

Revolutionäre Aktion

Sonntag, 28. Januar 1934

Kampf und Ziel des revolutionären Sozialismus

Die Politik der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands

Im Jahr lang laßt die nationalsozialistische Diktatur über Deutschland, über den Welt-Graubürgerkrieg bei der Seite der braunen Gegenrevolution des Böses und die Aufgaben der braunen Arbeiterbewegung...

Wenn die nationalsozialistische Diktatur sich in die Kampfschritte der Arbeiter und der Massen einmischt, so ist dies ein Zeichen für die Notwendigkeit der revolutionären Aktion...

Der Nationalsozialismus leugnet in seiner Theorie die Klassenkämpfe, seine Praxis vertritt sie auf das Grösste. Seine Herrschaft bedeutet eine unerhörte Steigerung der sozialen Gegensätze...

Das Durchgreifen des Nationalsozialismus zur Überwindung der gegenwärtigen Situation macht die Diktatur der Arbeiter und der Massen notwendig...

Die Bedingungen des revolutionären Kampfes
Der Kampf gegen die nationalsozialistische Diktatur ist ein Kampf um die Befreiung der Arbeiter und der Massen...

Der revolutionäre Kampf ist ein Kampf um die Befreiung der Arbeiter und der Massen von der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur...

Die Aufgabe der Partei
Die Aufgabe der Partei ist es, die Arbeiter und die Massen zu organisieren und zu führen...

Die nationalsozialistische Diktatur ist ein Zeichen für die Notwendigkeit der revolutionären Aktion...

Der revolutionäre Kampf ist ein Kampf um die Befreiung der Arbeiter und der Massen von der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur...

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the law of action upon us through the superior strength of his means, through the brutality of their use, as does the state of German society itself, which is under the most terrible pressure of economic, physical, and mental terror. Small groups are forming; they must gain the techniques for their work through dearly paid experience—an elite of revolutionaries.

When the contradictions at the heart of fascism, when the ever intensifying class antagonisms reveal themselves in capitalism, when dissatisfaction and disappointment shake the mass basis of National Socialist rule, when opposition wings develop and begin a spontaneous mass movement, then the task of the revolutionary elite is to deepen the antagonisms in the consciousness of the masses, to guide their development, to influence their objectives, to expand the connections, and to extend the revolutionary organization into a mass organization.

From the very outset, the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party abroad has placed itself in the service of fostering revolutionary organization, and has applied its energies and means toward fulfilling this task. The pressure of the terror has led to an extensive decentralization of illegal work in Germany. The unavoidable division of labor in Germany itself can only be brought together in the leadership's activity. Every group with revolutionary spirit testifying that its activity serves to bring down the National Socialist dictatorship in the context of working-class unity shall receive assistance and support. The leadership is aware that it requires the constant cooperation and advice of the leaders of the illegal groups.

II. The Goals of the Mass Movement Organization is the tool of the revolutionary struggle. What are its conditions, what is its goal?

The conditions and goals of the struggle cannot be determined arbitrarily; they grow out of the intensifying contradictions of capitalist society and out of the realities of the National Socialist counterrevolution.

We ask: What must the working class fight for under the fascist system, which struggles are forced upon it?

In its theory National Socialism denies the class struggles; in its practice it intensifies them in the cruelest manner. Its rule means an unprecedented increase in social antagonisms, a new stoking of the boiler while forcing closed all valves. The suppression of all organizations of workers and employees, their total disempowerment, delivers them to the despotism of capital, in the interests of which the dictatorship has placed the control of the state. This unilateral shifting of power relations threatens the workers with

Socialist Action Sunday, January 28, 1934

The Struggle and Goal of Revolutionary Socialism

The Policies of the Social Democratic Party of Germany

The burden of National Socialist dictatorship has been weighing upon Germany, upon the world, for one year. The victory of the German counterrevolution has thoroughly changed the character and the tasks of the German workers' movement. The population has been abandoned to bondage and lawlessness in a total fascist state. Taking up the revolutionary struggle to overcome this bondage through the right to liberty, and overcome this lawlessness through the system of socialism—that is the task of the German workers' movement.

