

Contribution of the Communist Party of Sweden

First of all, on behalf of the Communist Party of Sweden I would like to thank the Communist Party of Turkey and the Communist Party of Greece for organizing and hosting this meeting. We note that both parties contribute greatly to the revitalization of the communist and workers' movement worldwide.

Founded in 1919, the Comintern represented the revolutionary continuation of the international workers' movement and coordinated the activities of the communists world-wide. It played a huge role in advancing the cause of the revolution in several countries and mobilized the resistance against the nazist and fascist threat.

However, this activity of the Comintern – impressive and heroic as it was – was not without problems. In the national conference that our party organized in the end of summer, we identified a number of consequences of the 7th World Congress of the Comintern that has contributed to the state of the workers' and communist movement in our country to this day.

When the Comintern opened the door to the united and popular fronts, they acted out of historical necessity and the need to protect the Soviet Union and the gains made through the struggle of the workers. For the national parties, this meant a shift in the analysis of social democracy, best summed up by the chairman of the Communist Party of Sweden, Sven Linderot, who said that

[w]e cannot portray ourselves as infallible and the social democrats as more or less hostile towards socialism, if we want to achieve cooperation with the aim of establishing political unity with social democracy.

He went on to explain that the Swedish communists were no longer in opposition to the ruling Social Democrat and that the communists had to confess that there was an honest struggle for socialism within the ranks of the social democrats, and among their leaders.

The strive for unity with social democracy forced the communists to adjust their analysis of social democracy. It was impossible to criticize social democracy and expose them for what they are, while at the same time seeking cooperation with them.

This period of time was crucial not only because it adjusted the relationship of the communists to social democracy, but also because there was a shift in contradictions, which affects us to this day.

Communists correctly identify the basic contradiction within capitalism as the one between labor and capital. It is the basic contradiction and exists objectively within the economic basis of capitalism. It can therefore be analyzed scientifically. It was also along these lines that the communists organized themselves and the workers' movement.

This changed during the 30's. When focus shifted to the struggle against fascism, the main contradiction of capitalism was placed in the background. Instead of the contradiction capital-labor, the contradiction between fascism and capitalist democracy was brought to the front. Around this contradiction, it was possible to draw in social democrats and capitalist elements as well, which was tried in Sweden.

This is a very significant shift in focus, because the contradiction around which the communists now organize is found in the superstructure. Both fascism and capitalist democracy are political expressions of the economic base of capitalism. They cannot be analyzed in the same way and they

certainly do not offer any revolutionary perspective – they only allow for choices within the framework of capitalism.

After fascism was defeated, this later contradiction was further developed. The Swedish communists during this time now found their main opponent in *reaction*. This allowed the party to keep its analysis and its strive for the united and popular fronts.

Such contradictions plague the workers' movement to this day. Communists direct critique against neoliberalism, only to find on the other end a more regulated capitalism, keynesianism. Communists direct critique against right-wing politics, only to find capitalist left-wing politics on the other end. In the end, all of these categories correspond to the needs of capitalism at one or another stage of its development. This means that the contradictions that many communists organize along do not allow them to break the framework of capitalism, because what they are fighting for are capitalist alternatives.

Such is the logic of the "lesser evil" and we wholeheartedly reject it. We do not oppose certain aspects of capitalism and favor other, less harmful or less bad versions of it. We oppose capitalism and we oppose it with socialism.

There is a very clear line from at least 1935 to this day, where communists tend to find the main contradiction in contemporary society in the superstructure of capitalism. We see that the shift in focus from capital-labor to fascism-democracy opened this door.

We want to stress this: we do not choose between versions of capitalism, but we choose between socialism and capitalism. Unless we pose the question of the two different systems, we cannot pose the question of power.

When we look back at the founding of the Comintern, we learn from the experiences of those who came before us, of those who paved the way. Anything else would be a dishonor to all of the millions of communists who have given their lives for a better world.

In doing so, we must look back at what was positive and what was negative. We must take their experiences for what they are: successes and failures; mistakes and advances. We are convinced that this must be done through a process of self-critical evaluation and the questioning of old truths. Only by being self-critical and by analyzing our own history, will we do the legacy of the Comintern justice.

Long live the Comintern!

Long live socialism!