

(Laughter among the Communists)

And all this at a time in which all the objective premises are favorable for the Communist party.

Who can offer resistance to Fascism?

(Shouts from the Communists: You!)

These are worth as much as the shouters. Neither the police nor the Reich's army, but only and solely — the working class. Therefore we must aid in this aim, to organize and to arm it. Only in this manner can the question of a serious struggle against National Socialism be posed. Among the workers there are many who have served as soldiers, but the youth which has not yet learned to handle weapons is the most numerous section. The opportunity must be created to train the young workers in handling weapons. It must be decreed: In the factories, one hour a day is to be devoted to military training. One day in the week street training and field maneuvers are to be held.

(Rep. Kasper — C.P.G.: Who is to decree this?)

Patience, I will also speak about that.

The unemployed are to train with the workers in the factories, in which they have formerly been employed; special supplementary training can also be provided for the unemployed. For this purpose a sufficient amount of weapons must be put at the disposal of the workers. The costs of the weapons and the training must be borne by the state. The government of the Social Democrat Braun will not by far attempt to do anything of the sort for it would be a misdemeanour from the point of view of the high art of the state or that of proper parliamentary etiquette, and against the obedient devotion to the bourgeoisie. No, that cannot be demanded from the great men of the S.P.G. whose aim in life is to ape the bourgeois statesmen and to betray the interest of the proletariat.

(Disorder in the House)

But only in this way can it be proved by documents that the speeches of the ministers are a hollow sham.

## Trotskyists at Buchenwald

**IS IT TRUE WHAT they say about Nazi tortures? Were you tortured yourself? What do you think of these methods?**

I was beaten and tortured continually for ten days after my arrest by the Gestapo. Only complete exhaustion halted their curiosity about *La Verité* and the Fourth International. If I had dropped a single unwarranted word, it meant death. Tortures of all kinds were common in the camp, from marches in the snow to typhus injections.

At Buchenwald there were about three to four thousand German politicals who had been interned for 12 years! Buchenwald, like Dachau, had originally been built for them and tens of thousands passed through.

Old German communist militants sought out our Trotskyist comrades and told them: "The time has come for you to make a public appearance." They asked for political discussions with our leaders at the camp. We accepted on condition that those who failed to maintain their dignity as political prisoners be excluded. A declaration of our German comrades which called for a German Soviet republic found a profound echo among the mass of the German Communists in the camp and a great many among them made arrangements to keep in touch with the Trotskyists upon their return home.

We Trotskyists organised ourselves into cells of several different nationalities and spearheaded the struggle for internationalism at the camp. As a whole, the French showed an increasingly disheartening chauvinist

trend. But an important section of CPF militants reacted vigorously against this trend and fought for an internationalist policy... I am sure that many of these militants will break with treacherous Stalinism soon and will aid us in building a powerful revolutionary proletarian party.

Comrade Beaufrère concludes with the hope that, in returning, the many admirable CP militants will not forget their experiences

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and allow themselves to be swayed by the jingoism of Thorez and Duclos. He recalls to them how they worked day and night to produce a remarkable mimeographed issue of *L'Humanité* in protest against the chauvinist outpouring of a certain Simonin, a bourgeois journalist who had previously returned to France. The *L'Humanité*

of Buchenwald, he recalls, said:

"There are two Germanies: the Germany of Hitler which must be exterminated. The anti-Fascist Germany which must be helped."

General Foch, comrade Beaufrère concludes, once said that he was much closer to the Prussian Junkers than to the French communists. We, comrades, must make our choice too, at the side of the German communist, against the French bourgeois, even if he calls himself a "resistant."

**Extracts from an interview with Marcel Beaufrère after he spent two years in Hitler's jails. Published in *La Verité*, 11 May 1945.**

## Chronology of a disaster

**1930:** Slump hits Germany. Unemployment rises to three million. Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party becomes Chancellor and takes emergency powers to rule by decree. Nazis get 18% of the vote in September 1930 elections (they had got only 2.8% in 1928).

**1932:** *April:* the Nazi militias, the SA and SS, are banned. *May:* Franz von Papen becomes Chancellor. *June:* he repeals the ban on the SA. Hundreds

are killed or injured in street battles. *July:* he sacks the Social-Democratic state government in Prussia.

**1933:** *January:* President Hindenburg appoints Hitler as Chancellor. *February:* on pretext of Reichstag fire, constitutional freedoms suspended, thousands of Communists and Social-Democrats arrested. *March:* new elections, with CP and SPD banned from campaigning. Nazis get 44%. New parliament votes dictatorial powers to Hitler. *April:* "Day of Boycott" against Jews. *May:* despite offers by Social-Democrat trade unions to cooperate, Hitler takes over the unions, turns them into a state "Labour Front", and sends union leaders to concentration camps.

**1935:** *September:* Nuremberg laws deprive Jews of civil rights.

**1936:** *March:* Hitler occupies the Rhineland zone demilitarised under the Treaty of Versailles after World War 1.

**1938:** *March:* Hitler annexes Austria. *September:* Hitler grabs the Sudeten areas of Czechoslovakia. *November:* "Kristallnacht", organised pogroms against Jews throughout Germany.

**1939:** *March:* Hitler seizes rest of Czechoslovakia. *August:* Hitler-Stalin pact. *September:* Germany and USSR invade Poland. World war breaks out.

**1942:** Wannsee conference fixes details of mass slaughter of Jews. Up to six million killed.