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SELECTED
WRITINGS
1944—1949

KLEMENT GOTTWALD

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INTRODUCTION TO SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM KLEMENT GOTTWALD'S SPEECHES ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION INTO A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

This book presents a selection from the speeches made by Klement Gottwald, a leading representative of the Czechoslovak Communist movement and an eminent statesman of post-war Czechoslovakia. Klement Gottwald stood at the head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party for almost a quarter of a century, from 1929 up to his death in 1953. He also took part in the work of the Communist International, and was a member of its Executive in the years 1928—1943.

In 1945 he was nominated deputy premier, and following the parliamentary elections in 1946 he became Czechoslovakia's prime minister. In June 1948 he was elected president of the republic.

Under Klement Gottwald's leadership the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia proved its ability to set up against the country's official bourgeois policies a set of truly revolutionary working class policies, which in the course of years enabled the Party to become the leading force of not only the working class, but of the entire nation, and which enabled the Party to wage a successful struggle for political power, utterly defeating the bourgeoisie and winning victory for the working class in February 1948.

Klement Gottwald played a major role in creating and implementing the programme of national and democratic revolution, and in its development into a socialist revolution. His speeches are therefore important documentary sources contributing to an understanding of the road trodden by Czechoslovakia between

1944 and 1948, the road of a peaceful and gradual transition to Socialism. Although this transition process embodies a number of experiences, which are unrepeatable, specific to this country, it may still be an object lesson for the international workers' and Communist movement, for at the same time it reconfirms the validity of the general laws of Marxist-Leninist teachings on the transition from capitalism to Socialism.

The experience remains significant and topical also because this was the first time in history that the working class, under the leadership of the Communist Party, came to power in a country where capitalism was highly developed and where there were deep-rooted traditions of bourgeois democracy, in a country which had a great many political and economic ties with the capitalist West. The Czechoslovak experience refutes the revisionist claims, made use of by bourgeois propaganda, that Socialism and especially the Leninist principles of socialist revolution are at best applicable only for backward countries with a predominantly agrarian structure, without democratic traditions and culturally less developed, such as Russia was in 1917 or some countries of Europe and Asia after the Second World War.

The struggle of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia for the leadership of the nation entered its decisive stage in the years of the Second World War, in the period of the national liberation struggle. The policy of the National Front realised within this struggle linked on to the Popular Front policy outlined by the 7th Congress of the Communist International in 1935. The front was established on the basis of the broad class union of all strata of the nation, with the exception of the big business class, compromised by its national treachery and its collaboration with Hitlerite fascism. The leading position within the National Front was gradually gained by the working class led by its vanguard, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

It was not without significance for future developments that already in the first days of the Second World War the CPCz, acting together with the international workers' movement, began

the theoretical consideration of a programme for national and democratic revolution and for the National Front, which was formed in the national liberation struggle. In spite of all its alliances with the other resistance groups, the Communist Party remained a monolithic political party which throughout the entire period of occupation (1939—1945) strived to maintain its own organisation. Throughout the national liberation struggle it also conducted its own systematic campaign of social propaganda. It always spoke not only about the overthrow of fascism and about national liberation, but also about the establishment of a more just order in the future independent republic.

Thus it won the favour of the majority of the Czech and Slovak nation who wished to see a restoration of the Czechoslovak state, but who were not attracted by the prospect of a state run on pre-Munich lines. After the bitter experiences of Munich and the tyranny of German fascism, and thanks to the great work of the Communists, it became increasingly clear to the broad sections of the working people that in future they could not link a restoration and development of democracy with capitalism. When later, in the final years of the Second World War, the nature of the liberated republic was being decided upon, the Czech and Slovak people spoke unanimously in favour of people's democracy.

The approaching defeat of the fascist states and the commencement of Czechoslovakia's liberation by the Soviet Army significantly speeded up revolutionary developments, leading to a stepping up of the national liberation struggle of the Czech and Slovak people, which in the Slovak National Rising of 1944 and the May Rising of the Czech people in 1945 grew into a national and democratic revolution.

The programme of this revolution was the programme of the first Czechoslovak governing authority on liberated soil, the so-called Košice Programme, drafted by the Moscow leadership of the CPCz headed by Klement Gottwald. This contained the fundamental political, social, economic and cultural demands of the working class and the broad masses of the people.

The programme characterised the liberated republic as a people's democratic state, guaranteeing fundamental political, economic and social change and permitting no return to domination by the compromised bourgeoisie. The basis of the new state and public administration became the National Committees. The new Czechoslovak Army was to be democratic and antifascist. In foreign policy the new republic was to orient itself on firm alliance and friendship with the Soviet Union. The programme enshrined the existence, individuality and equality of the Slovak nation and its national bodies, and devoted considerable overall attention to the nationality question. A range of political and economic measures were directed against German and Hungarian capital and against the treacherous big business class, the haute bourgeoisie. *A ban was imposed on the restoration of fascist parties.*

The Košice Programme characterised the new government as a government of a broad national front of Czechs and Slovaks, embracing representatives of all those social groupings and trends which had taken part in the liberation struggle at home and abroad.

This government, constituted in April 1945, was entered by the Communists; it was for the first time in the country's history that the Communist Party had become part of the administration.

From the outset the Communist Party was aware that the antifascist bourgeoisie had agreed to the programme of national and democratic revolution so as to preserve its influence on certain strata of the population. It was aware that the possibility of a peaceful transition to Socialism would depend not only on the will of the working class, but also on the strength and resistance exerted by the bourgeoisie. It therefore pressed consistently for an implementation of the Košice Programme, for building the state on people's democratic principles. Executive power was assumed by a National Front government, by Slovakia's national bodies and by the National Committees. The National Committees became the sole organs of the people's administration, the linchpin of people's

power, engaging the broad masses of working people in shaping and realising the policies of the people's democratic state.

Furthermore the state economic apparatus and the armed forces were democratised. In the construction of the new Czechoslovak Army profound revolutionary changes were carried out in its internal structure and character, even though the bourgeoisie still maintained important positions in the officer corps. The security apparatus was in the hands of a Communist minister and the CPCz exerted considerable influence in the ranks of the National Security Corps, the police force.

Concurrently with the establishment of new organs of people's power and the state administration, extensive socio-economic changes were realised in the course of the revolution. On the basis of the confiscation of all the property of the occupiers and traitors an extensive land reform was carried out and National Administration Boards were appointed to run all major industrial enterprises. The nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, mines and key industries in October 1945 was the most sweeping act of nationalisation anywhere in the world in the first year after the war.

The working people expressed their support for the Communist Party in the elections to the Constituent National Assembly in May 1946, when the CPCz won 40 per cent of the vote in the Czech lands and 38 per cent of all votes nationwide, so becoming by far the strongest political force in the republic. The difficult class struggle for maintaining the people's democratic character and full action-capability of this system did not of course end there, but continued further. Indeed, this was to be expected as a matter of course, for the defeat of fascism had brought the end of one stage of the socio-political struggle and the beginning of the next stage, characterised by a new formation of class forces. The differences and the disputes, often of a fundamental nature, which until the defeat of fascism had been buried or swamped by the main tasks of the common antifascist struggle, began to be

more and more apparent after 1945. They grew increasingly sharp and bitter, assuming the most varied forms of the new power struggle. It became evident that the forces which had been obliged to concede formal agreement with the Košice Government Programme were by no means reconciled to its practical implementation and to the irrevocable end of the bourgeois era.

However, neither the working class nor its allies were prepared to be satisfied by the changes introduced so far, for these changes had still not definitively settled the question of political power and moreover they remained a source of repeated attempts to turn back the course of development. Thus right from the very start the national and democratic revolution began to be transformed into a socialist revolution. Meanwhile the struggle for the consistent and thorough implementation of the tasks of the national and democratic revolution, in the course of which the double-dealing nature of the antifascist bourgeoisie made itself plain, gave strength to the socialist revolution and weakened its opponents. This intertwining of the two revolutions, one growing into the other, was characteristic of the entire period from 1945 to February 1948.

The deepening disputes within the National Front led already in the second half of 1946 to the beginning of a split between the Right and the Left. The Left was represented by the CPCz, which was supported by the Social Democrats in the implementation of socio-economic change. The right wing of the National Front consisted not only of the People's Party in the Czech lands and the Democratic Party in Slovakia, but also, as a result of its increasingly anticommunist stance, the National Socialist Party, which together with the Communists and Social Democrats had created the original socialist bloc in the National Front.

Throughout 1947 there raged a fierce class struggle in all fields of political, economic and cultural life, testifying to the attempts of the bourgeoisie to stem the tide of revolution. The CPCz began to orient itself in such a way as to win the majority of the nation

for its policies in the next parliamentary elections scheduled for 1948, when it hoped to gain an absolute majority.

This meant winning the confidence of further members of the numerous middle class in the towns and countryside, preventing them from becoming allies of the bourgeoisie. The CPCz thus asserted the just demands of the small farmers, tradesmen, civil servants and the intelligentsia, and the working people could in this way convince themselves from their own experiences of the true aims of the individual political parties. Especially in the fight to impose a tax on the bourgeoisie's super-profits to recompense the drought-hit small farmers and in the struggle in support of the demands of the CPCz agricultural programme, embodying a proposal for a further land reform, the Party managed to generate immense working-class activity, to create a mass movement of small farmers and at the same time to reveal the anti-popular face of the bourgeoisie. All this led to a deepening of the revolutionary unity of the working class, to a further broadening of the worker-farmer union, to a strengthening of the unity of all workers, and thus the major preconditions were created for a more rapid advance to Socialism.

On the other political side, this development was opposed by a newly emerging anticommunist bloc. When the Communist Party outlined a demand for the full nationalisation of foreign trade, the wholesale trade and all industrial enterprises employing more than 50 people, and for speeding up the expropriation of all land owned above 50 hectares and its hand-over to those who till it, the leaderships of the National Socialist, People's and Democratic Parties made a determined stand against, for implementation of this demand would mean a further encroachment upon private capitalist ownership.

The drive to stop the Communists winning a majority in the elections and to prevent them from carrying out their aims was the real reason why the anticommunist bloc provoked a government crisis. Government ministers representing the National Socialist,

People's and Democratic Parties tendered their resignations in the belief that their departure would render the government unworkable and that the government would then fall. But such was not the case. Fully in accordance with all legal norms, the government remained viable and valid, because only a minority of its members resigned.

The Communist Party, which had wanted to wage the decisive battle against reaction only in the forthcoming parliamentary elections, now found itself in a new situation. Following the resignation of the reactionary ministers the time was ripe already now for the final clash of strength. The Party thus launched a counter-attack. The main device employed in settling the power conflict was the pressure exerted by mass meetings, especially the Congress of Works Councils and the Congress of Farmers' Commissions, which had already been summoned before the outbreak of the crisis. Meanwhile an important instrument for unifying and mobilising the masses were the National Front Action Committees, set up in a revolutionary way, which assumed such an extensive authority that they became the supreme organ of power.

The determined stand of the working people compelled President Beneš to accept the resignation of the reactionary ministers and to appoint a revived National Front government. The government crisis ended on 25 February with a victory for the working class led by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The crisis was resolved by peaceful means and in full compliance with constitutional and parliamentary practice.

The working class led by the Communists did not underestimate, however, the possibility that it might have to defend the revolution using armed force. In the course of the February events it built up its own People's Militia, which together with the National Front Action Committees created the elements of a revolutionary armed force, which could tackle the crisis. These elements were brought into play because there was a danger that

the crisis would be protracted, thus engendering the threat of civil war. The employment of these revolutionary elements in the Party's approach to the situation enabled and assured the peaceful culmination of the process of transforming the revolution.

In May 1945 there had been a fundamental turn in the history of Czechoslovakia, which then embarked upon the road of gradual transition to Socialism. February 1948 not only definitively secured this road of development, but at the same time speeded up the transition enormously. The people's democratic regime began to fulfil the function of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The correct policy of the Communist Party which led to the February victory had a firm basis and a great support in the Soviet Union's wartime victory over fascism, in the alliance with the Soviet Union, in the authority won by that country among the people of Czechoslovakia, in the assistance granted by it to Czechoslovakia in the harsh war years and also in 1947, the year of the harvest failure. Above all, only in such an international political situation of the country could the working class and its Communist Party dare to match its strength with the bourgeoisie without having to fear an attack from outside.

(1)

ON SOME QUESTIONS OF THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF OUR NATIONAL RESISTANCE

Our struggle to regain national freedom and state independence is being waged by us at home and beyond our frontiers within the broad National Front.[1] This means that our national resistance associates all social groupings and political trends which have not reconciled themselves to the subjugation of our country and who wish to fight, to one extent or another, for its liberation. The National Front welcomes as its own anyone and everyone who wishes to contribute and who can contribute in some way to this end, regardless of his past, provided he is not shown to be a traitor. For this reason there are within the National Front also such individuals and groups who in the struggle against Hitlerism[2] wavered in the past and who even today have not arrived at complete consistency, who are carriers of the opportunist policy of hesitation and of vacillation. The weaknesses of our resistance at home and abroad — especially as regards the utterly insufficient assertion of the methods of armed partisan struggle against the occupiers — have one of their roots in the fact that though our National Front is very broad it is not deep enough, and that it suffers the lack of a firm, purposeful leadership.

