

# Throughout the World of Labor

## The State of Mind of the Capitulators

I am sending you a specimen of Radek-ist panic, which is also a psychological explanation of his desertion. It seems to me that Radek is repeating his sorry experiment of 1923. At the decisive moment he is overcome by cowardice and hands the leadership over to the Centrists.

Here is a conversation between exiled comrades and Radek on his trip to Moscow in June 1929 on the platform of a railroad station (Smilga was sick and remained in the train):

Radek: "The situation is a very difficult one now, the country is passing through a 1917. The situation in the Central Committee is catastrophic. The Rights and Centrists are preparing arrests for each other. The Right-Centrist bloc has collapsed and an embittered struggle is being conducted against the Rights. They are strong. Their 16 votes can be doubled and trebled. There is no bread in Moscow. The dissatisfaction of the masses grows, which can degenerate into an uprising against the Soviet power. We are on the eve of peasant uprisings. This situation compels us to go back to the party at any cost. Our deliberation will proceed from the estimation of the general position of the party and the establishment of the split of the Opposition with the plea to be taken back into the C. P. S. U."

Question: "How is your attitude towards comrade Trotsky?"

Radek: "I have broken completely with Trotsky. From now on we are political enemies. He revises Lenin. Why did he bring up the permanent revolution again? And if we make no concessions to the peasants tomorrow will he frighten us again with the peasant and cry about Thermidor? We have nothing in common with the contributor of the (the name of a paper follows)."

Question: "Will you request the repeal of Article 58?"

Radek: "Under no circumstances. For those who will go with us it will be repealed by itself. But he will not repeal this article for those who carry on a destructive work in the party and organize the uprising of the masses. We brought ourselves to exile and prison. The youth who have now come to the Opposition have nothing in common with Party and Bolshevism. It is simply an anti-Soviet youth. The struggle must be conducted against these with all means. A third of the Party members will now go with us and those who remain have nothing in common with Bolshevism."

Question: "How can such a rapid transformation from even your Tomsk theses be explained."

Radek: "A party conference took place which led the party back on the Leninist path and on the other side a League of the Bolshevik-Leninists was organized. That's a second party—the party of the counter-revolution."

"Our platform stood the test splendidly. From a fighting document it became the platform of the party. What can you say against the theses of Kalinin? Against the five year plan? In connection with this the question of withdrawing our signatures from the platform is of secondary importance."

The agents of the G. P. U. did not let us talk further. They drove Karl (Radek) back into the train on the grounds that he is agitating against the expulsion of Trotsky from the country. Radek cried out of the train:

"I agitate against the expulsion of Trotsky! Yes, indeed! I agitate for the comrades to go back into the Party."

Karl turned to the agents of the G. P. U. with the words: "Let them alone. Let them reflect! Don't sharpen relations!" The agents of the G. P. U. listened in silence and dragged Karl further back into the train. The train started up....

(The comrades who sent us this letter make the following comment):

This letter is from a comrade well known to us, one of the outstanding young Bolsheviks. The letter gives a remarkably clear picture of the psychological motives for capitulation. The correspondent says that the reason for it is cowardice. This formulation may seem to be too simple. At bottom, however, it is right. It is self-un-

\*The article in the Soviet criminal code dealing with counter-revolutionary activities, which Stalin and Bucharin disloyally applied to crush the Bolshevik Opposition through imprisonment, exile and banishment.

derstood that we speak here of political cowardice. The personal factor is not important. It is true that not infrequently the two fall happily together. We once characterized the strongest quality of Radek as extraordinary impulsiveness. That was a very mild, very careful and well-wishing characterization, which, so to speak, still kept a certain credit open for Radek. There was no need for us to hurry, for even though we knew Radek we were still undecided to predict at what stage the impulsiveness of Radek would be transformed into political perfidy. Now it can be said that the process has come to a complete end.

The situation that Radek depicts is a picture of complete hopelessness. But that is fortunately a false picture.

That is the picture of a frightened citizen. But if the situation were really as Radek paints it as a justification for his capitulation, then the capitulation would be doubly senseless. The Rights are overwhelming. No bread. All classes are dissatisfied. Radek is anxious to save the revolution. But unfortunately, the saviour is transported to the scene of his heroic deeds under the accompaniment of the G.P.U. and at the moment when he is overcome with the greatest rage at Trotsky's bloc with Chamberlain, he is yanked back into the train by the agents of the G. P. U. From the pen of Gleb Uspensky, there is a story of an old woman—a petty bourgeoisie—who asks the police to bring her son to her so that she may still embrace him before his death. Radek, who is led to the arms of Yaroslavsky under guard of the C. P. U. repeats the story of Uspensky in political form.

