived—just as we shall continue to demand imprisonment for those who deceived them and who want to provoke a civil war.

We Communists consider that to ensure the independence and security of our country, menaced by fascism, we must begin by outlawing the agents of Hitler in our land, the Dorlots and others, preventing them from pursuing their abominable intrigues.

We despise pseudo-Left and pseudo-revolutionary phrases intended to mask their "sacred unity" as against our People's Front. We have already said, and we here repeat:

We are faithful to our allies and friends. We are faithful to our agreement for united action.

We are faithful to our oath given on July 14, 1935.

We are faithful to the program of the Popular Front, which has, in many essential parts, yet to be fulfilled.

We equally intend to remain faithful—and nobody can honestly reproach us for it—to our program, to our doctrines, to our noble ideal of social justice and human brotherhood, to our desire to lead the working class and the whole of our people to a better world, which will ensure to the workers true democracy, because it will finish' once and for all with class distinctions and the exploitation of man by man.

We are convinced that, inspired by the grand example of our brothers in the Soviet Union, themselves taught by the lessons of our own glorious Commune, the workers of France—those who have already created the Popular Front—will find new forms to correspond to the institutions, to the general conditions of our country, and to the inherent

genius of our own people.

Our Communist Party, strong in its membership of over 280,000 people, the French Section of the Communist International, will be able to fulfil the great task with which it is entrusted. It is marching forward towards a new France, a France free, strong and happy!