This firm, purposeful and authoritative leadership of the National Front cannot be represented by any individual party and cannot be replaced by any individual personality. This leadership must be created by a bloc of those political parties and trends which are politically closest to one another and whose social roots and political past offer a certain guarantee that they may play a leading role in the National Front. the people will not allow a return to

power in the liberated republic of that stratum of finance, industrial and agrarian capital which ran the republic before and which was bankrupt all along the line. It is clear that, conceived from a social viewpoint, the bearer of governmental power in the liberated republic can be only a bloc of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, quite simply a bloc of the working people of the towns and the countryside. Politically speaking, this bloc of the working people of the towns and the countryside answers best of all to a bloc of three parties — the Communists, the Social Democrats and the Czech Socialists.

The future political circumstances in the liberated republic will depend to a considerable extent on the agreement and joint approach of these three parties whose social roots and traditions ordain them to play a leading role in the next government. A precondition of course is that these three parties should carry out a truly independent policy of the working people of the towns and the countryside, that through their mediation the working people should truly rule and not be, as they were under the previous coalition regime, merely something of no account.

(2)

ON SOME MEASURES ON THE LIBERATED TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC

The idea of the National Committees is a great democratic idea: National Committees, democratically elected and invested with appropriate authority, can be not only representatives of national unity and the national will, but also bodies through whose mediation the broadest strata of the people of the towns and countryside may participate in administering public affairs and in so doing assert their will.

. . . every National Committee is accountable for its activities both to its immediate electorate and to its superior National Committee, eventually the government. The opinion that the National Committees ought perhaps to be mere advisory organs of officials appointed from above is utterly opposed to the entire democratic spirit and to the idea of National Committees, and cannot be accepted. The only possible set-up is one in which, within the framework of its competence, the National Committee shall be a decision-making body whose office or officials shall have executive powers. The respective National Committee should as a rule appoint its own officials, subject of course to approval by the higher National Committee, eventually the government.

District and Land National Committees may be elected indirectly. District National Committees at conferences of representatives of Local National Committees, and Land National Committees at conferences or congresses of representatives of the District Committees.

A further rule ought to be that members of the National Committees at all levels may be recalled at the request of a majority of their electorate.

(3)

WHAT IS TO BE DONE, HOW ARE WE TO BEGIN. PROCLAMATION OF THE CPCz, APRIL 1945

What is to be done, how are we to begin?

Maintain and strengthen unity! Unity of the people, unity of the nation. Just as you were united in suffering and in the struggle against the foreign intruders, so be united even now, at the time of victory and of work to build anew.

Implement the fundamental clause of the Constitution of the Republic, that the sole source of state power is the people! In every liberated community elect immediately a Local National Committee, and in every liberated district a District National Committee. Put into the National Committees your very best representatives, those who have proved themselves in the struggle against the occupiers and traitors and who are true democrats. At all costs do not allow the National Committees to be penetrated by treacherous elements and by people who actively collaborated with the enemy. The National Committees, which in the province of their activities are responsible for exercising all public administration, are the basis of the new democratic republic. They are organs of the people, and are invested not only with great rights but also great responsibilities towards the people, the nation and the state. Future life in the liberated republic depends above all on how the National Committees acquit themselves. Pay meticulous attention, therefore, that the National Committees make use of their great rights to the benefit of the people, the nation and the state.

Do everything that will hasten the final defeat of the enemy! Support with all your strength the liberating Russian Army and join the ranks of the new Czechoslovak Army. Repair the railways, roads, bridges, telegraphs and telephones — in short, everything that serves the front and that is a condition for restoring the devastated economy.

Get the wheels of production turning again! In every factory and every enterprise elect a Works Committee.[3] Organise a united and uniform trade union organisation of all workers and employees. Repair the damaged factories and speedily get them back into operation. Cultivate every piece of land, and through prompt supplies secure the armed forces and the civilian population with sufficient food.

Safeguard the security of the liberated territory from external and secret agents of the enemy. Set up in all places units of National Militia,[4] which in cooperation with the central security bodies will ensure order and the security of persons and property.

Secure the stolen property of the Germans, traitors and collaborators for the nation and the state. All assets — industrial plants, financial institutions, agricultural enterprises, businesses, shops, houses, and so on — which were in the possession or administration of the Germans, traitors and collaborators, or which have been abandoned, must be placed immediately under National Administration Boards,[5] to be nominated by the respective National Committee in agreement with the Works Committees. Each National Administration Board is responsible for ensuring that the assets entrusted to it are not spirited away, and that publicly administered industrial and agricultural enterprises are put into operation as soon as possible.

The alien aristocracy[6] will be dispossessed, without compensation, of all property and especially of all its landed property. The same is to happen with the land and other property of the Reichsdeutsche who so gravely trespassed against our nation and republic. Land belonging to traitors is also to be confiscated. Confiscated land is to be shared out among our own smallholders, cottagers, the small and medium farmers, sharecroppers and other agricultural labourers. Elect special agricultural commissions of

the National Committees, comprised of representatives of all applicants for land. Get everything ready for an immediate parcelling out of the land as soon as the appropriate law is passed. Until that time take great care everywhere that the agricultural enterprises destined for confiscation are carefully looked after by the National Administration Boards, that the land is farmed and that nothing is wasted.

(4)

SPEECH AT A CONFERENCE OF OFFICIALS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SLOVAKIA IN KOŠICE, 1 APRIL 1945

We are starting to build anew and from the bottom. Does this mean that already today it is time for us to set as our immediate goal the establishment of a Soviet republic, a socialist state? No! On the contrary, it would be a great strategic error for the Party to have such immediate perspectives. Despite the favourable situation, our closest aims are not soviets and socialisation, but rather a truly consistent implementation of the democratic, national revolution in whose full swing we now find ourselves, and this to the very end, so that in the next stage we may be able to open up the road to new goals, as far as possible within the broad National Front and at the head of the nation. Politically our main problem is that we should be able to lead the entire nation as a party of the working people and as a workers' party, and that we should be recognised as representatives of the nation. The strength of the bourgeoisie hinges not only on police batons but on the fact that it has always passed itself off as representing the entire nation, that it has always asserted its class interests in the name of the entire nation, and that in many cases it has been able to set us apart from the nation and to portray us as agents of a foreign power.

Times today are completely different. The nation is seeking a new leader, and this leader can only be the working class and we, the Communist Party, as the party of the working class. And this is the very point for us to assert ourselves as the leading force.

Today we are waging a struggle with the bourgeoisie for the trust of the nation. We are competing to see who can better conduct and administer the affairs of the nation. There is every prospect that we shall stand our ground in this struggle, and that we shall win. The Party has no blot on its escutcheon, and the people have seen it to be a people's party, a party of self-sacrificing warriors.

A second priority for us, of tremendous importance, is the work and the putting to use those bodies which today have been historically established and which according to our plans are to play a decisive role — the National Committees. Today the idea of the National Committees has won universal acknowledgement and even legal validation, and this is a great achievement. Our partners did not imagine the National Committees as organs of government which would have wide authority, and now they see them as a thorn in their flesh. The National Committees are the main arena of the political struggle. It is there that we are contending for the leadership of the nation with our covert and overt opponents. For this reason our activities in the National Committees and in the Slovak National Council[7] are of enormous importance. The reactionaries are going to work at discrediting the idea of the National Committees and at proving that these bodies are not capable of administering public affairs. They are going to undermine them, so as to be able to return to the old order. And therefore every error and every shortcoming of our policy within the National Committees is grist to the mill for our enemies.

And now to our tactics and strategy regarding other classes and social strata. Our tactics today and in the foreseeable future remain the tactics of the National Front. We have embarked upon the building of a truly people's state under the battle-cry of the National Front, of national unity. We are not building the National Front on the basis of our own Communist programme, which has as its goal soviets and socialism, but rather on the basis of a government programme. From the social aspect the National Front

means a bloc of the working class, the peasantry, the urban petit bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and that part of the democratic bourgeoisie, which wants to implement, together with us, our National Front programme. It is according to this that we define our relationship to the political groups.

We cannot govern alone, and they, too, cannot govern alone. They cannot govern without us and we cannot govern without them, although less so. The necessity remains to co-operate with any political group which is compelled towards co-operation with us.

(5)

ON THE POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN TODAY'S SITUATION. LECTURE AT A PARTY SCHOOL FOR REGIONAL AND DISTRICT CPCz OFFICIALS IN THE CZECH LANDS, 9 JULY 1945

The most fundamental, most important fact of today is the total defeat of Hitlerite Germany

This, comrades, is the most momentous fact that we have before us and from which we proceed. Just as the rise of German power in the years 1933—1942 was for our nation and for the working people unfavourable, so the defeat of Hitlerite Germany, the complete crushing of German imperialism and its bearer — Hitlerite fascism — is for us, for the state, for the nation, for the class, favourable. That is the first point.

The second point is that the greatest credit for the fall, for the defeat of Hitlerite Germany, is due to the Soviet Union. In other words, a socialist state. The Soviet Union's main credit for the defeat of German imperialism is generally known. It is known by the nations of Europe which Hitler enslaved. It is known by states all over the world which Hitler threatened and which had to fight against Hitler for their very existence. It is known above all by the working people of all countries. Today simply everyone knows that were it not for the Soviet Union there would be no defeated Hitlerite Germany, no liberated Europe, freed from the Hitler yoke. A result of this knowledge has been the enormous rise of the

authority and power of the Soviet Union, and this again is a favourable factor for us, as a class, as a nation, as a state.

The third point, no less significant, no less important, is that the defeat of Hitlerite Germany brought with it at the same time the compromising of those reactionary fascist forces which had supported Hitler in other countries, which had co-operated with him and which had brought about the national subjugation of those countries. As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, this means that with the defeat of Hitler, the forces of Czech and Slovak reaction, the Czech and Slovak *haute bourgeoisie* and their former political representatives, are politically and morally compromised to the core. And the fact that this class, which guided the destinies of our republic up to the occupation and which afterwards, for the most part of that occupation, supported it and co-operated with it, is now politically and morally immensely compromised — this is very significant for our policy and for further developments in the republic.

Finally there is a fourth point that we must take into account: that Germany was defeated in a national liberation, antifascist, that is to say democratic war. From our side and also from the side of the other opponents of Hitlerite Germany, the war against Hitlerite Germany was a just war, a national liberation war, a democratic war. From this national and democratic character of the war it also follows that the immediate revolutionary consequences of the German defeat have above all a national, antifascist and democratic character.

Until recently, all power in our country was in the hands of the German occupiers. All public, economic and political power, in a nutshell all power whatsoever, was in the hands of the Germans. This power was wrested from the hands of the German occupiers. The German occupation power in our country indisputably no longer exists. Power has been transferred once again to the hands of the Czech and Slovak nation. The German occupiers have been

driven out, their power has been broken and has returned to Czech and Slovak hands. And in this sense, that here power has passed from the hands of the oppressor nation, the nation of the occupiers, the German nation, into the hands of the nation which was formerly oppressed, the Czech and Slovak nation — in this sense our revolution is a national revolution.

But concurrently with the national revolution, that is to say concurrently with the transition of power from the hands of the German nation to the hands of the Czech and Slovak nation, we are waging a struggle against the domestic accomplices of the occupation power, that is to say against the forces of Czech and Slovak reaction and betrayal which collaborated with the Germans, which betrayed the nation, which gave their support to the occupation of the Czech lands and the suppression of their own nation. And insofar as our struggle, our revolution, is directed against the forces of Czech and Slovak treachery and reaction and their political and economic bearers, then our revolution is, at the same time, a democratic revolution.

Our period, then, is a period of national and democratic revolution.

A characteristic feature of today's regime from the political aspect is that we have a government of the National Front of workers, farmers, tradesmen, the working intelligentsia and part of the Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie. The political influence of the working class within the National Front is considerable. The working class expresses the interests of all the working sections of our people, the interests of the nation and state; it is the leading force of the National Front and to a considerable extent it co-determines its policy.

Against whom is this policy directed? It is directed on the one hand against Germans and Hungarians as exponents of the now overthrown nationalist alien domination. But at the same time the policy of our regime today is directed against that part of the Czech

and Slovak *haute bourgeoisie,* which is most guilty of treachery and collaboration with the Germans. This is the line of the political measures expressed, for example, in our refusal to allow the political representatives of the Czech and Slovak reactionary *haute bourgeoisie* to organise themselves politically.

The same line is followed by economic measures, too, the line of nationalising[8] and democratising the economy. As far as the German and Hungarian bourgeoisie are concerned, we are striking out for their economic roots. We want to completely liquidate and nationalise German and Hungarian property. As far as Czech and Slovak big business is concerned, we are undertaking the first steps towards nationalisation and democratisation of the economy by means of the National Administration Boards, in order as soon as possible to make another stride in consolidating our new regime politically and economically.

From the state-political aspect our regime is distinguished by the fact that it is not simply a replica of the pre-Munich republic, but rather a democratic regime of a new type. Our regime is not a regime of a mere formal democracy, but rather a regime of people's democracy, which is expressed in the fact that popularly elected representatives not only pass laws, but that the actual implementation and exercising of those laws is in the hands of popularly elected and appointed representatives. In other words, the state administration is not in the hands of a bureaucracy, as it was in the pre-Munich republic, but is rather passing into the hands of popular bodies, the National Committees. In this, among other things, lies the difference between what was before Munich [9] and what is today. In the pre-Munich republic not even the members of the government laid down the government's policy with final validity. The policy of the government was laid down by Czech and Slovak big business. Although workers were represented in the government through the Social Democrats and National Socialists, this section of the working people exerted no influence within the government, because the leading factor in the governments of the

pre-Munich republic was precisely the Czech and Slovak hard-core bourgeoisie.