I. The Conditions of the Revolutionary Struggle

In the struggle against the National Socialist dictatorship there is no compromise, there is no place for reformism and legality. The Social Democratic tactics are solely determined by the goal of seizing power over the state, stabilizing and asserting it for the realization of a socialist society. The tactics make use of all means to the end of bringing down the dictatorship.

The revolutionary struggle calls for revolutionary organization. The old form, the old apparatus, is no longer, and attempts to revive it do not correspond to the new conditions of the struggle. New organizational forms must come about, with fighters willing to make sacrifices. We are not free in the choice of these forms. At the moment the enemy still imposes

a progressive decline in their living conditions. This risk is increased by an economic policy that raises the costs of all needs of the masses, while increasingly curbing employment in the export industries; it is increased by a financial policy that burdens the masses and puts ever larger parts of the tribute extorted from them the way of individual classes favored by the regime. This forces the masses to fight to secure and raise their material existence. But every wage movement is banned, every strike becomes a political rebellion!

Out of this situation, the call for reinstatement of the freedom of association and the creation of organizations of social struggle as representatives of the workers' interests will necessarily follow. Their freedom of association is not possible without their freedom of assembly, affiliation, and the press. Thus, from the irrefutable needs of the workers arises the demand for political rights, emanates the struggle for their democratic freedom of movement.

As the length of unemployment grows, so does the rebellion among the army of the unemployed against a society that refuses them the right to work, strengthening their demand for reintegration into the production process, and for a system of the economy that no longer severs the working and the unemployed, but shares the opportunities for work equally among all those capable of working. This movement of the unemployed deceived by the dictatorship is aimed directly against the foundations of capitalist society.

Supporting with all available energies the struggles to secure the workers' living conditions and to reintegrate the unemployed into the production process, broadening the front of the fighting workers, making those involved in these struggles aware of their necessary inner connection with the goal of overthrowing the dictatorship—this is one of the first tasks of revolutionary work.

Taking back democratic rights is becoming a necessity to make the workers' movement possible as a mass movement again and to carry out the socialist liberation struggle once again as a conscious movement of the masses themselves. Every democratic right, however, is becoming a threat to the dictatorship's continued existence. The struggle for democracy is thus expanding into a struggle for the total defeat of the National Socialist control of the state.

This struggle is only an interim revolutionary stage toward obtaining full control of the state. The demise of despotism will take place, if it is not caused by external catastrophes, only in violent defeat, only through a victory in the revolutionary struggle. It will occur when the conditions of an objectively revolutionary situation are exploited by a determined party of revolutionary socialism, infused with radical fighting spirit and led by an experienced elite. It can only grow out of the deeds of the masses themselves.

III.

The Exercise of Power

This type of seizure of power determines the form of its exercise.

In the hard, passionate fight to overthrow dictatorship, which always claims many victims, the workers' movement fulfills itself with radical, uncompromising spirit. The political turnaround of 1918 took place at the conclusion of a counterrevolutionary development, which was caused by the war and the National Socialist whipping-up of the masses. The imperial regime was removed not by the organized, prepared, deliberately revolutionary struggle of the working class, but by defeat on the battlefields. The Social Democrats, the only remaining intact and organized political force, took over the running of the state without resistance, sharing from the very outset with the bourgeois parties, with the old bureaucracy, even with the reorganized military apparatus. The fact that they took over the old state apparatus almost unchanged was the grave historical mistake committed by the German workers' movement, disoriented during the war.

The new situation rules out any repetition. The defeat of the National Socialist enemy by the revolutionary masses will create a strong revolutionary government, borne by the revolutionary mass party of workers that controls it. The first and the uppermost task of this government will be to secure control of the state for the victorious revolution, to tear out the roots of every possibility of resistance, to transform the state apparatus into an instrument of rule for the masses.

