

THE COMMUNIST

ALL POWER TO THE WORKERS!

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA

VOL II., No. 7

JULY 1, 1920.

PRICE 5 CENTS

The Counter-Revolution in Germany

By LOUIS FRAINA,
International Secretary, Communist Party of America

Berlin, March 28.

The Ebert-Noske-Bauer Government shorn of Noske and Bauer, is again in power. The streets are still a mass of barbed-wire entanglements erected by the counter-revolutionary troops against the Government troops, armed with rifles, sheath-bayonets and hand-grenades, patrol the streets prepared to shoot down the workers (scores have already been shot)—the identical troops that did not fire a shot in defense of the city against the counter-revolutionary invasion of Luttwitz-Kapp. The old apathy is again dominant in the streets of Berlin—that cold, hopeless apathy which immediately impresses the observer in Germany. In the "high life" districts, in Unter den Linden and Friedrichstrasse, the swirl of frightful gaiety again rushes on; while in the proletarian districts there is sullen resentment, tempered by partial anticipations of a new struggle.

Five days ago it appeared as if this new struggle might start immediately. The proletariat of Berlin was still on strike, in spite of the Ebert Government and the trades union bureaucracy having issued orders to end the strike. In city after city the workers used the opportunity of the crisis to usurp power, developing the General Strike beyond the limits imposed upon it as a strike in defense of the Government. In Westphalia and the Rhineland, in the Ruhr mining districts, the working class, while not yet wholly clear on means and purposes, was in complete control, seizing government power and organizing an active Red Army of 30,000 men, with 50,000 in reserve. But, for reasons which will develop later, these hopes against the Red Army, which has been compelled to accept an armistice; disaster and massacre will come in the Ruhr.

These are the inescapable facts of the situation: the Ebert Government is in power, but the military coup d'état has partially conquered since it has compelled the Government to compromise and move more to the Right; the Government is withdrawing its concessions, or rather its promises of concessions to the masses; the interests behind the military coup are securing concessions as against the proletariat which rallied to the Government's defense; the Government is compelled to rely more than ever on military forces; while the Cabinet is being reconstructed according to the policy of the Right and not according to the demands of the Left. The proposal of the Independent Socialist Party for a "Socialist Government" (Cabinet coalition of Independents and Social Democrats) has been contemptuously rejected—a rejection accompanied by a new Terror; the Socialist-bourgeois Government, having to choose between the proletariat and the reaction, again chooses reaction.

The revolutionary crisis produced by the military coup, developing conditions for the final struggle for power, is being converted into a Cabinet-parliamentary crisis, with the Independent Socialist Party manipulating the situation to secure Cabinet concessions and parliamentary power; the Independents having, all through the crisis, acted not with an eye to the revolutionary seizure of power, but with an eye to (1) the reconstruction of the Cabinet on a "Socialist" basis, and (2) the coming elections in which they anticipate becoming the majority party; while the Communist Party of Germany (as represented by the Reichs-Zentrale) is assisting the conversion of the revolutionary crisis into a parliamentary crisis by not measuring up to the requirements of the situation and by rendering criminally opportunist encouragement to the Independents in their proposal for a "Socialist" Government.

And the masses? The masses are stirring uneasily, baffled and betrayed; and they may yet, under the pressure of events, initiate a new struggle, compelling the hesitants and the moderates to accept revolutionary action.

I.—THE COLLAPSE OF DEMOCRACY

The Ebert-Bauer-Noske Government was directly responsible for the military coup d'état. The coup was made by troops recently returned from the Baltic provinces, where the Government allowed a concentration of the most reactionary troops of the old German army for use against the Revolution and against Soviet Russia—troops which, with the connivance of the Socialist Government, surreptitiously assisted Col. Avaloff-Bermond in his counter-revolutionary campaign against Petrograd. The coup had been discussed for months and open preparations made; but the Government did nothing. On March 11 General von Luttwitz met President Ebert in Conference and issued an ultimatum, but von Luttwitz was not placed under arrest; while Noske, actively or compliantly, allowed the reactionary troops to prepare their coup. Late in the evening of March 12 Noske issued a statement that the fears of the Left concerning a military coup were unfounded—six or seven hours later 10,000 troops invaded Berlin to the strains of martial music and the plaudits of a crowd; the Government troops firing not a single shot in defense of the city, while the Government itself fled in an automobile.