Today we have a different situation. Today the working class as a whole is united. United we are advancing. Today the country is ruled by the working class, together with the mass of the peasantry, the urban middle classes, the working intelligentsia and part of the Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie, while the trend of the government, its line of policy, is not laid down as before by big business, but by the working people headed by the Communist Party.

Already the very fact that the programme of our government is the work of Communists, and further the fact that this government programme, as you have been able to witness yourselves these past two months, is not just a piece of paper but is truly being implemented — already these facts speak for themselves. But all the same — and this is something we must be aware of constantly — at the present stage we are proceeding along a line of national and democratic revolution, and not a line of socialist revolution.

Altogether we in our republic are experiencing very distinctive developments which cannot be fitted into any pattern, and during which we must seek our own road, our own method, our own Czech and Slovak policy. The conclusion, then, is this: our regime is a regime of national and democratic revolution of a specific, Czechoslovak type, and its further development depends on how we shall be able to go on steering this revolution in the future while proceeding from our own conditions.

A second issue in this connection is this: Are the possibilities of our national and democratic revolution exhausted? In other words, are we able to go further together with those forces which we managed to mould into the struggle against the Germans and against the Czech traitors? Or in yet other words, are we standing at the beginning or at the end of this stage of development?

Here we must necessarily be very clearly aware that the possibilities of the national and democratic revolution are by no means exhausted, and that we do indeed stand at the beginning of

this stage of development. So far we have only taken our very first steps on this road, and our policy must be rooted in our ability to exhaust all the possibilities that such a national and democratic revolution affords us.

What, comrades, is the most important thing for any revolution, or indeed for any progress? For any revolution the most important thing is to win over the majority of the nation, the majority of the people for the cause of the revolution. We can say that in our given case we have indisputably fulfilled this condition. The majority of the people are in favour of the government programme, and the government programme, comrades, is at the present instant the programme of our national and democratic revolution. The majority of our people, both in the Czech lands and in Slovakia, stand behind this programme and are actively carrying it out. And what is more, comrades, this programme is being implemented by our government and by all the components of our government.

We are enjoying the kind of favourable circumstances which coincide but few times in history: we are carrying out a revolution from above and from below at one and the same time. We are carrying out revolutionary deeds not only from below, for these revolutionary acts are being implemented from above, too. Comrades, in this direction, too, the favourable possibilities for further development are by no means exhausted. In the immediate future the political art of our Party must be and will be in exhausting utterly all these possibilities which we have — all the favourable circumstances created partly by our own struggle, our own policy, but mainly by the defeat of Hitlerite Germany as a consequence of the victory of the Red Army.

The bourgeoisie as a ruling class, especially the *haute bourgeoisie,* have been compromised in the eyes of the nation, disgraced, discredited. Our Party, as the most progressive representative of the working class, has shown throughout its past in the course of the liberation struggle and now in the period of building the new republic its maturity and its ability to lead the nation, to point out to it the correct road to be taken. Hitler's defeat has pressed his

accomplices onto the defensive. But this is not the end of the struggle, for the struggle for the leadership, for the soul of the nation, between us and the treacherous *haute bourgeoisie,* is only just beginning. This struggle is ideological, political, administrative, economic, struggle for power, in a nutshell it is a struggle on all fronts. What is at stake, comrades, is that the working class, and at the head of the working class our Party, should show it knows how to lead better, administer better, run the economy better and rule better than the bankrupt class of the *haute bourgeoisie.*

(6)

CLOSING ADDRESS AT A CONFERENCE OF LEADING REGIONAL OFFICIALS OF THE CPCz IN THE CZECH LANDS, PRAGUE, 16 AUGUST 1945

The character of the present revolutionary period is more or less clear. We are experiencing and executing a national and democratic revolution, and not a socialist revolution. At this given instant, at this given stage in our country, what relationship of forces currently prevails? We have managed to mould within the nation power-political forces which are able to carry out necessary measures in the interest of the national and democratic revolution. We have in our country the National Front, behind which stands the majority of the nation. We have the united mass organisations, a million-strong trade union organisation, a million-strong organisation of farmers, a million-strong physical tranining organisation — organisations which are components of the National Front, which still more than the political parties themselves are broadening this National Front to all sections and strata of the nation; at the same time they are considerably strengthening the progressive elements in the National Front, and up till now they have in effect been a reserve for us. Finally we have our own Party, a mass party hundreds of thousands strong, which plays an outstanding role within the National Front. From the political aspect, from the politico-power aspect, we have here a line-up of national forces able to carry out measures in the spirit of our revolutionary period, in the democratic spirit, in the national spirit.

As a consequence of this formation of national democratic forces we have already taken a series of significant steps on the road of national and democratic revolution. With the measures taken

against the Germans we smashed the political and economic positions of the German bourgeoisie and strengthened the positions of the Czech nation. By banning the treacherous Czech parties we drove the forces of Czech reaction into the political underworld. Through asserting the National Committees as popular organs of state administration we crushed the state-power positions of the forces of reaction. By placing the financial institutions and industry under the supervision of National Administration Boards we broke the economic basis of reaction. Through the confiscation of traitors' land, now already in progress, and by extricating the agricultural co-operatives from the clutches of the big landowners we can smash the economic-political positions of the forces of Czech reaction, and, finally, with the application of thorough measures by the People's Courts[10] we may afflict reaction physically, too. Thus we see that on the road of the national and democratic revolution we have undertaken several very significant and important measures. And right up till now we have remained on the offensive. The relationship of forces within the nation has been developing till now to our advantage, to the advantage of the people, to the advantage of the cause of the nation.

(7)

ON THE FURTHER ROAD OF THE NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION. FROM A SPEECH AT THE 1ST CONFERENCE OF THE CPCz PRAGUE REGION, 2 SEPTEMBER 1945

With the constitutional decree on the National Committees there has occurred a fundamental change in the state and public administration. While previously, in the pre-Munich republic, the bearer of the state and public administration was high bureaucracy, which was alien to the people, often hostile to the people, and which stood like a constable over the last remnants of so-called self-administration, now popularly elected National Committees are — or, more precisely, are to be — sovereign bodies of state power within the province of their activities, accountable and subordinate to their electors, to their superior National Committees and to the government.

The system of National Committees as instituted by us is our own, specifically Czechoslovak attempt to tackle an old question of any truly democratic regime, that is the question of how, through their representatives, the people not only pass the laws, but also implement these laws. I believe that the experiences of the past four months justify our affirmation that despite all difficulties our National Committees have passed in this direction, too, their test of statesmanship.

The decree on placing all the property assets of Germans, Hungarians and traitors under the supervision of National Administration Boards represents a profound intervention into the national economy of our state. The extent of this intervention emerges especially when we consider that during the six-year

occupation period a large portion of our economy passed into the hands of the occupiers and their Czech and Slovak helpers, and thus fell under the terms of the National Administration decree.

Here, too, we have much to do regarding the specific Czechoslovak attempt at thorough democratisation. And this step also has acquitted itself well, saving the nation and the republic immense economic values. It is carrying us over the great difficulties of the transition from a war economy to a peaceful economy. The system of National Administration Boards facilitates for us a logical and matter-of-course transition to the next stage of nationalising some sectors of our economy — to the nationalisation of the banks and heavy and key industries.

Among the other no less principled measures of the present government is the decree on the confiscation of the land belonging to the descendants of the post-White Mountain nobility, the Germans, the Hungarians and the traitors.

Among the first-order state-political problems, which the government has begun to tackle propitiously with its programme, is the Slovak question. It is well known that the Czech-Slovak relationship is being resolved on foundations which are in principle quite new: on the basis of recognising the Slovaks as a distinct nation, and on the basis of the full equality of Czechs and Slovaks.

The tasks with which we are confronted may be classed roughly into five groups.

Above all there is the point that at all costs we should rapidly put our economic affairs in order, rapidly and at all costs improve transport, increase production, both the output of heavy and of light industry, and also improve our entire supply situation.

The second group of tasks ensues from the fact that now we must make a further stride on the road to nationalisation of key economic positions, concretely we must proceed towards nationalising the banks, the financial institutions and heavy key industry altogether.

The third group of tasks ensues from the fact that we should consolidate the state-political and state-power organs of the people, that is the National Committees. In the course of the past four months the National Committees have passed a test of statesmanship. But we would have to be blind not to see that there are still many shortcomings in the work of our National Committees. It is for this reason that the consolidation of these organs, these people's organs of state and public administration, the consolidation and improvement of their work, ranks among our foremost tasks. At the very fore here stand three things. Above all, we must see to it that the people sitting on the National Committees are those who really want to work and who know how to work. Next, we should see to it that the National Committees should develop the greatest possible initiative and should fully use their authority, their competence. A great weakness of the work of the National Committees is that they are not taking full advantage of their competence, that they are not showing enough initiative, that they are still casting glances to the right and to the left, and they are still not conscious of the fact that there is no German whip at their backs and that they themselves are the masters in the sectors and fields into which they were elected by the people. The forces of reaction think that our people are not able to rule and to administer their affairs themselves. They think that our National Committees are going to fail and that the people will then go over to them and ask them to introduce the old system .

We must prove at all costs that these speculations are in vain, and that the people, through their National Committees, are indeed able to rule and to administer their own affairs.

The fourth group of tasks that confronts us is the strengthening and broadening of national unity, of the National Front. It is clear that if in the past four months we have been able to make a fundamental change in the whole structure of our political, economic and social life, and if today after these four months we are now placing on the order of the day such a momentous thing as the

nationalisation of key positions in the economy, then this is among other things thanks to the fact that we have in our country the National Front, national unity.

On the whole, the point is that come what may we must maintain the unity of our nation, maintain the National Front, for only in this way can we cope with all these difficult problems that face us, without crises and without jolts.

Our task is the further building and strengthening of our own Party. Today we are the biggest party in this republic. According to the latest reports from the regions, the total of works and local branches in the Czech lands alone has risen to over 10,000. The membership of our Party runs into hundreds of thousands. Broad strata of the working people attach great value to the significant role played by our Party in the national liberation struggle and the merits it has won in it, and this is shown by the way they are flocking to join the Party. We must set great store by this and build up our Party. Above all we must see to it that in every community we should have a local branch, and in every factory and every institution a works branch. Finally, so far we have only few women in our ranks. Here, too, our ensuing task is to draw still more than before from these great reserves. We must go even deeper, we must strengthen and consolidate our Party still more.

(8)

THE LEADING POSITIONS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY INTO THE HANDS OF THE NATION AS A WHOLE. SPEECH AT A RALLY OF PRAGUE PEOPLE ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONALISATION OF KEY INDUSTRIES AND BANKS, PRAGUE, 25 OCTOBER 1945

Yesterday, the twenty-fourth of October 1945, when the decrees on the nationalisation of the banks, the insurance companies, the mines, the iron and steel enterprises and other industrial branches were signed, will go down as a red-letter day in the history of our republic. That which whole generations of the working people of our towns and countryside fought for and suffered for, that which many of us have dedicated our whole lives to, is being put into practice. The leading positions in our economy are passing from the hands of treacherous, hostile and predatory circles alien to the nation, into the hands of the nation as a whole; the conditions are being created for joyful and indeed free labour for our people, and the economic basis of our national liberty and state independence is being strengthened. In the economic sphere we are making good our internal Munich. In this sense the nationalisation is an act which is national and profoundly democratic; it is a consistent continuation of our national liberation struggle which we waged at home and abroad against the alien occupation and against the bearers of domestic treachery.

But at the same time our labourers, office workers, engineers and our working intelligentsia as a whole are politically mature

enough to know that nationalisation by itself is not sufficient to raise the material well-being of the nation. Nationalisation plus good organisation of the nationalised economic sector plus the correct deployment and use of capable people and mainly plus the comradely, diligent and self-sacrificing work of all people without exception — only all this together will enable us rapidly and without any great jolts not only to overcome the consequences of the six-year German occupation and the war, but in the foreseeable future to improve the overall living standards of our nation.

(9)

CLOSING ADDRESS AT A SESSION OF THE EXTENDED CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 18 DECEMBER 1945

Apropos of our policy within the National Front, for us it was a matter of course that the National Front should not be an end in itself, but rather a means to achieving our socialist aims. So far, as you know, we have been successful. So far the National Front in Czechoslovakia has been dominated first and foremost by our line. So far, naturally regardless of certain compromises and tactical concessions which we were obliged to make, we have asserted our own line within the National Front. So far the National Front has been led by the working class, insomuch as the working class is represented by us.

We would commit a grave mistake if we were in some way to abandon these tactics and to cast doubt upon them. Viewed objectively, the possibility of a further advance within the framework of the National Front under our leadership still exists, we still have the objective preconditions. For the working class to lead the broad masses of the farmers, the intelligentsia and part of the bourgeoisie, these possibilities are by no means exhausted, and we would be making a mistake if we wanted today to renounce this weapon which has proved to be so effective and tactical. What must we do? We must endeavour to intervene actively in the development of internal relationships and to support the left-wing, progressive and democratic elements in the other parties, and to prevent the reactionary elements in those parties from getting the upper hand. We must orient ourselves in those parties on the best, most progressive and most democratic members, and mainly in carrying out the policy of the National Front we must involve the

public in all the issues which we are concerning ourselves with in the National Front, and thus put our partner parties under the pressure of their members so that they should not step out of line. Despite all the election fever, despite all the insidiousness that we see among our partners, our Party must continue to be the bearer of the unity of the nation and the National Front.

