

first proclamation had projected as a bogey, was now a real menace. To continue the struggle between the Government and the coup meant to prepare the conditions for the revolutionary conquest of power by the proletariat. What was necessary now was agreement and compromise, unity against the Revolution. The danger was very real. Hindenburg appealed to Kapp-Luttwitz to withdraw from Berlin, and to the Government for compromise and agreement. Now the strategy of the Socialist-bourgeois Government was apparent — in avoiding the decisive military struggle against the coup, the opportunity was provided for agreement and unity against the Revolution. The opportunity was seized at the earliest moment.

It is a fact, in spite of denials, that the Government was negotiating with the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship. On Wednesday these negotiations resulted in an agreement. On Monday the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship had announced negotiations, and stated its conditions: "Elections to be held two months hence for the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag; a new President to be elected, the former President to be requested to continue office until the elections." This declaration was denied by the Government and the National Assembly; but the agreement was concluded two days later, practically on the Kapp-Luttwitz conditions. On Wednesday the Kapp-Luttwitz coup declared that, having accomplished its mission, the old Government agreeing (1) that elections should be held within two months and (2) election of the President to be by direct vote of the people, it would withdraw. This was not accomplishing the program of the coup, but it was a partial victory; and, moreover, the Kapp-Luttwitz troops withdrew from Berlin with all the honors of war, to the strains of martial music and assisted in their evacuation by the Government troops; carrying with them, moreover, an enormous mass of captured munitions. A proclamation characterized the agreement in this fashion: "After long negotiations between the representatives of the Government parties and representatives of both Right parties (which had recognized the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship), especially between representatives Trimborn, Sudekum, Stressman and Hergt, the following compromise has been reached: The representatives of the majority parties will advocate elections to the National Assembly to take place not later than June; that the President be elected by the people, that the National Government will undergo a change in the near future; the carrying on of the business of Government in Berlin to be taken over by vice-Chancellor Schiffer." At 12:15 Thursday morning, Schiffer issued a proclamation in the name of the Government, designating General Select as commander of the troops and calling for restoration of economic and political activity. (A

joint proclamation by Schiffer and Hirsch (Social Democrat) in the name of the National and Prussian Governments declared it was false to accuse the National Army and the Security (Noske) troops of offering no resistance to the coup, and has this delicious bit: "It is not commonly known that on the night of Friday-Saturday (March 12—13) the troops stood at their posts ready to defend the Government; but, because of the difficult conditions of night fighting, they were, before the advance of the rebels, re-called to barracks"!)

Simultaneously with the conclusion of the compromise, the Government and the bourgeois parties issued the slogan: "Back to work!" The paralysis of the economic activity united with the menace of Bolshevism to compel a compromise. But the proletariat of Berlin rejected the call to end the strike, the trades unions and the Social Democratic Party being compelled to order the strike to proceed against the compromise.

The General Strike was now, in its impulse and in the mood of the masses, a Strike against the Government. But, in the conscious direction imparted to it by the trades union bureaucracy and S. D. P., the strike was against the compromise of the Government — purposely or stupidly evading the problem, in that the compromise was not in a formal agreement but in the prevailing situation itself; the Government might repudiate the formal agreement but would inevitably be compelled to compromise, as actually did happen.

The compromise agreed upon by the Government and the military coup, the masses persisting in the General Strike, now in fact a Strike against the Government, — these developments emphasized the inherent character of the crisis, as developing the conditions and providing the opportunity for the definite Communist struggle for power.

It was clear to all that the continuation of the General Strike was latent with the threat of proletarian revolution. On Thursday and Friday the citizens of Berlin acted as in mortal terror; the words Spartacus, Arbeiter, Unabhaengigen, were on all tongues and the basis of discussion in all crowds. At night, store and hotels were barred and people ordered off the streets: terror was rampant in Berlin. The Government troops now occupied the entrenchments erected by the Kapp-Luttwitz troops and new entrenchments were erected. Riots were frequent, the Government troops using rifles and machine guns at the least pretext: in three days more persons were shot by the Government troops than in the five days of the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship. In the proletariat a new energy manifested itself, a developing consciousness of larger means and purposes. But the General Strike did not move to Revolution; nor was it the masses who were not ready, but the representatives of the masses...

Never were the limitations of the General Strike in itself more apparent than in Berlin. The Strike was complete; for eight days not a factory nor a car was in motion. But in spite of all this, the strike broke and dispersed after unsatisfactory promises of concessions by the Government...

There are six aspects in the revolutionary conception of the General Strike:

1—A General Strike, if complete, must include the whole working class; but this temporary unity, while inspiring, is deceptive, since all groups in the working class are not in implacable opposition to Capitalism (officials, aristocracy of labor, trades union bureaucracy). The unity temporarily of fundamentally irreconcilable elements in a General Strike means that at a particular moment these elements will split apart and break the Strike. It is necessary, accordingly, to mobilize independently the potentially revolutionary forces — the industrial proletariat, the unskilled workers.

2—The limitations of the General Strike in itself are innumerable; unless it ceases being a strike it must break and disperse, since a General Strike presses more heavily on the proletariat than on the bourgeoisie — for example, the bourgeoisie can feed itself much more easily than the proletariat.

3—A revolutionary General Strike, accordingly, must cease being a Strike and become a revolution, mobilize itself for the seizure of political power.

4—The seizure of power implies breaking the military might of the bourgeois state; it is necessary, therefore, to arm the proletariat.

5—All that a General Strike can accomplish is to create temporary economic and political demoralization, making a breach in the old order through which the proletariat can break through for the conquest of power, its moral and physical energy, enthusiasm and mass consciousness being aroused by the General Strike.

6—A General Strike may become a revolution. But there must be adequate revolutionary leadership to formulate, at the start, the moral and physical measures which become the basis of action at the stage of the General Strike developing conditions of revolution.

None of these conditions were met. The fright of the bourgeois dissolved in smiles of satisfaction. The treachery of the moderates and the incapacity of the revolutionists prevented the General Strike becoming Revolution...

But should the Strike persist, danger would come: complete economic chaos and more revolutionary vigor. The Government, accordingly, again compromised; it repudiated the Schiffer "Intermediate" Government and established itself in Berlin. The trades union bureaucracy met the Government in conference; a compromise was agreed upon (to be re-