The revolutionary government will therefore be obliged to immediately carry out radical political and social measures for the permanent complete disempowerment of the defeated enemy. This calls for:

Appointment of a revolutionary tribunal.

Condemnation of the state criminals and their accessories and helpers in politics, bureaucracy, and the justice system for violation of the constitution, murder, and deprivation of liberty, while revoking their civil rights.

Abolition of the ban on removing judges from office. Occupation of all key positions in the justice system by representatives of the revolutionary government. Fundamental restructuring of the justice system by strengthening the layman element.

Cleansing of bureaucracy, immediate re-occupation of all senior positions.

Organization of a reliable military and police force. Complete renewal of the officer corps.

Repeal of all National Socialist despotic laws and rulings restricting workers' freedom.

Full equal rights for all citizens regardless of race and religion.

Separation of church and state.

Prohibition of any counterrevolutionary agitation.

Immediate issue of the necessary social, economic, and financial laws by the revolutionary government.

The destruction of the old political apparatus must be secured against its previous pillars in society. This calls for:

Immediate expropriation of large land estates without compensation, transfer of forests to Reich ownership and Reich administration, use of arable land for the creation of viable farming estates and cooperative operations of rural workers with sufficient funding from the state.

Immediate expropriation of heavy industry without compensation.

Transfer of the Reichsbank to the ownership and administration of the Reich.

Nationalization and takeover of the major banks by management determined by the Reich.

Only after securing revolutionary control and after complete destruction of the capitalist feudal and political power positions of the counterrevolution will the construction of the free state begin with the appointment of a parliament, elected according to general, equal, direct, [and secret] suffrage in individual constituencies. The revolutionary government shall issue the first constituency boundaries.

The parliament shall elect by absolute majority (if necessary by means of a second ballot) the head of the Reich government, who shall appoint the Reich ministers. The revolutionary government shall remain in office until the election takes place.

The despotic system of centralized state authority shall be broken down by the creation of a genuine liberal self-administration within the structured unified state. Self-administrated bodies shall be formed in the political communities for the school, welfare, courts, and tax systems, to which civil servants shall be responsible.

IV.

The Revolution of the Economy

The task of the workers in the new state is the use of the control gained of the state to implement the socialist organization of the economy. The nationalization of heavy industry, the banks, and large estates is not the final destination, but only the starting point for the transformation of capitalist into socialist society.

The socialist economic system eliminates the anarchy of the capitalist mode of production. It thereby overcomes economic crises and unemployment. In the place of the uncontrolled capitalist economy comes the socialist planned economy. In the place of the capitalist striving for profit comes the striving to meet constantly rising demand. In the place of unregulated rationalization for the purpose of raising profit by saving labor, in the place of unregulated inflation of the production apparatus at the cost of consumption comes a planned increase in production forces, an even expansion of production and consumption. In the place of destructive competition of the individual production industries against one another comes their coordinated development.

The management of this reorganization is the task of the highest-level socialist planning office. This authority serves to steer the entire economy. It has the following specific tasks:

Establishment of an economic plan for the development of the entire economy.

Creation of an administrative organization for the nationalization of industry with the participation of producers, consumers, and the state. Preparation of further socialization of capitalist-dominated industries, regulation of production increase, and application of technical progress through steering of capital investments and company loans.

Regulation of the relations between the nationalized part of the economy and the market economy.

The following industries are suitable for nationalization and uniform management: banking and loans, with maintenance and promotion of self-administration of the farming and commercial cooperative societies, insurance, heavy industry, the chemical industry, mass transport of goods and passengers, utilities (gas and electricity).

V.

The Revolution of Society

The socialist society will eliminate ownership based on capitalist exploitation; it will protect ownership based on the work of the farmer and the craftsman. It will bring about a constant enhancement of living conditions, and therefore ease sales possibilities for the products of farming and craft production. It will liberate the labor-based property in the countryside and the city from the pressure of major agricultural and industrial landowners and from the dominance of banking capital. Through its control of the credit system, it will ensure sufficient and cheap provision of the necessary operating loans to small businesses. It will extend old-age, invalidity, and health insurance to the rural and urban middle-classes, and thus increase their economic security. Agricultural policy, liberated from the dominant influence of major landowners, will advocate the promotion and sufficient utilization of processing products of the agricultural economy, provide state melioration to improve farmers' land, and create an adequate agricultural education system to raise productivity on a continuous basis.