Apropos of the peasantry and the urban middle classes, primarily the tradesmen and the rank-and-file intelligentsia, clerical workers and so on, these very strata are the object of the greatest struggle. It was from these strata that the main body of voters for the now-banned parties was recruited, and it is for the votes of these strata that the reactionary elements within the other parties are now speculating. As concerns the farmers, for whom much has been done in the seven months since the liberation, we must acquaint them perfectly with what our Ministry of Agriculture has done for them, and we must capitalise on it. As concerns the urban middle classes, the tradesmen — our Party has really done very little in this direction. It will now be necessary for us to come up in the government and in parliament with a range of initiative proposals aimed at the ranks of small businessmen.

(10)

LETTER FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE 8TH CONGRESS OF THE CPCz, HELD 28—31 MARCH 1946

The National Front, that is to say the union of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, is in the interest of all these component parts and is above all in the interest of the nation and the state. A firm support for the National Front are the unified trade union organisation, the unified union of farmers, the unitary cooperative movement, the unified youth union, and other united and uniform nationwide organisations. Our Party always fought for the unity and the non-partisan nature of these organisations, and it is a point of especial satisfaction for the Party that they were so created. Therefore the Party will in future continue to watch over the unity of these nationwide organisations and consider them to be equal components of the National Front.

One of the aims of the reactionaries is to erode the national unity or to impart to it another sense and another direction. All our people of the towns and the countryside must take a resolute stand against this, for the break-up of the National Front or its leading astray to an incorrect road would threaten peaceful development in the republic and the speedy consolidation of post-war developments, and would permit the reactionaries to go fishing in troubled waters for friction and unrest. All the parties and all other components of the National Front must take good care that no reactionary elements penetrate their ranks, influence their policies, or carry out their disruptive and seditious work from within the National Front.

(11)

TODAY'S SITUATION, THE POLICY OF THE PARTY AND ITS ACTION PROGRAMME. SPEECH AT THE 8TH CONGRESS OF THE CPCz, 29 MARCH 1946

In the first place it was necessary in the liberated republic to ensure an appropriate degree of enforcement of the will and the power of the people, the very factor which bore the brunt of the national liberation struggle against the occupiers. At the same time, as the other side of the same coin, it was necessary to prevent from making itself heard or from coming to power that treacherous clique, which had previously held sway and made decisions in the republic .

The measures carried out and being carried out with these aims essentially follow four directions.

The main objective was to exclude from political life in the liberated republic the chief political exponents of the traitors' clique . . .

Thus it happened that all governmental power in the liberated republic passed to the National Front, which is the political expression of the union or bloc of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, in short the union or bloc of the working people of the towns and countryside.

Concurrently with this measure it was necessary to ensure the people the possibility of direct participation in the state and public administration, that is to give the people the possibility also to implement, through their representatives, the laws, decrees and government statutes. Thus originated our system of National Committees as democratic popular organs of state and public administration, as opposed to the police-bureaucratic administration, which in essence we had taken over from the old Austro-Hung-

arian monarchy and which the German occupiers so perfectly misused for their own occupational and military ends. Our new, people's and not formally but truly democratic system of state and public administration has among other things the great significance that it enables tens, nay hundreds of thousands of people to take an active part in the state administration, that it renders this administration more accessible to popular control, that it makes it difficult for the state and public apparatus to be abused against the interest of the people, the nation and the state. The now perfectly built-up and popularly, that is unbureaucratically, well-functioning system of National Committees plus the government of the National Front gives the new republic its people's, truly democratic nature.

However, this is still not everything. A further, I would say, fundamental guarantee that political power remains in the hands of the National Front, that is in the hands of the bloc of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, is the economic foundation of this political power. This is the profound sense of the great work of nationalisation which we undertook. Here, too, we proceeded in a planned and purposeful way. The first step was the assertion of National Administration Boards in managing the property of Germans, Hungarians and traitors. The next step were the decrees on nationalisation by which all the banks and insurance companies, all the mines and the iron and steel industry, the electric power companies and big enterprises in other industrial branchces were nationalised. Now the nationalisation decrees are being implemented concretely through the gradual creation of National Enterprises. Meanwhile we have fully kept our word, given at the beginning, that besides the nationalised sector of the economy there would exist a broad private economic sector, and that small-scale and medium-scale private enterprise would be a part of our new economic system and would be accorded the full support of the National Front. Thus the economic measures of the National Front are not directed against the small and medium businessmen, but solely against that treacherous clique, which in

the past abused its economic power towards the political bondage of the nation and the republic and which even went so far as to hand over the republic to the mercy of the enemy, for the sake of a full purse. It was in order that this could never happen again that we carried out the great nationalisation action, which is also one of the characteristic features of our new, true democracy.

Finally, the measures against the treacherous clique have followed the line of cleansing our national life. The decree on the People's Courts, the decree on the National Court and the decree on the National Honour have been issued. Some of the main representatives of the previous traitors' regime have been arrested and are awaiting trial.

(12)

DRAFT PROCLAMATION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz ON THE ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 12 MAY 1946

Citizens' political rights have been broadened. Censorship has been abolished and full press freedom has been introduced, along with freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. Young people from 18 years of age have been given the right to vote[11] in elections to the National Committees and to the Constituent National Assembly. Political rights, including the right to vote have also been accorded to officers and men of the armed forces and to members of the National Security Corps. Besides political equality, women have also been granted economic and social equality. Thus from the aspect of individual liberty, too, the democratic rights of our people are broader than ever before.

The crushing defeat of Hitlerite Germany presented us the historic opportunity of ridding our state of the German fifth column,[12] which at the time of Munich and during the occupation showed itself to be an acquiescent tool in the hands of the foreign enemy, and which together with that enemy made an attempt on our national existence.

Externally, we have set up the liberated republic on the sole possible firm basis, on the basis of close alliance and friendship with the victorious Slav great power, the Soviet Union.

(13)

SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 30 MAY 1946. ELECTION RESULTS AND FURTHER TASKS

Comrades! The significance of Sunday's elections to the Constituent National Assembly in our republic was considerable as regards both domestic and international politics. From the international point of view the elections were to show at least two things. First, they were to show that Czechoslovakia remains faithful to the Soviet Union. Secondly, they were to show whether in the special conditions that prevail in our country — the new, people's character of democracy — this democracy is not merely formal, but factual, and at the same time also whether the will of the people gets through in a regime which affords democratic rights to all people including the regime's opponents. I think that on both points the election result matched up to the expectations of those who believed that Czechoslovakia is indeed an ally of the Soviet Union, and that the Communist Party has such an influence that it is able to assert itself even in conditions which give everybody the full possibility to make use of agitation in the election campaign, even its opponents.

As regards domestic politics, far more was at stake. During the elections and especially in the few days before the elections we saw that the People's Party and especially the National Socialists, and in Slovakia the Democratic Party, had quite deliberately taken up the banner of reaction. We saw that under this banner they were attempting to speculate with the votes of the members of the former reactionary parties, which are now banned, attempting to reverse developments. This was absolutely evident, despite all their earlier assurances that they were in favour of maintaining nationalisation,

the National Front, the National Committees and the people's democratic character of our republic. At the last moment they went into the elections with the intention of reversing everything that has been done in the past year. I think that the greatest success of Sunday's elections was that these attempts were rejected.

(14)

SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 22—23 JANUARY 1947

Comrades! It was always one of the virtues and strengths of our Party that it did not make its policies from day to day, that it did not live "from hand to mouth", as they say, but rather scrutinised its everyday policies over and over again from the viewpoint of its ultimate aims. And therefore today, too, just as at every meeting of our Central Committee — and, may I tell you, at almost every meeting of our Party Presidium — we again pose ourselves the question whether the road on which we are going is directed correctly towards our aim, whether we have not deviated from the correct road, and whether we are drawing closer to our ultimate goals. And so it is no wonder that among the responses to questions distributed by our secretariat during the preparations for today's meeting of the Central Committee are many which are concerned with this issue. And even in those instances where these responses refer to partial and relatively minor questions, it is always from the very viewpoint of our great ultimate aims.

At our last Central Committee session we spoke about the fact that in our country we are heading towards Socialism along our own Czechoslovak road, that we are applying the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and following the strategic and tactical rules of Leninism according to our own, specifically Czechoslovak conditions, and that we have already advanced a considerable distance on this road to Socialism. Therefore, comrades, today we are going to scrutinise our entire policy from this viewpoint, and set ourselves aims ensuing from this perspective.

Where lie the causes of the fact that we still very often lag behind, that still everything is not as it should and could be? The causes are of a dual character.

First there are the objective causes, stemming simply from the consequences of the six-year German occupation and the German plunder, from the consequences of the war as they appear in and around our country. It is unnecessary to expand upon this at this forum, for these causes are generally known. What I would like to say straight away, however, is that these causes — at least in our case — are not the main ones, although they are by no means minor ones. However, much of a mess we were in when we emerged from the occupation and the war, we do not have the right today, already almost two years after the liberation, to carry on blaming those consequences. They are not the main causes. The main reasons why we have not progressed further than we have done, why our conditions and relationships are still not more consolidated, are of a subjective character, resting in the somewhat unpleasant relationships that have started to be created within the National Front in the recent period.

I think that we have to make ourselves well aware of this in order to see correctly where the causes lie, where our weaknesses are and where it is necessary to obtain a remedy. Our weaknesses are political ones, resting in the policy of the National Front.

Today we have such a state of affairs whereby the National Front formally exists, the government of the National Front formally exists, from time to time National Front passes certain nice and very momentous documents and resolutions, such as our government programme, the law on the Two-Year Plan [13] and a whole range of other laws, but whereby within the National Front there is more and more strong friction in the practical implementation of these general laws, declarations and programmes. Does this mean perhaps that the National Front has outlived itself? Does it mean that under present conditions the National Front in our country is ceasing to be the political form of the bloc workers, farmers and the working middle classes? It would be a great mistake, comrades, for anyone

to conclude from our critical attitude in dealings within the National Front that the National Front has outlived itself, that it no longer has any justification and that as the political form of the union of workers of the towns and the countryside it is no longer competent. This is not so. We have to be clearly aware that whatever critical standpoint we may have, the National Front remains the political instrument with whose assistance we are holding together the working class and the farmers and working middle classes. I shall speak further on this point, what has to be done for this instrument to be as active as it was in the first months after the liberation.

It remains a fact that the unresolved relationships in the National Front, at the top and at the bottom, too, have as a result a whole range of very unfavourable phenomena and that as a whole these phenomena make up those very subjective reasons why our consolidation is not proceeding as rapidly as objectively it could. We are feeling some consequences of the fact that the National Front is not functioning as it should.

To the questions why this or that is not going the way it should, we have to reply: Because our partners are retarding it. It is not going because all the time, here a little more and here a little less, they are throwing spanners into the works of the machine. We should not be afraid to expose the real culprit behind all the difficulties and mischief we meet with, not be afraid to point to who is responsible. The reply to the question what has to be done must be that there must be more of us Communists than before, we must become a majority. If we are going to have not 40 per cent, but an absolute overwhelming majority, our objective difficulties will naturally not change, but we shall be able to deal with them and with everything that retards our work. I think we have to use this in our agitation and stress it over and over again. When I speak about a majority of the nation which we must gain if we are to advance further, this certainly has nothing in common with the 7

per cent of the Austro-Marxists.[14] You certainly remember how the Austro-Marxists argued, that they had 43 per cent and needed another 7 per cent and then there would be paradise in Austria, and meanwhile they did nothing at all and eventually lost completely. We cannot go in for this kind of percentage gimmick, and this is not what I have in mind when I speak of the necessity to win over a majority of the nation. Our policy is the policy of active struggle against reaction, the policy of conquering newer and newer positions, the politics of reinforcing those positions and of pressing the enemy on to the defensive.

Now for what is to be done in the nearest future. Quite obviously, when I speak of winning over a majority of the nation as a precondition of a further rapid advance on the road to Socialism, this task is not going to be fulfilled in a vacuum, but as a result of active policies and active struggle. Where now is to be the main arena for our confrontation, where are we to match our strength? The main arena, around which all things will turn, will be the struggle to fulfil this year's part of the Two-Year Plan.

Comrades, the devil himself would be in it if, with the honesty of our policy, the honesty which has often been corroborated and confirmed, and with the consistency of our policy, we were not to win over a majority of the nation in the foreseeable future and in so doing make another considerable stride forward, towards our ultimate aims — towards Socialism.

(15)

SPEECH AT A SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 5 JUNE 1947

The countryside is the centre of gravity of our struggle for a majority of the nation. The working class, most of the working class, is solidly behind us. To win over a majority of the nation means to win over still more farmers, especially the medium farmer.

The main difficulty now is the abuse of parliament for sabotaging the government programme. The whole process of preparing laws in the government is already in itself a tedious one. When at long last a bill is agreed in the government and is presented to parliament, the whole business there starts again right from the beginning.

This has nothing at all in common with the rights of parliament. After all, parliament is not composed of other material than the government; in parliament the same political parties are represented as in the government, and in the same proportions. Two things are thus possible: either the leadership of some political parties wishes in this way to hamper and to interfere with the implementation of the government programme, or the leadership of these parties has no parliamentary whip. Whatever the case may be, governmental and legislative work is being made difficult and often only the bare torsos of original bills are leaving parliament as laws.

In the recent period our slogan calling for the winning of a majority of the nation has been meeting an irritated response. We

do not want to win a majority of the nation in order to be able to exclude the rest, but in order that our word, which represents the correct policy, should have the greater validity. We do not want to win a majority of the nation in order to reject cooperation with the other parties, but in order that the correct policy should be better pursued. When there is so much of an outcry around this slogan, then it is evident that the others also consider our aim a realistic and realisable one.

