

# Throughout the World of Labor

## The Conference of the German Right Wing

On October 20, the Right wing opposition in Germany (Brandler group) held its second national conference at Weimar. According to the organization report, the group had gathered in one year of work 5,112 members divided into 169 groups. The number of readers of its 8 weekly papers appearing all over Germany is about 25,000.

Launched in spite of and against the always powerful Party apparatus, it is quite a success so far as the figures go. The political estimates of the national conference, however, reflect the impossibility of squaring the circle—the utopia of showing a section of the international proletarian army the concrete road to victory while having an entirely restricted national theoretical basis.

Is it just a reaction against the exaggerated internationalism of the C.I. that the first accounts and articles on the national conference triumphantly announce (Gegen den Strom, No. 43, October 26, 1929) that real Leninism has only just been found at Weimar, through the "discovery" that Lenin pointed out to all the Communists the duty of taking into consideration the "concrete peculiarities" of each country? Or should we not rather attribute a greater importance to the fact that they passed over in silence the necessity, for Lenin and his school, of taking the international point of view without neglecting the "concrete peculiarities" of each country?

What can be the international basis of the platform of the Right wing opposition (which will be published in the coming number of Gegen den Strom and which we will examine a little closer later on)? Thalheimer, the theoretician of the Brandler group, says in his report that the general program of the C. I. is the point of departure for the national program. But Thalheimer and his friends have disapproved of the essential parts of this program. Can a correct national program then be drawn from a wrong international program?

Thalheimer himself, who already dared a lot, will not succeed in that.

Then what are the other bases of the platform, which was the central axis of the Weimar conference? Thalheimer tells us:

"The platform is the result not only of this year of our work, but of 4-6 years of work and struggle of our tendency, of 10 years of revolutionary experience on German and international soil. The discussion on the platform was as lively as it was rich in content. It indicates the great theoretical interest and the maturity of our movement."

"The results of 10 years of revolutionary experience on German and international soil", viewed with a critical eye, means this:

On "German soil" there was the March Action in 1921, the "result" being the theses of Thalheimer-Bela Kun on the theory of the offensive. It is above all thanks to comrades Lenin and Trotsky that these theses couldn't see the light at the Third World Congress. Had this "result" been accepted it would have destroyed the Comintern beneath its ruins. On "German soil" there was also the year 1923. Brandler and Thalheimer were then the leaders of the C. P. of Germany. May we assume that the lesson given us by the attitude of the Party in an acute revolutionary situation finds its "result" in the platform? Thalheimer has for years been announcing the appearance of a pamphlet on the lessons of 1923. The national conference also asked for a concrete attitude towards 1923, for we read in the report: "Ruhnaue (Hamburg) takes a position in detail towards the reports presented and mentions above all the proposal to publish the pamphlet on 1923."

Does the leadership of the Brandler group really think that it can forever evade the question of the political attitude leaders in a revolutionary situation, a question so decisive for the revolutionary workers? To chant the same rosary all the time on the "ultra-Left Trotskyist legend in 1923" cannot make one forget the fact that they are avoiding the taking of a concrete attitude.

So far as the "result" of the lessons of the Russian Revolution is concerned, we can already foretell a part of it by reading an editorial article in Gegen den Strom (No. 42, October 19, 1929) under the heading "Russian Questions". In this article we get, instead of a concrete attitude towards the questions raised there, the following reply", which is a classic example of the

diplomatic way of evading a question:

"If one wishes to give a concrete reply to these practical questions, one must be in possession of exact data. The Russian comrades have exact data. We have not. That is why we cannot say conclusively whether Stalin or Bucharin is right in these decisive practical questions...."

"So far as the theoretical discussions with Bucharin are concerned, we point out elsewhere the criticism emanating from the Stalinist camp itself. Two young adherents of Stalin, Sten and Schatzkin, have criticized in an extremely energetic manner the methods of struggle employed against the Right in Russia...."

Alas, two minds live in the same body. One does not yet want to burn all the bridges that lead to Stalin, the other is in an enthusiastic glow for the Right wing faction in the U. S. S. R.—the "realistic politicians." There was a time when Brandler, Thalheimer, Frohlich, Walcher, Sievert, Boettcher, Beck and the "sympathizer" Klara Zetkin took an entirely concrete position towards the Russian question, and it was at a moment when Stalin suppressed all the material of the Russian Left Opposition so that the Party would know nothing about it. At the time they voted on and approved the expulsion of Trotsky and the Russian Opposition and had no scruples in acting that way, without pleading the "lack of concrete data" at that time.

