

puddied by the Government in two days); and two hours after this conference Legien and other reactionary union officials issued an order to end the General Strike (the conference ended at 5 o'clock Saturday morning, and at 7:05 the proclamation calling off the Strike was issued). The same day the Independent Socialist Party (Speaking through Crispian in "Freiheit") also urged ending the General Strike.

The situation on Saturday may be summarized:

1—The trades union bureaucracy, moderate, treacherous, and itself as much in fear of a revolution as the Government, broke the Central Strike. This bureaucracy, petty bourgeois to the marrow, yearned for "tranquility." The conditions of the unions were moderate, vague and general, capable of easy "interpretation" and repudiation: immediate disarmament and punishment of participants in the military coup; clearing the Government of reactionaries; new laws for equality of workers and officials (!); immediate socialization of industries ripe for socialization (now urged by the moderates for more than a year); drastic action against profiteers, if necessary by expropriation. Two interesting conditions were: 1) "Representatives of the Government parties will defend the right of the workers' organizations to participate in the reconstruction of the Government, the unions to have a decisive influence. 2) Dissolution of all reactionary military formations which have acted against the constitution, and their replacement by reliable Republicans, especially from workers, employees and officials without neglecting any profession." Magnificent evasions of the problem of power! As if even these moderate conditions could be secured by compromise agreements and paper concessions, and not by means of conquest of power!

2—The Independent Socialist Party acquiesced in ending the General Strike while calling upon the Government to arm the proletariat — as if the Government would cut its own throat. It issued other demands which were either miserable compromises or else incapable of accomplishment without the conquest of power. But, most characteristic and miserable of all, the Independent Socialist Party issued the call for a "Socialist Government" — the exclusion of the bourgeois parties from the Cabinet, which was now to consist of Social Democrats, Independents and representatives of the trades unions. This was the final compromise of compromises — coalition with the assassins of the proletariat and the Revolution as a means of expressing the Revolution and the proletariat.

3—The Left Wing Independents and the Communist Party repudiated the call to end the General Strike. Continue the General Strike — for what? Against the Government's compromise with Luttwitz-Kapp?

But that compromise was in the objective facts of the situation, not in any formal agreement. Against the Government? But that meant a revolutionary struggle for power. Neither the Communist Party nor the Left Independents, however, were prepared to engage in this struggle: the Left Independents because of their affiliation with the Independent Socialist Party; the Communist Party because it affirmed that the proletariat was not ready for the seizure of power. There was issued neither a definite call to revolutionary action nor a definite revolutionary program. Moreover, the disastrous character of the situation was emphasized by both the Left Independents and the Communist Party acquiescing in the Independent Socialist Party proposal for a "Socialist Government." The Left Independents accepted the proposal enthusiastically, prepared to participate in such a Government; the Communist Party, through its Reichs-Zentrale, declared it would wage only "loyal opposition" to such a Government — a declaration which perfectly satisfied the Independents and which they interpreted as approval. This was the final and worst mistake of a series of mistakes: it completely smashed any prospects of revolutionary action developing out of the General Strike.

Betrayed by the S. D. P. and the trades union bureaucracy, missing the urge of revolutionary direction and inspiration, the General Strike was on the verge of breaking. The non-proletarian elements in the working class immediately acquiesced in the order to end the strike; but large masses of the proletariat rejected the order. On Saturday and Sunday, while the representatives of the masses hesitated and compromised, the masses were again in a mood for action. The call for Soviets might have met response; but while the Communist Party issued this call, the Left Independents issued the call for elections of revolutionary Betriebs-Rate (Factory Councils, economic Soviets); and the C. P. acquiesced in the call. The Communist Party, as represented in its Reich-Zentrale, met the retribution of its incapacity: it might now issue the necessary revolutionary slogans, but these would not meet response, since the Communist Party had developed neither the moral energy nor the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses; while these revolutionary slogans were now vitiated by the Zentrale's compromises with the Independents. Undoubtedly it was too late to initiate now an immediate and successful struggle for seizure of power; but the Communist Party owed it to itself and the Revolution to come clean of compromise, to formulate measures and action calculated to develop moral reserves for action in the days to come...

On Monday the representatives of the revolutionary Betriebs-Rate elected the previous day met in the General Assembly. Large numbers of

workers had returned to work; but large masses were still on strike, the Betriebs-Rate Assembly itself representing 500,000 workers. The Assembly, dominated by the Independents, decided to "interrupt" the General Strike, the Communists urging continuing the Strike, but the Independents carried the day. The "interruption" of a General Strike as a revolutionary tactic depends upon circumstances; unless it is adopted at a moment when the Strike is at the crest of its power, but conditions make it impossible to conquer, hence it becomes necessary to secure a period for new preparations, — "interruption" a strike is simply a cover for defeat. Under the prevailing condition, this manoeuvre was characteristic of the Independents.

The Communist Party opposed this "interruption" of the General Strike, and rightly. Even now, considering the general situation and particularly the intense revolutionary struggle in the Ruhr, continuation of the Strike two or three days more would have disorganized Capitalism and the state, might have developed a new struggle, and encouraged the Ruhr proletariat.

But the General Strike was "interrupted." And from the Ruhr proletariat, waging a magnificent struggle and menaced on all fronts, came the searing cry of "Treason!" hurled at the representatives proletariat of Berlin.

(To be continued)

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