

Throughout the World of Labor

The Real Victor in the German Elections

On November 17, municipal elections were held in Prussia and Saxony. They were the first important elections since the social democracy came to the head of the government, and in Berlin, they were the first elections since the massacre on May First.

The Communist Party of Germany entered the election struggle by affirming that Germany is in a stage of violent revolutionary outbursts, that the masses are recovering from their reformist illusions and are turning to the C. P. of Germany.

A comparison of the Reichstag elections in 1928 with those of November 17 throws light on the situation. On May 20, 1928, the C. P. C. received 611,317 votes in Berlin for the Reichstag elections. The social democratic party, 816,196. On November 17, after the May Day massacre, after a year of the social democratic coalition government, after the Sklarek (Berlin administration) scandal, this figure sinks to 451,735. But the benefit of it does not go to the C. P. G., for it did not succeed in maintaining the figure of 1928 which fell from 611,317 to 565,595.

It is true that on November 17 there were 180,000 fewer voters in Berlin than in the 1928 elections. Nevertheless, the parties of the bourgeois center (with the exception of the Democrats whom the Sklarek affair compromised the most) maintained the number of votes received in 1928.

Contrariwise, the fascist bloc, that is, the National Socialists and the Fascists, united among themselves (Hugenberg-Hitler), succeeded in spite of the small number of voters, in increasing the number of their votes from 475,184 (in 1928) to 536,787, and the benefit fell wholly to the National Socialist Party. It can, then by no means be said that the result of the Berlin elections was an "overwhelming victory" for the Communist Party of Germany. The Party, following its false and adventurist policy, has been unable to reinforce its base in the last eighteen months. The losses of the Social Democratic party benefited the fascists.

In the whole of Prussia, the results differ from those in Berlin. In the province, the increase of the socialist party, already quite obvious in 1928, was not halted, contrary to Berlin. In the industrial center of Central Germany (Halle-Merseburg) the Social Democratic Party gained twenty percent in its vote. The C. P. of G. lost as much in this former stronghold. The fascist bloc has no gain at all to register in this country, but rather a diminution of strength. In Wasserkante, Schleswig-Holstein and in the West, the social democrats increased everywhere. In part, they obtained substantial results in Upper-Silesia (Breslau, Beuthen) but great losses in favor of the fascists. Nowhere in these regions did the C. P. of G. succeed in retaining its positions, especially in Saxony. After having suffered losses in the Landtag elections (in May), it now loses in this industrial region from twenty to thirty percent more of the votes (Dresden, Leipzig, Plauen). The hopes of the Brandlerites in Saxony, which is their stronghold, to influence a sufficiently large part of the workers, were lamentably disappointed.

The elections have brought about no decisive change. They show that it was correct to estimate the regrouping of the masses by saying that they will not yet go towards Communism. The process of evolution of the masses towards bourgeois reformism still lasts. That is what stands out even more clearly than in the Landtag elections a few months ago. At the decisive points (industrial regions, Saxony, Berlin) this process has ceased. But that development does not benefit the C. P. of G., because of its ominous policy, but in part the fascist bloc which will organize on December 22, in the referendum on the Young Plan, a new mobilization of the masses for the fascist dictatorship. Tens of thousands of workers who followed the reformists a year ago are falling into indifference.

Without according an exaggerated importance to these elections and to elections in general, it may be said that they give quite a revealing picture of the process of fermentation and regrouping of the masses. Unfortunately, it cannot be said, as does the Rote Fahne on November 18: "The election figures show the magnificent progress of the C. P." Favorable the objective circumstances for a

rapid advance of Communism in Germany are, the party, under the leadership of Thaelman and Remmele, shows itself incapable of profiting by the opportunity and of grouping the majority of the working class around the banner of Communism.

KURT LANDAU

Berlin, November 18, 1929.

Φ

A Letter from Stalinist Exile

A LETTER TO THE BULLETIN OF THE RUSSIAN OPPOSITION

A condition of extraordinary isolation prevails at the present moment in exile. In the course of the last few months the courier blockade has been further reinforced. Especially does it rigorously hem in Christian Rakovsky, who is now at Barnaul, as you know, where he was sent from Saratov. The initiative for addressing a declaration came from the group of deportees at Saratov, which had Rakovsky at its head. No sensible person could expect any practical immediate result from this declaration. No, the declaration is a new mobilization of the deportees, of whom a part had given way under a certain wind of panic during the summer, caused by complete isolation and the lack of any information: in addition, these comrades had nothing else to read for many months than Pravda. In this sense, the declaration has completely performed its mission. The Saratov group has been dissolved as a punishment for this mobilization of the deportees around the declaration and around the theses of Rakovsky, in which the fundamental questions are presented with all the necessary clarity.*