(16)

SPEECH AT A SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 27 NOVEMBER 1947

The denial of participation in National Front discussions to above-party organisations is another dangerous phenomenon. This is an attempt to exclude the people from taking part in decision-making. The people have responded to this attempt with indignation. They were filled with indignation by the offensive and heavy-handed way in which the trade union movement, the farmers' union and the resistance groups were treated. For us and for the people, the National Front is not an old-style coalition, but a union of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, a union of the working people of the towns and countryside. The Košice Programme and the agreement reached by the three socialist parties acknowledge above-party organisations as an integral part of the National Front. Without them it would be impossible to build up the state and a people's democratic regime. Everybody knows, for example, what immense credit is due to the trade union movement for the building up of the republic, and every trade unionist must feel slighted when somebody excludes him from the National Front.

What is being said against the participation of above-party organisations in discussion meetings of the National Front? It is being claimed that such participation would mean a change in the balance of forces, a coup within the National Front. This is false. There is no voting in the National Front. What there is in the National Front is discussion and agreement, and implementation of what is agreed by all. The National Front is not an executive body but a political body, and it is not possible to speak of any upheaval in the balance of forces.

It is also claimed that only the political parties are political representatives of the will of the people. But this is not true. The above-party organisations represent a far broader section of the population than the political parties.

It is alleged that their participation would mean an imitation of the corporative system. But this, too, does not correspond to the truth. For in the corporative system, finance capital aided by the führer-type set-up, subjugated the masses of the people in the towns and countryside. In people's democracy, on the contrary, the participation of above-party organisations in the National Front means the democratic implementation of the will of the masses associated in these organisations.

Anyway, those who today have their mouths full of the National Front are alienating themselves from the very spirit of the National Front. They speak against blocs, but they themselves create blocs. The National Socialists and the People's Party are engaged in making secret agreements from top to bottom, and are themselves attempting to shift the forces within the National Front. For this reason they are forming blocs, for this reason they are striving for a mechanical majority, which is against the spirit of the National Front.

It is not enough merely to talk about the National Front. What we must do is return to the original conception of the National Front, as it was created in the struggle against the occupiers and after the liberation. We, and together with us, our people, have been faithful to such a conception of the National Front, and faithful we shall remain.

When observing the processes which are going on in various parties, we cannot fail to see that conditions within the National Front in its present state are not good. The reason for this is that too many reactionary influences are having a hand in the policies of certain parties. The rather bad conditions within the National Front naturally influence conditions within the government, so that the government's ability to act is being curtailed. Many of the things included in this government's construction programme have not yet

been done, though they should have been done long ago. They have not been done because some of the government parties have resisted it. They did not want the measures scheduled in the government programme to be applied. Because of the resistance of the others, a considerable part of the government programme has not been implemented. The leaders of the National Socialists have even asked their followers not to judge them by what they have done, but by what they have prevented. They are therefore putting up obstacles consciously.

We might have covered much more ground in building the republic if things were not that way. We shall not hesitate to tell the people the truth, to show them the cause of the difficulties and who is guilty. The time has come for all honest people, regardless of their party affiliation, to rally in order to wipe out all reactionary influences which are active in the ranks of the National Front, which are decomposing it from within, and undermining its ability to work.

The National Front — a hundred times Aye! The National Front as a union of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, as a union of the working people of the towns and the countryside.

Though it is being declared for public consumption that no one is contemplating to overthrow the nationalised economy, we know that the forces of reaction are attempting a reversal, that they desire a return to pre-Munich conditions. They want to misuse the difficult food situation for the purpose of cooperating with foreign reaction and of undermining the popular democratic regime. Having slyly installed themselves everywhere the reactionaries will increasingly try to paralyse the activity of the government, parliament and the other popular authorities, so as, at a certain moment, to disable the government and parliament totally. They would like to choose a suitable moment for creating a government crisis and for attempting to set up a caretaker government. In political terms, any such step would have to be regarded as an attempt at a reactionary coup d'état. It would be necessary to counter this with a suitable answer, an answer which would crush the reaction.

What, to see the other side, does the Communist Party want? We want to win over a majority of the nation, so that we may overcome all existing difficulties, provide safeguards for a further and permanent expansion of our economy, and ensure a continued peaceful development and growth of the republic.

Our plan is thus a positive plan, a plan of construction. It is a plan for overcoming the difficulties caused by the bad harvest, a plan for securing food for our people. It is a plan of safeguarding a peaceful development of the republic, of safeguarding its existence from within as well as from without, and of safeguarding our further progress along the road to Socialism. We must mobilise a majority of the nation for the implementation of that plan, and we shall do so.

A guarantee of this is the daily-growing strength of our Party and its correct policy. Ours is a Party which has such strength and attractiveness that in one single day it gains some 35 thousand new members in its already numerous ranks; a Party whose ranks include more than 400 thousand self-sacrificing women of all social strata; a Party which is firmly anchored in its mother-soil, in the masses of the labouring people, and yet at the same time is pushing out roots deeper and deeper into all the other working strata of the towns and the countryside; a Party which is being joined by the flower and the pride of our culture, arts, science and technology. Such a Party as ours indeed has every chance to win a majority of the nation.

And that majority shall be won!

(17)

SPEECH AT A MASS RALLY IN PRAGUE'S OLD TOWN SQUARE, 21 FEBRUARY 1948

The cause of the government crisis lies in the fact that the reactionaries wish to prevent the full implementation of the present government's construction programme, particularly the introduction of a popular democratic constitution, of national insurance laws, of a new agricultural reform, of lower taxation of farmers and tradesmen, and of a number of other laws and measures which would benefit the working people of the towns and countryside.

The cause lies in the fact that the reactionaries wish to destroy the real National Front, the fraternal union of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia, in line with the old slogan of the enslavers: "Divide and rule".

The cause lies in the fact that the reactionaries wish to set our homeland against our Slav allies, particularly against the most powerful of them all, the Soviet Union, while they do not mind in the least that this would be the beginning of a new Munich, of a new national and state catastrophe for Czechoslovakia.

The cause lies in the simple fact that the reactionaries in this country, at the instigation and with the support of reactionaries abroad, are making a decisive attempt at a reactionary overthrow of our people's democratic order and at a gradual liquidation of everything that the people have gained by the national revolution and by the liberation.

The reactionaries at home and abroad fear the results of free and democratic elections, and so they are making a desperate attempt to bring about, before the elections, a shift in the structure of power

in their favour, so that unimpeded they might terrorise the community of our people.

Citizens! Dear friends!

We are now facing the momentous task of resolving the government crisis which has occurred, of resolving it quickly and in a way which would benefit the people and the republic.

We wish to resolve this crisis in a constitutional, democratic and parliamentary manner on the basis of the broad National Front representing all sections of the working people in the towns and countryside.

We propose to complete the government, in place of the ministers who have resigned, with new people who have remained faithful to the original spirit of the National Front as it was shaped in the joint struggle against the foreign invaders and in the victorious national revolution. We believe that there are plenty of such good Czech and Slovak men and women in all political parties and in all nation-wide organisations. Those ministers who have, in fact, deserted the National Front's idea and programme, and who have brought about a government crisis by their arbitrary behaviour, actually acted behind the backs of their own parties, and adopted decisions within small factions, without having consulted their own members. That makes it even more necessary for the honest members of those parties to raise their voices now and to help in the struggle for completing the government of the National Front with people worthy of their confidence.

A government of the National Front, completed in this way and relying on the confidence of the progressive and democratic forces in all political parties and nation-wide organisations, would assume the task of implementing the government's construction programme, particularly as regards the introduction of the new constitution, the national insurance law, the new agricultural reform, lower taxes for the farmers and tradesmen, and the holding of free and democratic elections within the period prescribed by the law.

With this aim in mind, the completed government would present itself to the Constituent National Assembly, and would request its

confidence and support in the implementation of the programme which was approved by the Constituent National Assembly itself after the 1946 elections.

We believe that our people, who for a long time now have been observing with disgust and indignation the increasingly audacious attacks by domestic and foreign reactionaries against our new, people's democratic order, would never tolerate a return of the agents of those reactionaries to the government of the republic. We believe that the people have a firm will and enough strength to prevent this and thus to guarantee the continued peaceful and free progress of the republic towards a better and happier tomorrow. We believe that today's manifestations are a proof of this firm will and strength of our people, that proof of this will be tomorrow's historic Congress of Works' Councils and Trade Union organisations, that a proof of this will be the Congress of the Farmers' Commissions next Saturday and Sunday. And we entertain no doubts that our people shall, if necessary, demonstrate their firm will and strength and put it into practice even more forcefully, authoritatively and decisively.

Citizens! Dear friends!

I am calling on you all to be vigilant and prepared. I am calling on you all, all good Czechs and Slovaks, all of you — workers, farmers, tradesmen and intellectuals — to be united and of one mind. Set up in your communities, in the districts and regions, Action Committees[15] of the National Front, composed of democratic and progressive representatives of all parties and nation-wide organisations. Nip in the bud any provocations by reactionary agents. Be united and uncompromising — and may your truth prevail!

(18)

SPEECH AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKS COUNCILS AND TRADE UNION GROUPS AT THE INDUSTRIAL PALACE IN PRAGUE, 22 FEBRUARY 1948

We, Communists, who continue to adhere firmly to the principles of people's democracy and the state policy valid until now, demand that the crisis be resolved in a constitutional and democratic manner on the basis of parliamentary tradition and in keeping with the will of the Czechoslovak working people.

We demand that in accordance with past practice and in keeping with the will of the people, the resignation of ministers who have betrayed the principles of the National Front and the government programme, be accepted, and that the government be completed with new, faithful representatives of the people and of their organisations.

We demand that the government, completed by new men faithful to the people, relies fully on the real National Front of the working people of the towns and the countryside, that it adopts the construction programme of the present government, and that it ensures, in close co-operation with the people, the implementation of urgent demands, including a new constitution, a national insurance law, a new land reform and lower taxation of farmers and tradesmen, and that it prepares truly democratic elections within the period prescribed by the law.

This is the only way to prevent the confusion and chaos, which the reactionaries wish to provoke, and the only way to guarantee further progress. This is the way proposed by the Communists interpreting the will of the working people proclaimed at the large demonstrations held within the past few days.

I am convinced that this historic congress of yours, as well as all representatives of our political and public life who have the fate of the people and the republic at heart, will also favour this way.

I therefore call on you all to remain steadfast in your faithful adherence to the principles of people's democracy and of our road to Socialism, and to be prepared always to defend our achievements and ideals. I call on you to serve, as the vanguard of the nation, as an example of unity and concord, to keep on strengthening in every way the unity of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and of the entire people — workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia. Set up, in all factories and in your communities, districts and regions, Action Committees of the National Front composed of honest representatives of the workers and other strata of the working people, of democratic and progressive representatives of all parties and nation-wide organisations.

The unity of the working class, the unity of the working people, the unity of the nation, that is the first and foremost guarantee of victory!

Long live the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, the builder of our new People's State and its faithful and determined guardian!

Long live the government of the National Front of the working people of the towns and the countryside, a government without underminers and reactionaries!

Forward along the road of people's democracy, the road of progress, the road of prosperity for the working people and the republic! Forward, not one step back!

(19)

SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL FRONT CENTRAL ACTION COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL HOUSE, PRAGUE, 23 FEBRUARY 1948

Comrades! Dear friends! The honourable task has befallen me to present this assembly a report on the present state of the government crisis, on its causes and on the way to overcome it speedily. In order to understand the background of today's crisis and thus to find the correct road to its solution, we have to be aware of a few basic things. Therefore I take the liberty of beginning my address on rather a broad note.

Our republic has experienced its most tragic period ever in the past few years. We experienced Munich, the dismemberment of the republic, we experienced the German occupation and the war, and despite all the sacrifices made by our nation, despite all the suffering, it was only thanks to the great, heroic efforts of the Soviet Army that we lived to see in May 1945 our liberation and, I would say, our resurrection.

Naturally enough, the trial undergone by our people in connexion with the Second World War and all the things that accompanied that war could not remain without any consequences, especially as regards social shifts within society. We can see similar developments going on around us in a number of others states which were previously occupied and which were then liberated by the Soviet Army. In our country especially, similarly to the other states which I have in mind, it was shown that the former ruling class had not been able to administer national and state affairs in a way beneficial to the nation and the state. It was shown that the

former ruling class had not been able to safeguard the existence of the nation and the republic, that it had even led the republic into a disaster, that in pursuing its own narrow and selfish class interests it did not hesitate to hand over the republic to the mercy of the foreign conqueror, and that when this foreign conqueror settled here it even went so far as to collaborate with the occupiers rather than fighting them, in the interest of maintaining its privileges.

On the other hand it was shown that our working people, who despite their formal democratic rights had in fact been excluded previously from exercising truly public state power, were far closer to the republic, the homeland and the nation than the former ruling stratum. It was shown that the working people were able to fight against the occupiers with great self-denial and self-sacrifice, and that finally with the help of the Soviet Army they were able to safeguard the resurrection of the republic and the nation.

This, friends, had as a consequence the fact that following the driving-out of the occupiers, a considerable part of the former ruling stratum were also driven out of their previously privileged positions, out of economic and political power, and that our people, the workers of the towns and countryside, began to exercise their right to manage their own affairs. This great class, social and power shift within our nation followed the democratic road quite calmly mainly thanks to the fact that the brunt of the work, the defeat of the occupiers, was borne for us by the Soviet Army.