No doubt the "concrete data" contained in the pamphlet\* of Klara Zetkin were enough for them to approve the "political necessity" of expelling Trotsky from the Soviet Union.

"We will continue as in the past to take an objective position towards the problems of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and not a factional point of view."

That is how the last phrase of the penultimate paragraph in the article just quoted, is worded.

The proof of it is given in the last paragraph, in which "as in the past" a position is taken in a subjective manner and contrary to the truth:

"...The annihilation of Trotskyism in Russia has determined Trotsky and his few believers to capitulate before Stalin, even though it was done provisionally, with certain reservations. Thus Trotskyism, which fought mainly in the unprincipled bloc with Zinoviev, ends with an unprincipled capitulation before Stalin."

After these preliminary labors, the national platform was accepted as a basis at the conference and presented for discussion. In a coming issue we will examine this double-bottomed platform more closely. We will have no trouble in bringing the revolutionary elements of the Brandler group proof that Thalheimer, the theoretician of the pure defensive in 1929, is the antipode of Thalheimer, the theoretician of the pure offensive in 1921.

Berlin, October 1929

F. ST.

## The Aftermath in Palestine

The Palestine situation has by no means calmed down. Feeling has run very high. Very serious violence exists in a potential state.

The Arab Executive Committee met a little while ago and decided upon:

1. A declaration of distrust in the English government.
2. Repudiation of the Balfour declaration.
3. Intensification of the boycott.

This boycott, lasting since the disturbances, seems to have been, in the beginning, a total "non-cooperation"; now, it is only half of that. The Arabs consent to sell to Jews (happily for the latter; without it would die of hunger!) but not to buy from them. It is the inversion of the secular situation: "Jew, you have taken our money long enough, now you won't see it any more and it is for us to take yours!" Apparently this "slogan" is extremely popular. Thus, a few days ago, an Arab tradesman secretly bought two hogsheads of oil from a Jew. The matter became known. Immediately, an army of dockers pursued the "collaborationist" and made him throw the hogsheads into the sea. "Force is the only thing that counts," a young Christian Arab told me, "words don't mean anything any more."

\* The writer refers to the nauseating pamphlet written at the behest of Stalin and Bucharin to justify the criminal act against comrade Trotsky before the eyes of the workingclass by using the former prestige attached to Klara Zetkin's name.

ian Arab told me, "words don't mean anything any more."

It seems that the Arabian united front is indeed realized. My young speaker, all a-throb with faith, said: "We are 100,000, it is as though we were one." In any case, the working class is marching with the others—and not in the rear: On November 2, there was a general protest strike against the Balfour declaration (it was the day of its anniversary). It was no less general than that of October 16, when the French steamer Angkor, arriving that morning at Jaffa, could find neither a dock nor a boatman and had to take off for Beirut as it had come, with its cargo and its passengers.

This strike took place, errors excepted, to protest against the condemnations that followed the disturbances: three to hanging and many to hard labor.

Generally speaking, those who are in business are uneasy; not everyone can have the fine impetuosity of my young Christian Arab: "How now," he said, "they have created an uproar throughout the world over three hundred Jews killed. But what are three hundred Jews? In the first place we have had just as many dead, and then, during the war, when there were all those victims, and boats with 1,600 people on board were sunk, they said: It's nothing. Well?..."

To be sure, those who are owners do not view matters so philosophically. What is going to happen? Will Tel-Aviv (the most important of the Jewish cities built by the Zionists) soon look like the Greek quarter in Smyrna (razed by the Turks in 1921 when they drove the Greek army back to the sea), a vast field of cinders and crumbled walls, while ancient Jaffa, like the Turkish quarter of Mount Pagus at Smyrna, continues to be based on the mountain, satisfied with its enormous, picturesque, squalid, gracious and eternal walls? Yes, it is more durable in the high city where the boatmen live with its labyrinths of streets, blind alleys, half-arches and loop-holes than in the wholly modern and not unseemly—really!—buildings of Tel-Aviv where they engage in esthetics, in hygiene and other trifles. The capitalists are certainly idiots: They form leagues against tuberculosis... and condemn people to toil and in a country rebelling against imperialism, whose first action will be to raze all imperialist reminders, they give lots of attention to seeing that the houses have enough openings, and are separated and aired on all four sides!