You know that a pretty substantial group of deportees has been carried off by a wave of illusions. Isolation and uncertainty, as I have already said, have played a big role here. But it is nevertheless astonishing that there were people capable of taking Centrism for Communism, when a rich experience tells us one thing: Centrism is capable of making tremendous vacillations towards the Left and still remain Centrism. It is no longer Radek who is tracing the line of demarcation in the Opposition (that's an old story) but I. N. Smirnov. I am informed that he has addressed the third ** text of his declaration which differs in nothing but style from the text of the trinity (Radek-Preobrazhensky-Smilga).

Despite the departures that have resulted, the colonies of the deportees are increasing, being supplemented by more homogeneous and firmer elements. Thus, when I wrote you my first letter, we were four; now we are fourteen.

The situation in the country, from what I gather in the press, presents itself thus, in my opinion: on the order of the day—without setting an exact date—is written the inevitable explosion of a civil war, with the possibility of foreign intervention. The Party and the working class must be orientated along this perspective. The most dangerous policy is that of the ostrich. The leaders of the party continue either to feed the party with "official" pictures of prosperity or with unexpected sensational events in the domain of internal and foreign relations, without attempting to analyze them seriously, or—what is worst of all—to direct the attention of the party on to deliberately false roads, as was the case, for example, with the loathsome articles of Yaroslavsky on the letter of Solznev. (A propos of this letter, assuming that it is authentic, it is indubitable that it represents the product of a temporary confusion and is in no way characteristic of the exile and not at all—it is hardly

* In *Populaire* (the French socialist paper) a certain Rosenfeld regards the declaration as a result of faint-heartedness, of capitulation and of a course towards well-rewarded posts. It would be needless to dwell upon this zealous and mercenary servitor of the social democracy, one of the parties of power of capital, if he did not find imitators among the ultra-Left phrasemongers and bunglers who utter the same ideas in essence, but only in a meaner form. Which shows us once more that the ultra-Leftists are in accord with the estimates of the social democracy not only in the question of the Chinese Eastern Railway, but also in that of evaluating the declaration of the Russian Opposition.

** The first two texts, being found insufficient by the Central Committee, were not accepted.

necessary to say so—of the comrades who are in Russia.

The tension of the situation obliges the Party itself to seek new ways under the aegis of the apparatus. Thence, the ever new fermentations and groupings, the birth of a new Left wing within the party (Schatzkin, Sten, etc). Whatever its leaders may be *** the birth of a Left wing and the necessity for a new campaign against the "semi-Trotskyists" are the symptoms of healthy and very important tendencies, which attest the fact that we cannot be cut off from the party.

We have been informed by the party journal in Kharkov of the policy of the Urbahns group. We have refuted dozens of times before the masses the ideas that the Stalinists impute to us. Now the Stalinists utilize the articles of Urbahns to reinforce their accusations against us and to compromise the Opposition. Is there any hope of correcting the line of Urbahns? We can absolutely not bear the responsibility for such positions. Not to be able to find his place in the struggle between international imperialism and the revolution—that's shocking.

The point of view of the Left Opposition on the First of August is not clear to us. There is no doubt at all that Molotov's interpretation of Bucharin's "Third Period" is the preparation of the basis for international adventures of the Cantonese type. Nevertheless, the question remains always posed whether we must abandon our "right" to the street. It is in the same way that the question of the First of May is posed.

Warm greetings and best wishes.

A. B.

Φ

Tardieu, the Man of the Hour

Tardieu is master of the situation. His appetite for power can be satisfied. And through him, the bourgeoisie will also be able to handle systematically the great ventures that world competition now imposes upon it.

Tardieu has succeeded in making himself appear as the candidate of the country and no longer only as the candidate of a majority of the deputies. There has been renewed for him the "mystery of confidence" with which Poincare was surrounded in his day. The press, big industry, the whole bourgeoisie proclaims him: Tardieu is the man of the situation.

Back in 1926, Poincare, the honest and ferocious accountant of the bourgeoisie, was the man of the situation. Since then he stabilized the franc. He balanced the budget, he realized the important budgetary surpluses. Now capitalism wants a builder and a spender man who knows how to undertake work, to invest capital, to develop and to coordinate—in a word, to rationalize. There he is: Tardieu! The press is burning incense, the economic groups caress him: he is their figure-head. The situation now demands a directing crew that attends actively to the business of capitalism. The Hague Conference, the Young Plan have changed international positions. The ever smaller field of markets necessitates an ever more violent struggle to conquer them. But the foreign markets are already so disputed that the home market must be arranged for the greatest absorptive capacity. The whole policy of the Hardieu cabinet, as far as it is defined in his declaration, is orientated in this spirit.