What is typical in the conversation of Radek is undoubtedly his declaration that our platform has stood the test splendidly. Therefore, we must break with it. But Marxism has also stood the test throughout all modern history. Shall we not therefore also break with Marxism? Smilga, on the eve of his capitulation, even wrote a peculiar document, "On the Defense of the Platform of the Bolshevik-Leninists". Smilga defended the platform against Trotsky. But after an especially urgent request from Yaroslavsky, Smilga not only broke with Trotsky but also with the platform.

Shall we quote here our friend Sosnovsky, who, calling to mind a religious rite, recommends in such cases to whisper into the ear of the next to die, and say to him with the necessary emphasis: "Don't forget: you are already dead".

## Hugenberg's Victory at Kassel

The Kassel convention of the Deutsch nationalen Volkspartei (German National People's Party) came off extremely monotonously. Although for weeks previously—during and after the campaign on the "popular referendum"—deep-going differences of opinion on the expediency of this referendum and on the policy of Hugenberg in general had appeared in the Deutschnationale ranks, these differences were looked upon as non-existent at the convention.

The so-called "opposition" was entirely unsuccessful in shaking the position of Hugenberg as leader of the Deutschnationale party. This opposition proclaimed its ability and its will to fight the Deutschnationalen newspaper king much more by the fact that its most prominent representatives, Treviranus, Linderer-Wildau, Lambach, etc., either left Kassel before the opening of the convention or else did not even appear.

The convention of the party expressed itself, as the Hugenberg press triumphantly announces, "with unbroken unanimity" for the hitherto prevailing policy of the party leaders, which includes therefore the policy of alliance with Hitler. The fact that the biggest bourgeois parties, despite all the losses incurred precisely at the last elections through the alliance with the National Socialists (Hitler's Fascist Party), play with the armed struggle against the working class by open fascism, characterizes the growth of tendencies in the camp of the German bourgeoisie which consider it more expedient to execute the new offensive of capital against the German proletariat with open fascist terror. The party delegates, who responded without discussion to Hugenberg's report with the unanimous approval of his line of action, as well as the plenum of the convention, placed themselves on his political line. This fact is to be explained, naturally, not merely by Hugenberg's position of financial power

in the Deutschnationale Volkspartei. When the Kolnische Zeitung counsels the party that it "would perhaps be still more clever were it to reject his (Hugenberg's) secret financial means and be on the lookout for a real leader", it only illuminates one side of the question.

Taken in essence, Hugenberg expressed in clear words, in his long speech at the convention, the readiness of the Deutschnationale to participate in any government in which the social democrats are not represented, and thereby, in spite of the reservations on the Young Plan conditioned by the impending date of the plebiscite, cleared the road for the change to come after the adoption of the Plan. Hugenberg pointed out, among other things, that a collaboration of the bourgeois parties might be realized much "more easily" if the Young Plan were not adopted, that after its adoption, on the contrary, "almost" insurmountable difficulties opposed such a collaboration. Every German government will be confronted with the alternative of fulfilling the obligations it has assumed either at the expense of the living standards of the German workers or other professions or by the ruin of German industry. Only the conscious will to freedom (!) can open a way out for Germany. The domestic policy of the ruling Marxists (!) is no less ruinous than its foreign policy. Only when a conscious and clear attitude of struggle against Marxism is taken simultaneously in the Reich and in Prussia, will Germany again reach positive, constructive work.

In these sentences from Hugenberg's speech, the complete demagoguery of his "struggle" against the Young Plan is plainly expressed. After the adoption of the slave pact, the opportunity for the collaboration of the bourgeois parties is, it is true, "almost" impossible, but still only "almost", for the "Marxists" participating in the government (and that can be only the social democracy) need only be removed and the road to "collaboration" of the Deutschnationale is opened after the adoption of the Young Plan, even if it does "enslave three generations."

The speeches of the other Deutschnationale convention representatives do not even deserve mention, so colorless were they in their tone—obviously delivered on Hugenberg's orders. At best, the remarks of the Deutschnationale "labor representative," the Reichstag deputy Hartwig, deserve quotation, because they allow a comparison of the "equality of rights for the workers in the bourgeois state" with the efforts of the reformists that run in the same direction. Hartwig said, among other things:

"Not domination over other classes, but equality of rights for the working class in the state, economic and cultural systems is what you have to demand on the basis of the Christian code of morality."

