

Module 04: The End of Optimism? The Great Depression in Europe

Evidence 20: "Appeal of the Communist Party of Germany," *Daily Worker*, August 7, 1931

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Comrades, Workers, Toilers in the whole of Germany!

An economic disaster of enormous dimensions has broken out in Germany. A crisis such as the world has never seen before threatens to ruin the whole economic life. Numerous works and undertakings are at a standstill. More than four million unemployed are starving on the streets. German industry is only working 50 percent of its capacity. The collapse of the Darmstadt and National Bank, in which were deposited over 2,000 million marks, introduces a chain of financial collapse the end of which cannot be seen. Fresh hundreds of thousands of workers will in the next few days be deprived of bread. As a result of the gigantic bank collapse, which is already extending to the savings banks, the poorest of the poor, the unemployed, the invalids and pensioners are faced with absolute destitution, as the municipalities and boards of guardians will likewise shortly cease paying out benefit and relief. Millions of small savers are losing their savings which they have managed to scrape together by means of years of hard work.

The whole of the working population feels and realizes that things cannot go on as they are. The working masses are filled with rage and indignation against those responsible for the economic disaster. The Communist Party was the only Party which issued a timely warning of the present development. The Communists predicted the inevitability of the catastrophe. The capitalists, together with their agents, are the sole parties responsible for the unprecedented misery and suffering, for the indescribable deprivations of the working people.

The kings of industry and bank magnates have in a criminal manner called forth the collapse. They cold-bloodedly organize the starvation of the whole people in order to secure their profits. The frivolous acceptance of the Young Plan, which enslaves the working masses of Germany for decades and hands them over to predatory foreign capital, has led to the collapse.

The system of emergency decrees, which aimed at securing the bankrupt economy of the capitalists with all the means of coercion of state power against the masses of the people, has contributed to the collapse. . .

We Communist have always declared, and repeat today with greater certainty of victory than ever before: there is only one way out of the crisis, only one means of escape from the catastrophe: the taking over of power by the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party means the expropriation of the banks, the expropriation of the industrial concerns and big stores, the expropriation of the big landlords, the cessation of all Young payments and reparations, the cancellation of foreign debts, the replacement of the bankrupt capitalist economy by a new and better one by the socialist economic order under the leadership of the proletariat. . .

We demand that an end shall be put to the unbearable system of emergency orders, wage reductions, cutting down of unemployment benefit and relief. We demand that the police oppression of the workers which leads to ever fresh bloodshed shall cease. All prohibitions of demonstrations, meetings, and newspapers of the working class must be done away with. The streets of the towns of Germany must be made free for the working masses, the unemployed, and swindled small depositors, the victims of the emergency order.

Source:

"Appeal of the Communist Party of Germany," *Daily Worker* (7 Aug 1931), 4.