In rebuilding our society and in the construction of a new people's democratic republic, we followed a road which we denote as being specifically Czechoslovak. Its specificity rests in the fact that here, through their immense numerical, moral and political superiority, the people of the towns and countryside, united in the National Front, were jointly able to remove the former holders of power from their former privileged positions by a democratic way. The result of this was that we carried out a range of penetrating economic and political measures, such as nationalisation, the dismantling of the former bureaucratic police regime, the estab-

lishment of new public administration bodies, the resettling of the Czech border areas following the removal of the Germans, and so on, by which our republic — as opposed to the pre-Munich formal democratic regime — received a regime which we call people's democratic.

We were aware beforehand, of course, that the deposed former ruling stratum would not rest content with this state of affairs. We knew that the nationalisation of industry and the financial institutions and the punishment of a section of the collaborators would not mean an end to the physical existence of this former ruling stratum, and that it would still enjoy firm support in a quite considerable sector of the private economy from those capitalists who still remained after nationalisation. We reckoned beforehand with the fact that these capitalist and to a greater or lesser degree reactionary strata would do everything possible in one way or another, come what may, to thwart the development from people's democracy to Socialism. It was clear to us that even though we banned certain discredited political formations, the former Agrarian Party, the Party of National Unity, the followers of Stříbrný and Gajda, and so on, the reactionary elements formerly concentrated in those parties would try to infiltrate present political organisations, and would try especially to turn these legally existing political and special-interest organisations into their spokesmen, and with their help to pursue their reactionary interests. And so we became witnesses of the fact that some parties of the National Front were dominated more and more by this reactionary spirit, that the leaders of some of the governing parties deviated more and more from the people's democratic road, becoming the instrument, the mouthpiece of these very reactionary elements. The eventual result is what we witness today. This is the broad background of our present government crisis. If we grasp this background, we also grasp the character and meaning of the present crisis.

. a direct cause rested in the fact that in connection with the approaching elections and in connection with the economic difficulties that we are facing as a result of last year's drought, some government parties considered that the time had come to proceed to decisive actions which would lead to political reversals, to a political shift of forces still before the elections, which would then enable the gradual demolition and extinction of all the achievements made by our national and democratic revolution.

They considered that, making use of their formal majority in parliament and in the government, they could provoke a government crisis, force the present government to step down, render impossible the formation of a new government enjoying a parliamentary majority, and then proceed to establish a non-parliamentary, undemocratic, that is to say a Civil Service government.

Of course, when they ascertained in time that their plans were revealed, when they became aware that our people would not stand for such an essentially reactionary anti-democratic putsch and that its results would be fatal for its perpetrators, and when the Head of State also announced that he would never become a party to the implementation of such plans, the reactionaries changed course and tried to achieve essentially the same result using other means.

This other road rested in the fact that some parties had created within the government and within the National Front a reactionary bloc, that in all things they had been taking a joint approach against the most powerful party of the government, that especially in the recent period they had tried to push through a series of resolutions which testified to their attempts to paralyse the authority and the activities of the Communist ministers and thus to exclude from actual decision-making and cooperation the party which represented 40 per cent of the electorate. In the recent period it became a custom for them to vote down our individual ministers,

to force majority resolutions upon them, to encroach upon their authority, their competence. What would this mean in practice? It would mean that the nine Communist ministers, representatives of 40 per cent of the electorate, would in fact be barred from sharing in power and in the government. Needless to say, this would have paved the way for a change in the character of the government, which although on the outside would remain the old government, on the inside it would qualitatively be utterly changed.

And further, hand in hand with this attempt to stage a cut-and-dried coup within the government, there continued the already long weeks of direct sabotage of government undertakings. The period of the Constituent National Assembly was drawing to its end. Many and many tasks of the government programme still remained unfulfilled, and yet at the very time when it was necessary for the government and parliament to strain every nerve to finish its job of work before the elections, and thus to show the people that the government and parliament not only make promises but also carry them out, at that very time the reactionaries adopted the tactics of systematic sabotage and the braking of government undertakings. Things went so far that in the past four weeks at least, the government, which met often twice a week, was utterly unable to get down to business and all its time was used up by more and more new attacks, either on the National Security, or on agriculture, or finance, simply on every field which was in the hands of the Communists, and in the recent period especially on the domain of the Minister of the Interior and on the National Security. [16)]

Our people, who by their diligent labour showed after the liberation that they love the republic, that they are able to work for it, that they are able even to make sacrifices for it, our people were already long dissatisfied with many and many phenomena which in the recent period especially had begun to snowball in our republic. In the majority, our people also saw who was the cause of these

woeful phenomena which were arousing the impression that we were already abandoning the old principles of our revolutionary struggle and hastening back to the old order. Our people knew who was to blame. And therefore the instant the parties linked in the reactionary bloc stepped down from the government, the republic resounded with one voice: These people and the leaderships of these parties must not and shall not return to the government. They must not and shall not return, because it was precisely their policies which braked the construction of the republic, which added to the difficulties that we already faced in connection with the drought and other objective causes still further artificial difficulties aroused through their resistance to everything progressive and truly popular and democratic. Our people knew that the government programme, including the constitution, could have been fulfilled already long ago, had it not been for this stubborn and in the recent period ever-growing resistance on the part of the reactionaries. Therefore now, when they have shown themselves clearly for what they are, and when this reactionary bloc has not hesitated openly to shatter the National Front in its old form and to move over into opposition, the united voice of the overwhelming majority of the people cries: Let them stay where they wanted to go!

What is the nature of the road to a speedy overcoming of the crisis, so that rid of the reactionary ballast we might work more successfully, faster and more calmly than up to now? The road for us is a clear one. We want to settle the crisis on a democratic, constitutional and parliamentary basis. We want, and in this we are fully at one with the wishes of the overwhelming majority of our people, the resignations of those who offered them to be accepted, so that they should not return to the government. We further proclaim that mere changes of personnel without changes of policy are not enough, and therefore we say: If we, and together with us our people, reject the return to the government of those who offered their resignations, it is logical that we should also reject negotiations with the leaderships of the parties which created this very crisis.

If we refuse to accept back into the government those who stepped down and if we reject negotiations with them and with the leaderships of their parties, in no way does this mean that we wish to exclude from participation in the government the democratic and honest members and also well-known prominent people from those parties. On the contrary, we want the new people who are to enter the government, the people who have been standing in opposition to the leaderships of their parties, to participate with us in jointly reconstituting the National Front, setting it up on a better, firmer political and organisational basis. I am convinced that in every party and in the nation-wide organisations there will be found more than enough people who are able, honest, democratic and who enjoy the confidence of the people.

It is on this basis that we are proceeding towards a completion of the government, and towards an early settlement and liquidation of the government crisis in the fastest possible time — in the next few days, if not in the next few hours. If anyone asks me "And what about parliament?", then my reply is what I have already stressed: we want to settle the crisis in a parliamentary way. The renovated and completed government will elaborate a programme, it will present itself to parliament, it will strive to win the confidence and support of a parliamentary majority, and I believe that many and many of those members who until now have in fact been pursuing oppositional policies although their parties were sitting in the government, many of these members of parliament will become wiser, will come to their senses and will support a government which will pledge to fulfil before the prescribed date of the elections all the most important points of the government programme which today's National Assembly itself approved in 1946.

(20)

SPEECH AT THE WORKING CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF FARMERS' COMMISSIONS IN PRAGUE, 28 FEBRUARY 1948

The participants in that reactionary conspiracy wanted the land which had been given to our farmers in the interior and in the border regions to be returned to the large landowners. They wanted the revision of the first land reform to be stopped, they wanted to kill the new land reform bill, under which all landowners' soil above 50 hectares is to be parcelled out among needy farmers, they wanted our nationalised industry and finance to be returned to the domestic and foreign capitalists.

They simply wanted to throw our working people of the towns and the countryside back into political and economic bondage. One hundred years after the abolition of serfdom they again wanted to forge fetters of capitalist enslavement for our people. That was the real purpose and aim of the reactionary attempted coup. Do not let yourselves be deceived by various tales being spread by the defeated reactionaries. The pretext under which they created the crisis was certainly futile and stupid. The way in which the reactionaries brought the crisis about, was, if possible, even more stupid. Yet the purpose and aim of the reactionary conspiracy was far-reaching, it went to the very roots of our people's democratic republic.

Today we can note with self-satisfaction that the reactionary conspirators have been defeated, that the people have triumphed, that the republic has been victorious, that the truth has prevailed.

I consider it my duty to express warm thanks to our people in the towns and in the countryside — to our workers, farmers, tradesmen and intelligentsia — as well as real admiration of their attitude at

the time of the crisis. It is no exaggeration if I state that last week our nation was faced with a test of statesmanship. And our people — whether Czechs or Slovaks — have stood that test of statesmanship excellently. They stood it so well that now our allies regard us with admiration. So well that our adversaries are spewing fire and brimstone at us. But that will not disturb us, nor deflect us from the road we have taken.

(21)

ACTION PROGRAMME OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RECONSTITUTED NATIONAL FRONT, PRESENTED IN THE CONSTITUENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON 10 MARCH 1948

At the same time, the people were of generous mind towards the former unrestricted rulers. They nationalised only some of their property and for what was nationalised it guaranteed them compensation. It left many industrial and other enterprises in private hands, and nationalisation did not touch the internal wholesale trade, or exports and imports. The capitalists therefore still had the opportunity to earn money, to trade and to accumulate profits. And the capitalists made full use of it.

That is not all. After the liberation, we left the former plutocrats and rulers with all their civil political rights. We witnessed how court proceedings against traitors and collaborators degenerated into a direct ridicule of the legal and moral feelings of our people, how traitors and collaborators were being set free indiscriminately or how criminal proceedings against them were being stopped, and how only an infinitesimal number of them were punished, and only leniently at that. No wonder then that they soon started flexing their muscles again. They made full use — or rather misuse — of the political rights which had so generously been left to them. They joined legal political parties and legal special-interest organisations, or they sent their agents to join them. They kept pushing themselves or their own people into leading positions in those parties and organisations, directing their work from behind the lines, from secret conventicles. The conduct of certain parties of the former National Front in the government, in parliament, in the

National Committees, in special-interest organisations, in the press and in public life in general — all provided tangible evidence of how those parties were gradually succumbing to reactionary contagion and how ultimately they were entirely degenerating into instruments of reaction. The result of such "development" was that, after May 1945, the *haute bourgeoisie*, though removed from political power, gained political strength, that its influence reached right into the government, and that this influence could be no other than reactionary. In other words: in May 1945 we threw the reactionaries out of the government's debating chamber by the door, and in February 1948 it was seen that they had crept back in through the window.

Such, then, was the economic, class and power-political background of the February government crisis. Having misused their economic positions to enrich themselves, and having subjugated certain parties of the former National Front to the extent that, with their aid, the reactionaries penetrated the government itself, they decided to make a general attack against the people's democratic regime. The immediate aim of the reactionaries was to change the power relationships in the state government and in the entire state before the elections, since they feared an election defeat. The ultimate aim of the reactionaries was to overthrow the people's democratic system, to deprive the people of all that the liberation and the national revolution had given them, to restore to the former owners all that had been nationalised, and to re-establish the unrestricted rule of great and powerful plutocrats.

It should deceive no one that the reactionary instigators of the government crisis did not speak out openly about their ultimate aims. Let no one be deceived by the fact that from time to time those people even kept repeating, for instance, that they did not intend to interfere with nationalisation, that the alliance with the Soviet Union was beyond discussion, and so on. This is the way of every counter-revolution. Every counter-revolution keeps silent about its ultimate aims, and it puts its cards on the table only one at a time. A counter-revolution is at all times interested primarily

in bringing about a reversal of the power conditions in its favour, it is — to put it simply — interested in power. To gather power in its own hands, that means that it has won everything. By this, it gets a free hand to carry out its counter-revolutionary plans right through to the end. The same applied in the Czechoslovak case.

To be sure, those who did not let themselves be deceived by any manoeuvres, subterfuges or pretexts of the reactionaries — were our people. The people saw through the ulterior intentions and aims of the reactionaries, and not only at the moment when the reactionaries decided to stake everything on one card and to provoke a government crisis. The people had had more than enough of what the reactionaries had been up to for many long months. The government crisis provoked by the reactionaries was only the drop which filled the cup of the people's patience to overflowing. And it was not only our working people in the towns, but simultaneously also our working people in the countryside. In their overwhelming majority, they immediately understood that the issue at stake in the government was no petty coalition squabbling about government posts and material advantages, squabbles so typical for the pre-Munich coalition governments. The overwhelming majority of the people saw clearly that the issue was a dangerous attempt to overthrow the people's democratic regime and to bring to nought all that the liberation had given the people. Therefore that spontaneous thunder of the people's wrath and indignation which, from 20 to 25 February 1948, resounded through the entire republic, from the Šumava to the Tatra mountains, and which blew apart the shady plans of the reactionaries like a house of cards.

I do not exaggerate in stating that in these critical days our working people of the towns and the countryside passed a new test of political skill and maturity, and they came through it excellently, indeed, with flying colours.

The completed and reconstructed government is a government of the reconstituted National Front. Representatives of all rejuvenated political parties as well as representatives of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, our largest organisation, are participating

directly in the government. In this sense, the Government of the reconstituted National Front is the executive authority of the alliance of workers, farmers, tradesmen and the intelligentsia. And in this we are reverting to the original purpose and spirit of the National Front, as it was created during the resistance, during the Slovak and Prague Uprisings, and in the days of the glorious liberation.