Here is the situation. Tardieu and his crew are not the only ones who would have to come through. It must be made clear that a Paul Boncour would have been unable to do otherwise. He would have imitated his colleague Snowden. The illusions of the petty bourgeoisie, of the "people" in power, through the Daladiers or the Blums, have vanished forever. The governments of French imperialism can only carry out one policy, that of big capital, of production, of finance capital. It is dictatorial policy that Tardieu will carry on and which Boncour would have carried on. Only the revolutionary policy of the proletariat can be set against it.

The declaration of the Tardieu government is addressed to the "country". over the heads of the deputies. It puts the government under the control of the country, that is, of the capitalists. It promises "prosperity" to the country and considers

*** Schatzkin and others, according to a recent Daily Worker dispatch, have confessed their sins to Stalin since this was written.

itself responsible for it to the whole nation. Tardieu denotes, timidly enough as yet, his contempt for parties and parliamentary formations. He addresses himself to the producers, to the manufacturers, to the tradesmen, to the peasants. He brings them his program of endowments and reductions. He announces without a smile the lowest decreases in taxes on the transportation of manure or on pharmaceutical products. He makes it clear that all the communes in France will know how much the government will give to the country for technical education to give them an appetite, for tourists, to entice the dollars—three billions in all.

But the cynical demagogue does not speak of the tens of billions which are the share of the War and Naval departments!

There is the program that the situation requires. It upsets the "democratic" prerogative. It passes over the representatives of the people; it addresses itself to the country, but speaks only for the bourgeoisie, for the pillars of capitalism. Produce, trade; the State, which is your instrument, will help you; we will free it from the petty bourgeois obstructors, from the pusillanimous defenders of the artisans, etc.

For the working class, the program of Tardieu is the muzzle and the police, because it is the very program of the employers. The government cannot have or allow towards the working class any other policy than that of the capitalists. The declaration promises but one thing to the workers, the application of the law of social insurance. Insurance being carried out on the backs of the workers and by a withholding of their wages; Tardieu can do nothing but have it applied. But as to the rest, his declaration does not speak of a "social program", as the bourgeois parties "of the Left" know so well to do, as Poincare himself knew so well to do. And after all why should he speak of a social program. His social program springs clearly from his economic program. The economic program is that of the big employers and consequently, his "social program" is also that of the big employers: rationalization, squeezing of wages, repression of the labor movement and tormenting the revolutionary organizations.

The employers, encouraged by the State, will have all the latitude to reinforce its exploitation. "Order," to whose rebirth Tardieu has already contributed, will be still more consolidated.

Under such conditions, the Communist party would have to revise its attitude. On the contrary, however, it continues to be rent asunder by persisting in all its errors. The day of the opening of the Chamber, Cachin delivered a wholly insipid speech from the tribune in which he limited himself to saying that Tardieu was not qualified to lead the "honest" working people. Wherein is Tardieu's past more scandalous for a Communist than that of most of the bourgeois "statesmen"? Aren't they all accustomed to carry on their own business at the same time as that of the State? Aren't they all in the service of economic groups of interests? It is evidence that when one speaks of a "dishonest" bourgeois statesman, he assumes that there are others who are honest; but this opposition does not exist. Honesty or dishonesty have a class meaning. Capitalist honesty is to despoil of the workers, to dispute over imperialist booty, to fatten at the same time as the State. Tardieu has not abstained from acting as in the past.

Precisely one of the myths of bourgeois democracy is to have the people believe in the "integrity" of their representatives, in their independence and their personal probity. But this myth must be unmasked by the Communists who show that these people are the beneficiaries of capitalist profit, on account of which they dupe the workers.

The honest Cachin is taking the wrong road in clinging to the dishonesty of Tardieu. He should, on the contrary have declared that Tardieu was the worthy representative of capitalist democracy, the proper executor of imperialist practices.

Cachin also limited himself to saying the program of the Tardieu government is translated for the working class by a redoubling of the repression. It is true. But this repression arises at a time when the working class is disunited, when the Communist party gives it an example of confusion and corruption.

Tardieu governs all the surer for the revolutionary movement being misled and its perspectives wrong. The leadership of

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