The restructuring and control of production will increase the significance of technical and managerial employees' work. Enterprises will still require structured and qualified management in the socialist economy. Releasing these managerial organs from capitalist rule and transforming them into community functionaries will give their work a new content and new dignity.

Educational privilege will be broken down. In the comprehensive school, the upcoming generation will be educated not only for their future professions, but also to fulfill their tasks in the free socialist community. Advancement to higher educational facilities will take place solely on the basis of suitability and talent, with no regard for origin. Teaching and learning material will be free of charge at all levels. The socialist society will reintroduce the freedom of the intellect and the sciences, will protect cultural work and art from the intervention of bureaucratic and church powers, and will give back the inalienable right of personality and human dignity to the individual.

The socialist restructuring of the economy is more than a material matter. It is in itself a means to the end of realizing true freedom and equality, human dignity, and full development of the personality. Labor, previously the source of personal enrichment for some and the struggle to carve out a miserable existence for others, will become a social service for the increase of societal wealth. The masses will no longer work to wrest a meager living space and an existence perpetually threatened by crises from the monopoly owners of the means of production, but will work to shape the socialist future under happier conditions and for higher goals. The planned management of technical progress will vastly raise the

productivity of human labor. The removal of crises will constantly increase society's wealth. The reduction of working hours enabled in this way, but above all the liberation of the human race from the everyday concerns of making a living and looking for work, will enable all members of the socialist community to take part in the treasures of culture, the findings of science, and the pleasures of art. A new public spirit, a new view of life, a new contest to develop all skills will grow: the socialist spirit, in which the new society will be indestructibly anchored.

The more the restructuring of society nears completion, the more the authoritarian state is replaced by self-administration, the more the centuries-old contradiction between state and society will be overcome. In the place of the power state, which rules its subjects through the military, bureaucracy, and the justice system, will come self-administration of society, in which every individual is called upon to join in the public tasks. In the place of the leadership principle and party hierarchy, which mean despotism and lack of responsibility, will come the responsibility of free individuals for fulfilling the tasks of society. Despotism will be superseded by free self-determination of the people; oppression will make way for equality of rights and duties for all in society. Humankind will have abandoned the realm of necessity for the realm of freedom.

VI.

Disarmament and the Threat of War

The National Socialist dictatorship has plunged Germany into barbarism and bestiality, and laden the German people with the deepest disgrace. But Hitler's rule is not only a scandal and a danger for Germany; it also brings the threat of violence against the freedom and civilization of all other nations. The dictatorship has brought pan-German National Socialism to a boiling point in racial fanaticism and megalomania. It is poisoning the youth with a spirit of military aggression, and it is employing all intellectual and material means for feverish armament. It is openly propagating its war goals: a new expansion policy is intended to create new land for settlement in the East, and to annex all areas of "German origin" into the fascist Reich. But the victorious dictatorship harbors even worse threats to these peoples than territorial losses: the whole world is to reap the benefit of German fascism. Just as a new war with the infinitely perfected means of destruction means a threat of the decline of civilization, a victory of the fascist dictatorships means a perpetuation of slavery and bestiality in the fascist states and its extension to the rest of the world.

German democracy raised the call for equal rights in league with the great democrats of the West as a means of organizing and securing peace. The dictatorship has falsified this demand to abuse it for its military intentions. It raises the issue, militarily strengthened, in order to build new military strength through defiance. It raises it in order to form new coalitions as a strong partner, to achieve its political goals. The German dictatorship's foreign policy means a constant threat to peace and thus the compulsion to an arms race. The dictatorship, which came to power through shameless breaches of the constitution, through staging the Reichstag fire, which exerts its power through wanton terror and shameless violation of justice and law, certainly offers no guarantee of adhering to international agreements. It will break them as soon as it considers it expedient to do so.