The completion and reconstruction of the government has been done in a strictly constitutional, democratic and parliamentary manner. This must be recognised by all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The constitution and also government practice decree that the president of the republic, on the premier's recommendation, appoints new members of the government in lieu of those who have resigned. This has been done. The constitution further decrees that any government, that is also the present one, must enjoy the confidence of parliament. The present government of the reconstituted National Front is asking the Constituent National Assembly for that confidence. It is up to you either to give the government that confidence or to deny it. I believe that the large majority of members of this assembly shall express their confidence in the present government. They will do so even more if they correctly judge the government's programme.

(22)

EXTRACTS FROM A SPEECH AT THE CPCz REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN PRAGUE, 28 MARCH 1948

In May 1945 we carried out a national and democratic revolution. We carried it out bloodlessly, by peaceful means, for the blood was shed for us by the soldiers of the Soviet Army, who drove out the German occupiers from our country. At that time, in 1945, we were aware that we were not yet passing over to the socialist order. We were aware that the character of our revolution then was national and democratic. On the one hand we had driven the German occupiers out from power, and on the other hand we had deprived of power the most corrupt, the most perfidious and the most profaned part of the Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie. At the same time, however, we had left untouched part of the material basis of the bourgeoisie, and we had also left it its political rights.

At that time this approach was absolutely necessary, because although our Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie had deeply compromised itself before the war and during the occupation, its further role in the liberated republic had still not been completely revealed. Our people, who had taken over part of the economic basis and the political power of the Czech and Slovak *haute bourgeoisie,* still offered it the opportunity to show its true face in the further construction of the republic, either to make amends, or to be revealed.

We Communists harboured no illusions, but at that time mainly the villages and the middle classes in the towns were still not mature enough to understand what the bourgeoisie was capable of doing after all the acts of treachery it had committed before the war, in Munich and during the war.

Our people had of necessity to pass through a great school following the liberation, in order to see whom they had the honour of dealing with.

(23)

LETTER TO THE CPCz AND CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIAL DEMOCRAT MERGER MEETING

Comrades! I send heartfelt greetings to today's festive gathering of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party at which the merger of the two parties is to be proclaimed, and which is to certify the unification of the working class of Czechoslovakia.

I do not deny that I write this letter with some emotion, and certainly all the other participants in the gathering are experiencing similar feelings. After all, this is the greatest, the most joyful and most glorious event not only in the development of the working class after May 1945 and February 1948, but in the entire history of the Czechoslovak labour movement. The 27th of June, 1948, marks the definitive end of the splintering of our working class, and the beginning of the working class's striding at the head of all the people, united in one Party.

It is important, Comrades, to be aware of what this unity involves. This is no artificial or partial unity which has emerged on the basis of compromises, but a profound fundamental unity, created on the basis of the best experiences of the working class expressed in the theory of scientific Socialism, in the teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin. This teaching, which emerged and grew in the struggle against petit-bourgeois socialism, reformism and other forms of the influence of the bourgeoisie on the working class, stood its ground victoriously at the times of greatest trial, it led the working people in Russia to the Great October Socialist Revolution, it determined the construction of the first socialist state, it was the inspiration of the victory in the world struggle against Hitlerite fascism, and it is the guiding ideology also in the construction of

the new people's democratic states. It is in the spirit of this teaching that the CPCz has pursued its mission from its foundation right up to the present day, paying heed to this country's own labour movement traditions and national history. If today we are uniting on this basis, then this is a proof that our working class has raised itself to its highest level of consciousness, and there is no doubt that we can be proud of this fact.

It is also important to be aware that the unification of the working class is not only the affair of the labouring people, but of all our people, both our nations. The development of society has upraised the working class as the inheritor of all that was great and progressive created by mankind in the past, and has made it also the creator of new values, the like of which human society has never known before. The working class alone has the possibility and ability to eliminate all forms of the oppression of man by man, to realise the ideals of justice, freedom and democracy, to create a new and more noble man, a new and more noble order. The working class alone has the possibility to lead the nation to a new unprecedented advance and to retain and to redouble its national culture. It is therefore self-evident that the other strata of the working people of the towns and countryside should rally around the working class and beneath the banner of its ideas, that the Party of the working class and its policy should become the Party and the policy of all the sound, honest and creative forces of the nation. After many fierce struggles and harsh experiences, this process has led to today's leading position of the Communist Party in our state, and today's unification of our parties is a further confirmation of this fact.

Therefore, and this is the third point, we must be aware of the great commitments that today befall the unified Party of our working class, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. This Party, above all this Party, is today accountable to history for the further fates of the people, the nation, the state. For us to stand the proof of this responsibility it is necessary that our Party shall further tread firmly and unswervingly the road of a truly workers', truly

popular, truly national policy. It is necessary that our Party should be a firm, monolithic and disciplined whole, enjoying the confidence of all the people and maintaining vital links with them. Meanwhile it is necessary to pay constant heed to the fact that the Party's unity and discipline and also the Party's authority within the nation can be built up only on the principles of democracy. Only on the basis of a consistent democracy of inner-Party life, on the basis of all-round criticism and self-criticism, can we preserve the Party as a firm, capable, disciplined whole. The basis of the Party's authority among the masses is that the Communists not only explain and agitate, but also set themselves as a firm example in work and self-sacrifice for the well-being of the people and the republic. Any kind of red tape within the Party and towards the non-Party masses, or even dictation, would mean the annihilation of the Party and its authority among the masses. Let us bear these principles in mind especially today, during the merging of our organisations and in the changes which this arouses in the life of the Party.

This, Comrades, is what I wished to bring to your attention on this glorious day, on the threshold of a new stage of our labour movement. Permit me in conclusion to express my unswerving faith in the strength and ability of our Party as the leader of all the Czechoslovak working people, my unswerving faith in the happy socialist future of our country, as dreamed of by the founders of our labour movement.

Comrade Communists, my hands are clasped in yours!

(24)

SPEECH AT A SESSION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPCz, 17 NOVEMBER 1948

When February was won, some comrades began to be heard saying: "This means we squandered all that time between May and February, half of 1945, all of 1946, all of 1947, right up to February." Some of them said: "What we did in February 1948 we ought to have done already in May 1945, and it would have been settled!" There would be no greater mistake than to allow even a shadow of this way of thinking to remain within our ranks. We, the Party, and together with us, with the Party, the entire nation, all the strata of the nation, had of necessity to pass through a school of almost three years' duration, from May to February, in order to make possible that which occurred in February.

If you only consider what it meant to cope with such great tasks as those which confronted the Party in February, and if you try to match these tasks with the abilities of our Party in 1945, then that in itself will tell you that we would not have been able to cope at that time. But not only that. What was unconditionally necessary for the success of February? For the success of February it was unconditionally necessary to isolate the reactionary elements. And for the isolation of the reactionary elements it was necessary for the nation to know them, to see into their soul, to know whom it had the honour of dealing with. In May we isolated, or we had isolated within the nation, the cout-and-out collaborators, the overt supporters of Munich and the accomplices of the Germans. These were isolated, these were also got rid of. But the nation still did not know what stood behind the representatives of the political parties and groups of that time which had gradually passed over into the reactionary camp. What was necessary was time, the first-hand

experiences of the broad strata of the working people, the broad strata of the nation, in order that this should be clear and that later, in February, these gentlemen should feel themselves in isolation, between two stools. In May the masses would not yet have understood us.

So if we only consider these two circumstances — the strength, experience and ability of the Party to tackle itself already in 1945 the tasks that confronted it in connection with February, and then the isolation of the reactionaries — these two circumstances, if nothing else, show that the period from May to February was absolutely indispensable and necessary.

What preceded, from our part, in order that when it came to the clash of strength — and we knew that such a clash was coming, it was in the air — what did we do to make sure that when it came to it we should be on top and not the others? What did we do? A characteristic feature of the preparations for February on the part of our opponents were their dirty intrigues, behind-the-scenes machinations, behind-the-scenes chicanery and the old methods of so-called parliamentary democracy. Our preparations for that which happened in February, but which could have happened in January or in March, and which had to happen anyway, were these: first and foremost we waged an honest struggle to implement the government programme. This was one of the main political preparations for the February clash. Against all the intrigues and all the demagogueries we waged an honest struggle for the implementation of the government programme, and at the same time, as you know, we pointed our finger in good time, already one year before, at the beginning of 1947, at those who were responsible for the government programme not being fulfilled as it could have been. And the nation in the towns and the countryside went with us. That was one line of our struggle, one line of preparation for every contingency.

A second line, which we elaborated shortly before February, was the outlining of new nationalisation demands and new agricultural

demands still before the elections — new demands going beyond the framework of the government programme approved in 1946 after the parliamentary elections. You know that on this basis we convened the Congress of Works Councils, the Farmers' Congress, and that all this fitted in to those very February days. When I look at it retrospectively, I believe that those further nationalisation demands in industry, in domestic and foreign trade, and then the further interventions into the old ownership of the land, the new land reform, all outlined by our Party — this was for the reactionaries a kind of signal that their eleventh hour had truly come; it made them nervous, it hastened their action and thus also contributed to their mistakes, which we made full and appropriate use of. On this basis of struggle for an honest fulfilment of the government programme, while outlining the fundamental postulates of the new government programme for the elections, we entered the elections for a majority of the nation.

That was our well-known slogan, which they distorted to mean 51 per cent. Although they said that our attainment of a majority was unrealisable and that day by day we were losing any chances of putting it into practice, that is to say, of legally winning this majority in the elections ourselves, they still resorted to an attempted putsch in order to prevent it happening. As you know very well, the situation was such that the reactionaries were confronted with a prospect quite singular in the history of a country where all the attributes of formal democracy had been maintained — the prospect that the Communist Party, heading into the election campaign on the basis of its own programme, on the basis of the work it had done so far, would really win a majority of the nation. Our reactionaries were indeed confronted with such a prospect, with such an acute danger, and this drove them into taking their untimely action.

The ensuing course and consequence of the February days is something that you certainly all remember well. We feel it today and we shall continue to feel it for a very long time.

And so, Comrades, if we want to give a summary answer to the

question of what February showed, we may say this: above all February showed the great political and organisational maturity of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. We may say this without fear of pulling the wool over our own eyes, without fear of deceiving ourselves, without closing our eyes to the weaknesses that we still have. In February, in those few historic days, our Party through and through rose to the occasion. It is the very fire of action, the fire of struggle, that puts to the test, brings to account as it were, all the results of the painstaking work that is invisible in itself but which emerges only during such great events as took place at that time. This, then, was what February showed first of all.

With this is linked the second thing, that February showed the truly leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia within the nation. There were here such wiseacres, quasi-Marxists, who did not like this and who considered it our mistake that especially since May 1945 we had spoken about the Communists having to be the leading force of the nation. They said: "What has this in common with Marxism and Leninism? After all, the Communists are part of the working class, the leading force of the working class! What's all this about the leading force of the nation! You're smashing up the concept of the Communist Party!" I think that our Central Committee is mature enough to comprehend at once the absurdity, the Trotskyist nature, of such a "critique". After all, the whole sense of our struggle was to win our way to the head of the nation, so that the nation, this means above all its working strata, the overwhelming majority, should respect us, acknowledge us as its own Party. We strove and fought by word and deed so that the working class should not be isolated, so that the running of the nation's affairs should pass out of the hands of the unrighteous, out of the hands of the bourgeoisie, out of the hands which had many times sold this heritage of the nation, into our hands. That was the task of our struggle — and now along comes such a quasi-Marxist who says what's all this, are you pretenders to the role of the nation's leaders? Yes, and thank God we won ourselves that role, because without the leading role of the Communists in the nation,

without the majority of the nation acknowledging us as their head, their brain, their leader, the bourgeoisie would not have been isolated; there would have been no Victorious February; and we would not be sitting here. And so the second great lesson of February is that the Party truly rose to the occasion as the leading force of the nation.

The third thing is that February showed the great political maturity of Czechoslovakia's working class. Look, we ourselves knew very well that the workers could be, had the right to be, and indeed were dissatisfied with many things; we knew that they could also be ensnared by the reactionaries' various demagoguery, and that it could also be theoretically possible for them to, so to say, sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. Naturally, it is not possible to make mechanical comparisons, but the difficulties struggled against by precisely the Communists, class-conscious workers in various Western countries — as in our country before the war — stem from the political backwardness which leads a great majority of workers to fail to comprehend sometimes their very own class interests, to fail to comprehend that the main thing is power and that all else is besides the point. And this was what the reactionaries counted with in our country in February, hoping that something similar would repeat itself. We have to give full honour to our workers that they stood this great test of statesmanship just as well as the entire Party. When in those February days we in the leadership of the Party were looking for the link that we had to grasp so as not to lose the whole chain, we said to ourselves that the workers must be told: everything was at stake, the danger existed that the nationalisation would be taken away from them, that the capitalists would return, that the pre-Munich system was to be brought back again. And we knew that the workers would understand. They may have criticised many things, what this or that person did, but when someone came up and reached to touch — or when they had the feeling that someone was touching — their this for himself, what great significance it had, and whom and what class it served. Already before February we had said that one

man: "Hands off!" Here was that great political maturity — the ability to see the great, main, most important thing that is so often lost in the everyday hurry and haste. The fact that the working class stood its ground is the third lesson of February.