There was no power of resistance in the Government—no resistance in democracy and the parliamentary regime. Aggressive and relentless against the proletarian revolution, the Government was weaker than a woman's tears against the counter-revolution. Democracy and the Government had been compelled to rely upon the most reactionary forces, upon the military of the old regime. Democracy and the Government did not act uncompromisingly against the military, since antagonizing or weakening the military meant weakening the basis of their own power; hence the Government slyly allowed the preparations for a coup to proceed. A revolutionary Government would have answered the threat of von Luttwitz to march upon Berlin by mobilizing the armed proletariat and by general arrests of reactionaries, by mass-Terror against the bourgeois-Junker re-

action; but the Socialist-bourgeois Government had disarmed the proletariat, while aggressive measures against the reaction would have meant an open break with the Right, and the collapse of the Government under pressure of Right and Left. At a meeting of the National Assembly on March 14, Socialist Chancellor Bauer said: "After mature deliberation the Government decided not to enter into a bloody struggle with the Kapp upstarts, and therefore determined to leave Berlin, thereby avoiding violence." (Against the Communists there never was any thought of "avoiding violence"! But that is miserable equivocation. The Government had at its disposal in Berlin alone 30,000 troops and 50,000 armed civilians, and about 300,000 in all Germany; yet the Government evaded a struggle with 10,000 counter-revolutionary troops. Why? Because the Government knew that its troops, reliable in crushing a Communist uprising, were completely unreliable as a means of defense against a reactionary uprising. Moreover, an open military struggle would compel

tained the ascendancy of democracy. The petty bourgeois democracy, accordingly, adopted a policy of "watchful waiting" and "neutrality," which under the circumstances assisted the counter-revolution—democracy did not defend itself against the Left, with whom there could be neither compromise nor merger. It might be unpleasant for the military reaction to conquer, but a satisfactory agreement could be arranged. This, then, was the consequence of the Socialism of the Social-Democratic Party—that, in affirming democracy as the means to Socialism it developed means for the ascendancy of Junker-Capitalism, thereby directly promoting the coming of military counter-revolution.

And after 18 months of murdering the proletariat and Socialism, the Government and the Social-Democratic Party were compelled—to call upon the proletariat and Socialism to act against its own creation, the military counter-revolution.

2.—DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CRISIS

In choosing the alternative of a General Strike the Government and the Social-Democratic Party were fully aware of the fact that the strike might develop beyond the limits imposed upon it as a strike in defense of democracy and the Government. But the Government was equally aware that it might depend upon the military in the event of the General Strike assuming revolutionary proportions; and, moreover, the Government, simultaneously with the call for a General Strike—issued in name of Ebert, Bauer, Noske, Muller and David (Noske afterwards denied subscribing to the call)—prepared measures to prevent the General Strike becoming revolutionary. In the Ruhr district, for example, revolutionary and under a state of martial law, the strike was consciously limited, and it did not become a General Strike until March 17, when the struggle was no longer against the military coup but against the Socialist-bourgeois Government.

In accepting the alternative of a General Strike the Government, moreover, simply "legalized" an accomplished fact, since the masses acted independently of the Government.

On Saturday March 13 the General Strike was proclaimed in Berlin by the trades unions, the Social-Democratic Party and the Independent Socialist Party. All three proclamations agreed in fundamentals—strike against the coup, in defense of democracy; the Independents jugged with revolutionary phrases in characteristic style, but proposed no definite revolutionary measures; while the trades unions spoke of the "legal" Government being menaced by the coup, of the danger of reaction being restored in state and shops, of the Republic being in danger. There was no clear call to revolutionary action, not even from the Communist Party which, on Saturday, declared against the General Strike on the assumption that the military coup and the Government were identical.

The response of the proletariat to the General Strike was immediate and complete; in Berlin, the struggle immediately and completely assumed the character of a proletarian struggle against the military-bourgeois reaction.