It is not the task of Social Democracy to hope for an overthrow of despotism through war. Instead, our task is to prevent war. We therefore reject all military concessions to Hitler's Germany. We warn the workers' parties of all countries against underestimating the threat posed by German nationalism. Equal rights for democrats, but no armament for a war-crazed dictatorship! Not one man and not one penny for this system, that is the slogan of German Social Democracy, that must be the watchword of the Labor and Socialist International. Securing peace and protecting the freedom of the nations requires not military concessions, but disarmament and dissolution of the SA and SS formations.

Should war, which may still be prevented by firmness and alert determination on the part of democracy under the influence of its workers' parties, break out nevertheless, the German Social Democrats shall confront despotism in unaltered, irreconcilable enmity. The unity and liberty of the German nation can only be saved by overcoming German fascism.

Social Democracy shall vehemently oppose any attempt from outside to exploit a military collapse of despotism in Germany for the purpose of fragmenting Germany. We will not recognize a peace that leads to a breaking up of Germany and means an inhibition of its possibilities for developing freedom and its economy.

VII.

The Unity of Revolutionary Socialism

With the victory of the total state, the question of overcoming it is posed in cruel clarity. The answer is: Total revolution, moral, intellectual, political, and social revolution!

The Social Democratic Party will aim for a joint front of all antifascist strata in this struggle. It will call the farmers, the small businessmen, the businesspeople who have been deceived by the National Socialists' promises, the intellectuals, who are suffering a previously inconceivable level of oppression and degradation under the present regime, to a joint struggle with the working class.

We have shown the way, we have shown the goal of this struggle. The differences within the workers' movement are being wiped out by the enemy itself. The reasons for the divisions are becoming irrelevant. The struggle to overthrow the dictatorship can be led no other way than by revolutionary means. Be they Social Democrats, Communists, or followers of the numerous splinter groups, in the course of the struggle through the conditions of the struggle itself the enemies of dictatorship become the same socialist revolutionaries. The conciliation of the working class is becoming a necessity, imposed by history itself.

The leadership of German Social Democracy therefore declares itself free from any sectarian seclusion and is aware of its mission to unite the working class in a party of revolutionary socialism. Just as it is prepared to support the illegal work of all groups that lead the struggle against the dictatorship and not against other working-class parties, it opens up its newspapers, journals, and publications for all discussions on the problems of claiming and asserting power for revolutionary socialism, in the conviction that only joint intellectual consideration can enable the realization of the unified revolutionary socialist consciousness for the working class. However, it refuses to allow the form of self-destruction that hopes to perpetuate the division of the working class, the safest protection for the dictatorship, for the sake of exploiting victories that have not yet been won.

The National Socialist rulers boast of having destroyed the revolutionary socialist workers' movement and exterminated the ideal of freedom. They are the victors and they take their brutal revenge on the oppressed. But the greater their victory, the victory of the capitalist powers, the harder their future defeat will be. The capitalist development creates its own gravediggers, and today's triumph is tomorrow's downfall.

We are waging a battle against fascist barbarism for the great and everlasting ideas of humankind. We are the bearers of the greatest historical development since overcoming medieval bondage; we are the heirs to the everlasting traditions of the Renaissance and humanism, of the English and French revolutions. We will not live without freedom, and we will win that freedom, freedom without class rule, freedom up to the complete removal of all exploitation and all domination of people by people!

The blood of the victims will not have flown in vain!

German workers, you now have only the chains of your servitude to lose, but the world of freedom and socialism to gain.

German workers, unite in the revolutionary struggle for the destruction of the National Socialist dictatorship!

Through freedom to socialism, through socialism to freedom!

Long live German revolutionary Social Democracy, long live the International!

Prague, January 1934.

The Executive Committee
of the Social Democratic Party of Germany