Does the comparison with the events in Asia Minor astonish you? Not at all. In both cases, England tried to achieve the colonization of people in a politically highly developed Asiatic nation. In the first instance it acted through an intermediary (the Greeks), this time it is doing the thing by itself. The difference is very small. What may be asked is why on this Northern side of the Suez Canal it has recourse to the formula of colonizing people. Is it because of the very bad political results produced on the Southern side of the Canal? It is probably the most by the opposite formula of colon-serious reason, for it is obviously necessary to "create a Jewish homeland" and that of relieving oneself of one's Jews". But whatever the reason may be, the result will very probably be pitiful: The people of Palestine are under the impression that the Egyptians will soon be entirely liberated, and they have no hankering to replace them as guardians of the Canal.

In any case, these facts about Palestine are very interesting for us: Since the anti-imperialist movement broke out in the world, it is the first time that, without an official war, it affected colonized people.

Palestine, October 30, 1929.

J. PERA.

## Before the Capitulation of Bucharin

\*You have acted correctly in signing the declaration of the Saratov comrades (Rakovsky and others). But this declaration must become a point of departure for the struggle and does not signify marking time or decamping. The formula of the "Kerenskyism upside down" is now applied more than ever. The situation appears to me as follows: The present policy will not keep up for long. Here is how its immediate tasks present themselves:

\*This letter was addressed to comrade Trotsky.

selves: a) annihilate Bucharin and his highly placed friends; b) pump the maximum of grain by extraordinary measures in the country. Both are necessary so as to be able to straddle the Bucharinist horse; that is, leave elbow room to the possessors of grain and try to regulate the grain market with the funds created by the extraordinary measures. But none of this plan can be executed: the pressure of the possessors of grain, the Kulaks, will outstrip the development of the Stalinist maneuvers. Thence the hysteria, the cramps and the impotence that characterized the measures taken against Bucharin's faction. It is not for nothing that the July Plenum did not take place. The Stalinists themselves are afraid of the instability of the situation they have created. The November Plenum can have a great importance. One cannot fail to note in passing that although the interval of two years since the Fifteenth Congress is coming to a close, no one up to now whispers a word about the Sixteenth Congress. This interval of two years still seems to be too brief. In any case, the Sixteenth Congress will not be convoked until it can be placed before accomplished facts.

If the annihilation of the Right is not accomplished before the necessity matures for a retreat by the apparatus before the Kulak, then it seems to me that a reconciliation between the Stalinists and the Right is not excluded. Stalin can very easily take a step towards Bucharin by disavowing one of his subordinates. It is quite possible. One can imagine the enthusiasm it would arouse among the Thermidorians in and out of the Party, and how the confusion among the functionaries would increase further. These latter, who are already sufficiently worn out, would like very much to take a rest. There are even some among them who dream of seeing Kamenev and Zinoviev disposed to make peace with the Right wing. The significant silence of these two supports their hope.

The point of departure taken by the Thirteenth Congress (1923) in economic questions was entirely correct. If developments had followed this line, we would not have the present monstrous economic contradictions which hit the working class hardest, arousing its discontent. But the position of 1923 was followed by the zig-zag of 1925 and of the brutal turn of the bureaucracy in 1928-29. As a result we find ourselves without the slightest solid political position to solve our economic task. The bare formulae of the five year plan give no solution. It is necessary to have good relations between the Party and the class, between the proletariat and the poor and middle peasants. A new political orientation is indispensable; for that the Party must be delivered from the fetters around its hands and feet. Under the present conditions, the Right wing is automatically reinforced in the objective process. We can strengthen ourselves only on the basis of a correct and public estimation of the whole process with all its contradictions.

A critical appreciation must be given of the present political situation, with all its new features: It is a task that hardly brooks delay, above all for the mobilization of the worker Communists. A small part of the Oppositionists who signed the declaration of comrade Rakovsky are perhaps disposed to await passively after this declaration, the subsequent development of the struggle in order, afterwards, in silence or by renunciation of their ideas with "deference", to be "inserted" into the Party. We cannot, and we will never be able to march along with these elements. There is a movement to the Left in the Party and in the class. But it is possible to enter into this movement only over the heads of the present leaders of the Party. In order that the proletarian masses should not transform their loss of confidence in the present leaders into a loss of confidence in the revolution itself, a public estimation before the whole Party of the past work of the present leadership is necessary.

October 19, 1929.

R.

The Sixteenth Congress is not spoken of yet. The purging of the Party is no longer dwelt upon very much, for at its conclusion "affairs" were uncovered in Leningrad, Ivanovo, Tver and in many other places. It is still another proof—perhaps the most striking and the most convincing—that all the measures of Cen-

Continued on Page 2