The fourth lesson lies in the fact that it showed the true cohesion of the National Front and especially the genuine bloc between the main strata of the working people, between the workers and the farmers. How else could it have happened that when at the top they broke up the government, when they mostly stepped down from the government, when they simply broke up the National Front, right before their eyes, literally overnight, the National Front was revived and assumed for them, for all these gentlemen, the terrifying form of the Action Committees of the revived National Front, in which were represented the farmers, the workers, the intelligentsia, all the working classes. On the one hand they tried to smash the National Front above, and on the other hand this National Front grew up again overnight in such a form that they were then haunted by it. In their waking and sleeping hours they saw only the Action Committees, and even today they are still troubled by them. Thus, the attempt to smash the National Front, to isolate the Communists and especially to draw the farmers aside, proved unsuccessful. February showed that precisely the opposite occurred.

Finally, February showed the immense importance of the state apparatus — the National Security Corps, the radio, transport, the authorities, the army, simply all of what we call the power apparatus. Up till February we had many reasons to be dissatisfied in this direction. Since February, many things have been put right, but still not everything is as it should or could be. But despite all this, our state apparatus, though still not in a fully satisfactory state, played a great positive role in February, so helping the working class, the working people, to thwart the reactionaries' plot. In February it was to be seen vividly, and everyone could witness this for himself, what great significance it had, and whom and what class it served. Already before February we had said that one

of the fundamental changes, as opposed to the pre-war situation, was the very fact that the state apparatus no longer served the classes that it used to serve, but new classes. There had been some worries in this direction — naturally the struggle for the state apparatus is no trifling matter, no joke. February showed that the state apparatus played a significant role, and it was an object lesson for the working class how, as the ruling class, it should take care of its power apparatus. The working class will have to take care of it very conscientiously and painstakingly.

In what is expressed the fundamental change from and since February? It may be summed up roughly in this way: before February, a restoration of capitalism and of the pre-Munich relationships was possible in our country through the internal forces of reaction. You remember that in the Central Committee we once touched upon the question of who of us would prevail, and we said that comrades should harbour no illusions that in our country this question had been settled definitively — not only with regard to our international encirclement, but rather from the political-power aspect. Before February the reactionaries in our country, naturally with foreign assistance, could still mobilise forces which could have brought about a restoration of the pre-Munich relationships, that is to say a restoration of capitalism. The main thing that February brought was the smashing of this possibility to carry out a restoration of capitalism through the internal forces of reaction, through their power-political and economic-political forces. Today the reactionaries do not have the possibility to carry out a coup and restore capitalism through their own internal forces. Today we can state this with assurance, with no fear of lulling the Party unnecessarily into a sense of over-satisfaction and self-confidence . .

Following February, there is now only one possibility to restore capitalism and to restore the pre-Munich relationships in our country, and that is through external forces of reaction, not through all kinds of forces such as radio broadcasts, spies, all kinds of agents, but through war. Only a war against our republic could still

give reactionaries a certain chance to bring about a coup and the restoration of their power. Of course, this war of theirs would have to be victorious. I think that everything testifies to the fact that there will be no war in the foreseeable future, and even if there were a war, then I have no doubt that Czechoslovakia would not be on the side of the losers, but rather on the side of the victors.

(25)

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND OTHER TASKS OF THE PARTY. SPEECH AT THE 9TH CONGRESS OF THE CPCz, 25 MAY 1949

One of the lies of the defeated reactionaries is their later statement that it was we, Communists, who had been intentionally preparing the February events. The obvious facts show, of course, that the very opposite is true. We were the ones in the government and in the Constituent National Assembly who kept on insisting upon the implementation of the government programme down to the last dot, and it was the reactionaries who were increasingly sabotaging the implementation of the government programme. We, Communists, were the ones who kept demanding that all parties of the National Front keep the promises and obligations to the people, and it was the reactionaries who kept avoiding the fulfilment of their promises and obligations like the devil. It was we, Communists, who kept arguing patiently and perserveringly in favour of positive work in the government and parliament, and it was the reactionaries who, by their obstructions in the government and parliament, made the government authorities completely unable to work. And we, Communists, were not the ones to finally provoke an open government crisis; the twelve reactionary ministers, and this is a well-known fact, were those who provoked the Government crisis by submitting their resignations. Until then the initative was in the hands of the reactionaries. But, of course, the events which followed were not due to the efforts of the reactionaries. They were really due to the effort made by us, the Communists, and with us by the overwhelming majority of the working people of the towns and countryside.

It is generally known how the February government crisis was resolved. And statements made by reactionaries at home and abroad

about the alleged non-democratic and non-parliamentary manner of that solution are again some of their obvious lies. What are the facts? They are these: the reactionary ministers of a few government parties submitted their resignations. We, in line with the will of the majority of the people, kept insisting that the resignations be accepted. Naturally, the Prime Minister, as representative of the leading government party, refused to negotiate with the then leaders of the respective parties on the composition of a new government, since it had become clear that those leaders had gone into opposition against the state and had become unfit for positive government work in terms of people's democracy. At the same time, however, we did not abandon the idea of the National Front; on the contrary, we reconstituted the National Front and expanded its base. Thus we acted on the principle that the National Front should be composed of all the really popular, constitutional elements of our nation, and that there were enough people of this kind in all parties and organisations. The only ones to remain outside the National Front were those who had themselves abandoned it, those who had even before represented an anti-national, anti-popular, disruptive opposition within the National Front. And so it happened that after the resignations of reactionary ministers had been accepted, the government of the reconstituted National Front could be restored on an even broader basis. So much for the political side.

And what about the constitutional and parliamentary aspects? On 10 March 1948, as everyone knows, the government of the reconstituted National Front, appointed on 25 February 1948, presented itself and its programme to the Constituent National Assembly, and on 11 March 1948 the Constituent National Assembly unanimously expressed confidence in the government. That is how things stand. The government crisis provoked by the reactionary coup-makers was resolved in a democratic, constitutional and parliamentary manner. It is only natural that it was and could only have been resolved against the reactionary coup-makers, and in no other way.

To be sure, reactionaries at home and abroad must have a lot of

audacity to accuse us of having acted in a non-democratic and non-constitutional manner in the February days. After all, the people do not have such short memories that they could forget how those various "democrats" at home and abroad proceeded in 1938, at the time of Munich. Then, when the existence of the republic was at stake, the domestic and foreign Munichites took scant notice of what was democratic and constitutional. They simply dictated and carried through the destruction of the republic, and in doing so they most brutally trampled down both the Constitution and democracy.

The impact of the February events on our public life has been like a storm that cleans the air. It was only after February that the government programme could be carried out to the full, particularly the great work of national insurance, the revision of the first land reform, and the adoption of a new, people's democratic Constitution. Yet February also made it possible to carry out in a record time the second stage of nationalisation, whereby the economic and political base of the people's democratic regime has been considerably broadened and stabilised. February brought our farmers the new land reform, which put further hundreds of thousands of hectares into the hands of small and medium farmers, and which practically abolished the large landowner class. Only after February was it possible to cope quickly and thoroughly with all those far-reaching demands raised by the memorable February congresses, the Congress of the Works Councils, and the Congress of the Farmers' Commissions. It was especially through this vivid example that our people in the towns and countryside could see clearly how the Communist Party was fulfilling its promises and obligations, and how a real, reconstituted National Front should be working. That was also why in the May elections to the National Assembly, held within the period prescribed by the law, the list of candidates of the reconstituted National Front led by the Communist Party was so unequivocally victorious. Through the elections the February victory of the people was solemnly endorsed and consolidated. And when, after the resignation of the former

president, a fundamental change was also made in that important constitutional office, it implied a still greater consolidation of the February victory and a stronger guarantee that this country's affairs would continue to be run in the spirit of the February slogan: Forward, not one step back! Forward — towards Socialism!

1) THE NATIONAL FRONT as a bloc of the working class, the farmers, the urban middle class, the patriotic intelligentsia and a smaller part of the democratic bourgeoisie was created in Czechoslovakia during the national liberation struggle in the years of the Second World War. It was officially constituted towards the end of the war, its membership consisting of the political parties which had taken part in the liberation struggle. After 1945 nationwide mass organisations (the united trade unions, the youth organisation, etc.) also became components of the National Front. In a modified form and with a different content (as a class union of the working class, the working farmers and the intelligentsia headed by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) the National Front continues to exist during the current stage of constructing an advanced socialist society.

2) HITLERISM — the ideology of fascist Germany led by Adolf Hitler, which in March 1939 subjugated Czechoslovakia. The part inhabited by the Czech nation was occupied, creating what was known as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, while the part inhabited by the Slovak nation was declared an independent Slovak state, in fact a fascist satellite state. Czechoslovakia's state independence and unity was restored following the defeat of Hitlerite Germany in May 1945.

3) WORKS COMMITTEE — during the Second World War, the underground Communist Party set up bodies in the factories to struggle against the occupation power of Hitler Germany. In the days of the country's liberation by the Soviet Army they were transformed into revolutionary Works Committees or Works Councils, which organised the defence of the factories, drove out from them the occupiers and traitors, took care of the resumption of production and dealt with the needs of the workers.

4) THE NATIONAL MILITIA was set up in Czechoslovakia in the last phase of the Second World War and in the developing national and democratic revolution as a form of arming the people. Following the take-over of power by the lawful Czechoslovak government and by its armed forces the militia ceased to exist.

5) NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION BOARDS were instituted according to a presidential decree from May 1945, to manage the property of the Germans, Hungarians and traitors, and also enterprises where national administration was required to secure a steady production flow. The National Administration Boards were a temporary measure and were to exist pending a final decision from a legislative assembly. With the signing of the decrees on nationalising key industries in October 1945, the

majority of nationally administered enterprises were transformed into National (i. e. nationalised) Enterprises.

6) THE ALIEN ARISTOCRACY (also known as the post-White Mountain nobility) — following the defeat of the revolt of the Czech protestant nobility in 1620, their property was confiscated by the monarch and sold to the catholic, mostly German aristocracy. Thus two-thirds of the country's noble estates found their way into non-Czech hands.

7) THE SLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL — a representative body with legislative power on the territory of Slovakia. The creation of the council was an acknowledgement of the existence of a distinct Slovak nation, which had been denied in pre-war Czechoslovakia.

8) NATIONALISATION — the first stage of the nationalisation of Czechoslovak industry was carried out on the basis of a presidential decree signed in October 1945. The Decree on Nationalisation covered the entire power industry, the mines, iron and steel, armaments and most chemical works. In other branches of industry, nationalisation extended to enterprises employing between 150 and 500 people, depending on their industrial character. Nationalised industry subsequently accounted for 75 per cent of the country's ouput.

9) MUNICH — on 29 September 1938 representatives of the governments of Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy met in Munich, where they decided that Czechoslovakia should cede to fascist Germany its frontier regions which were inhabited by a German minority. The conference decreed that the regions should be handed over to German troops from 1—10 October 1938. It also demanded that Czechoslovakia should ensure a settlement of the problem of the Polish and Hungarian minorities, too, within a period of three months. The government of bourgeois Czechoslovakia capitulated to the Munich Diktat. "Munich" meant the beginning of the complete dismemberment of the Czechoslovak Republic, the loss of the country's statehood and national freedom and of the independence of the Czech and Slovak nation, and was the prelude to the Second World War.

10) THE PEOPLE'S COURTS were special courts set up after the Second World War in Czechoslovakia on the basis of a presidential decree signed in May 1945. The courts were to see to the punishment of Nazi criminals, traitors and their accomplices, and were presided over by professional and lay judges. They were abolished at the end of 1948. The National Court was set up for the purpose of punishing the highest political representatives from the period of the fascist occupation in 1939—1945 (members of the collaborationist governments, leaders of fascist organisations, etc.). This supreme revolutionary court ceased activities in May 1947.

11) VOTING RIGHTS — in pre-war Czechoslovakia the right to vote and the right to stand for election to public office was granted to all citizens of the age of 21 years and over.

12) THE GERMAN FIFTH COLUMN — the overwhelming majority of Germans living in bourgeois Czechoslovakia became acquiescent tools of the policy of conquest pursued by German imperialism against the republic, and they helped fascist Germany to break it up. The Potsdam Conference of the three allies in the Second World War, the Soviet Union, the USA and Great Britain, therefore decided in 1945 that these Germans should be moved from Czechoslovakia. This was implemented by 1947. Germans who were proven anti-fascists retained Czechoslovak citizenship and were offered the choice of remaining in Czechoslovakia or voluntarily moving to Germany.

13) THE TWO-YEAR PLAN — the law on the two-year economic plan for restoring and building up the national economy in 1947—1948 was approved by parliament in October 1946. Its main task was to match pre-war industrial output and to boost it by 10 per cent by the end of 1948.

14) AUSTRO-MARXISM was the opportunist and revisionist ideology of the Austrian Social Democrats, elaborated from the 1890's and promoted internationally especially following the First World War. One of the Austro-Marxists' theses was that the bourgeois social order may be transformed into a socialist one without recourse to revolution, by means of an electoral victory and by the predominance of representatives of socialist and workers' parties in the bourgeois parliament.

15) ACTION COMMITTEES of the National Front began to be created in the course of the political crisis in February 1948 at the call of the Communist Party. They were set up in communities, districts, regions, in factories, offices and institutions as bodies of the working people in the struggle against reactionary attempts to turn developments in Czechoslovakia back towards the bourgeois social order. Within the Action Committees, Communists worked together with members of other political parties, and representatives of the trade unions, youth organisations and other nationwide mass organisations. The Action Committees contributed to the peaceful establishment of working-class power in Czechoslovakia. They were temporary bodies and were gradually disbanded after the fulfilment of their tasks.

16) NATIONAL SECURITY (full name: National Security Corps) — Czechoslovakia's police force after 1945.