The situation in Berlin was most characteristic of the General situation in Germany. The collapse of the Government was complete; there was not a trace of its authority or its resistance... Herr Kapp occupied the Chancellery; while General von Luttwitz installed himself in the Ministry of War from whence Comrade Noske had issued orders of death against the Communist proletariat. This Government district, now a fortress of barbed wire entanglements, machine guns and artillery, opens on the Tier-Garden where, fifteen months ago, Karl Liebknecht urged the proletariat to revolution; while three streets beyond is the turgid canal into which the assassins of the Socialist Government cast the mutilated body of Rosa Luxemburg... The National Army either retired to its barracks or fraternized with the counter-revolutionary troops. The Noske Guards, insolently active in all the streets of Berlin the day before, now scurried to cover, and did not appear again until the struggle against the revolutionary masses started. The Einwohnerwehr (literally, Guards of the Inhabitants, civilian White Guards) issued a declaration of neutrality (neutrality under the circumstances meaning assistance to the counter-revolution) while emphasizing its readiness to march against "plunderers," that is to say, against the proletariat; and it did march to action when the General Strike began to threaten "law and order" and the struggle developed against the Government.

As against these open and masked forces of counter-revolution, the proletariat on General Strike was alone. It was clearly, emphatically, the working class against all. The paralysis of industry, of most public activity, was complete; it was as if a giant mass of ice pressed down upon the city. The Kapp-Luttwitz Government was isolated; its troops occupied the streets, but the proletariat closed his factories, halted railway and street car traffic, and kept the city unlighted at night. The Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship issued innumerable proclamations about right and the constitution, bread and liberty—but the iron answer of the proletariat mocked it all; the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship styled itself the "Government of labor,"—but there was no labor; the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship issued threats against the profiteers,—but this did not worry the profiteers, while the General Strike did; the Kapp-Luttwitz dictatorship issued a decree providing death for strikers and strike directors,—but the General Strike implacably persisted. All Government authority, "legal" and "illegal," was now a myth in comparison with the reality and the might of the General Strike.

The struggle of the proletariat in Berlin was, objectively, a revolutionary struggle. But, un-

AGENDA FOR THE SECOND CONVENTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA

I. Reports:

- C. E. C. and National Secretary.
- International Relations Committee.
- Editorial Committee.
- Defense Committee.

II. Current Fundamental Problems.

- Present world situation.
- Present situation in the United States.
- Soviet Russia.
- Communist International and Party International Relations.
- Our attitude towards Parliamentarism.
- Mass Action.
- Industrial Unionism and Syndicalism.
- Our Attitude towards Economic, Educational and other Legal Workers' Organizations.
- Workers' Councils Before, During and After the Revolution.

III. Revision of the Program and Manifesto.

IV. Organization Problems.

- Communist Party Centralization and Discipline.
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- Communist Party units and C. P. Shop Committees.
- Functions of Language Federations in the Communist movement of America.
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 - General Propaganda and Agitation.
 - Classes for Propagandists and Other Communist Study Classes.
- Party Press and Literature.
 - Policy.
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- Communist Unity vs. "Centrist Unity."
- Defense and Relief Work.

V. Revision of Constitution.

VII. Resolutions.

VII. Election of Party Officials.

the Government to arm the proletariat, thereby developing the forces of proletarian revolution. The Government, accordingly, chose to retreat and compromise; never for a moment did the Socialist Government of Ebert, Noske and Bauer forget the menace of a proletarian revolution; concessions to the Right rather than permit the revolutionary proletariat to conquer!

Democracy and the parliamentary regime, acclaimed as the final symbols of the Revolution and the means to Socialism, broke in pieces. Democracy? It was, in the persons of the Government, fleeing to Dresden in an automobile; and they, issuing proclamations about law and order, right and the constitution—at a moment when the issue was power against power and might against might. The Parliament, the National Assembly? It was dispersed as chaff before the wind by the bayonets of the Luttwitz troops; the Reichstag, where the Assembly met, now as imposingly empty and impotent as democracy itself, was guarded by three soldiers, while children played upon its steps an appropriate memorial to Karl Kautsky... The National Assembly dispersed, issued its defiance to the military coup, spoke of democracy and right, of law and the constitution, decided to convene in Stuttgart—and exercised scarcely any influence upon the march of events. The National Assembly, which approvingly observed the butchery of the workers on January 13, now, on March 12, was incapable or mustering either the moral or physical energy to resist counter-revolution.

The representatives of petty bourgeois democracy fulminated threats against the military coup, but the democracy itself was apathetic. Even own for action against the counter-revolution. Moreover, for this democracy to act decisively against the counter-revolutionary troops meant precipitating a struggle within the military forces of the nation, to disrupt the power which main-

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