This "equality of rights" is reflected in the eyes of Hartwig, in distinction from that aspired to by the reformists, only by its "Christian basis".

The "unanimity and firmness" of the Deutschnationale convention existed, in reality, only in appearances. Hugenberg himself, if his remarks are considered basically, left all doors open; he can continue to drive towards Hitler in a strengthened degree, or else he can, as the remarks cited above indicate, take his place in the ranks of the "big bourgeois front." The further development of the discussions in the Deutschnationalen Volkspartei may be expected. Until the plebiscite the hands of the Deutschnationale are tied. The big internal differences behind the scenes, which may be seen from the open insurrection against Hugenberg of a decisive part of the Deutschnationale press, behind which stand the Land League and parts of Deutschnationalen finance capital (Deutsche Tageszeitung and Boersenzzeitung), will sooner or later lead to the collapse of the Deutschnationale. What forms the unity of this opposition with the Volkspartei and other grouping of the decisive section of German finance capital will assume for the purpose of insuring the execution of the Young Plan, cannot yet be predicted in detail.

But, on the basis of the convention speech of the "victor" Hugenberg, there is one question on which there can no longer be any doubt, even for the unenlightened: His "struggle" against the Young Plan, just like that of his partner, Hitler, has been openly exposed as a fraud.

—VOLKSWILLE

Berlin, November 27, 1929.

## The Movement in South America

Broadly speaking, the social movement of the South American republics has been stationary, beating time, for the last five years. There are various reasons for it, such as the growing impoverishment of the working class with the consequent enrichment of the capitalist class; the gradual establishment of dictatorial, fascist governments in a majority of the South American states (excepting Argentine and Uruguay, all the rest of the S. A. republics now have either a frankly fascist government like Chile or a personal dictatorship like Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, etc.); the failure of the Communist Parties—mainly due to the so-called "Bolshevization" forced upon them by the Stalin clique—to attract the masses; and the absence of any great upheavals in Europe. This last is not the least.

As secondary causes may be mentioned the "Americanization" of the big cities—more electric light, more advertising signs, more moving pictures with their constant suggestion of luxury, lust, crime and worship of wealth, more football, prize fights, races, etc. (a hundred men listening at a labor meeting, forty thousand at a football match) and the growth of a labor aristocracy; the slow but sure work of the Roman Catholic Church among the rich and the middle class. The influence of the Catholic Church as a religious institution among the masses of the people is nil, but as a social organization it has a certain amount of success—more so now that its union with fascism enables it to spend more money on entertainments, clothes, automobile rides, etc., for some of the poor. Its work is confined to a few big cities; it never touches the country, the farming population,—perhaps because there is no money in it.

The position of the trade unions shows a decline of the anarcho-syndicalist element with a slight increase in the reformist unions. Some months ago, the official Stalinist party formed a new trade union federation—and made a mess of it. There was a terrific beating of drums, the country was flooded with wall propaganda (such as "600,000 revolutionary workers join the Red International of Labor Unions"), a trade union congress was held in Montevideo, where they were glad to welcome one Rafael Greco who previously was deported from Russia as an agent of the capitalists. One hundred thousand Argentine pesos were spent and the result was a fake federation with a real membership in all of South America of—848 members, resentment and antagonism of the union members of other colors, and unpopularity for the Communists in general as the dividers of the trade unions. As for the unofficial Communist Party (Penelon group) it is between the devil and the deep sea. It fights the official party tooth and nail but is mortally afraid of offending the E. C. C. I. As for the international situation, the Russian Communist Opposition, Stalin, Bucharin, etc., etc.—Mum! "There ain't no such animal!"

The revolutionary instinct of the masses here can't get over the deportation of Trotsky. We've seen something like it in South America. The fascist Ibanez deported some Communists to Peru, Peru deported to Ecuador, Ecuador sent them back to Chile and the Ibanez sent them to the isle of Mas Atuera—the island of Robinson Crusoe—and we have heard no more about them.

—R. GUINNEY.

Buenos Aires, November, 1929.

## The BULLETIN of the Russian Opposition

The Latest number just received contains articles by L. D. Trotsky, Christian Rakovsky, V. Kossior, M. Okudjava, N. Muralov, F. Dingelstaedt, and others.

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