

# Throughout the World of Labor

## The Leninbund on the Wrong Road

The misfortune of the Leninbund consists in the fact that it wants to play the role of an independent party when in reality it is only a weak faction. I do not doubt for a instant that if you persist in the present way, you will lead the organization to a catastrophe in a few months.

—Letter of comrade Trotsky to the leadership of the Leninbund, October 13, 1929.

Eighteen months ago the Leninbund received 40,000 workers' votes in Prussia, 8,374 of them in Berlin alone. During these eighteen months it has not been able to consolidate the positions gained, extend its influence into new fields and thus strengthen its ranks. For some time, comrades have tried to demonstrate that the absence of a clear political line, the perpetual floating between Korsch and Brandler could have nothing but disastrous consequences for the Leninbund. The facts have justified their predictions. At the last municipal elections, the Leninbund lost more than half the votes it had in 1928. In Berlin, where its paper, Volkswille, appears, it fell from 8,374 votes to 3,784.

The comrades of the minority asked that lists of candidates should not be presented everywhere, on principle—which would be the act of a second party—but that we should limit ourselves to presenting them only in those places where we have a strong position and where we represent the party in the mind of the masses. That is the case at Neulissenburg, for example, where we were not only able to get all the Communist votes, but even to carry four mandates from the social democrats. That is a real success. Unfortunately, at other points in the Reich, the act of presenting candidates served the social democracy and thereby discredited communism in the eyes of the masses.

The presentation of independent tickets at all costs and on principle was serious enough, but the methods employed in the electoral campaign were often such as could only make the Leninbund ridiculous. One of the members of the national committee did not hesitate to issue a leaflet which is a model of opportunism and could be claimed by any sort of social democrat at all.

These are the manifestations of an extremely grave nature, which must engage the attention of all the members of the Leninbund if they wish to hold back their organization from the dangerous declivity down which it is slipping.

The masses still have reformist illusions that must be taken into account. It is precisely a question of carrying out a policy which in the hard daily struggle, leads the masses by means of their own experience to the limits of democracy and proves to them practically that only the over-stepping of bourgeois democracy by revolutionary action can really improve their situation.

Instead of undertaking this serious and fruitful work, it is imagined that these illusions can be destroyed by decrees and hollow phrases which are based on no concrete experience. That is how the working

Soviet power. But to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship, really to seize power for itself—this can be done by the bourgeoisie only by a violent overthrow . . . We are fighting the Stalinist course. But Soviet Russia is something else than Stalin. In spite of all the degeneration which we fight and will continue to fight most resolutely, so long as the class-conscious workers are armed, Soviet Russia is a proletarian state to us, which we defend unreservedly in our own interests, in peace as in war, in spite of Stalin and in order to defeat Stalin, who is incapable of defending it with his policy. Whoever is not absolutely firm in the question of the proletarian character of Soviet Russia, hurts the proletariat, hurts the revolution, hurts the Left Communist Opposition."

This formulation is theoretically entirely irreproachable. Comrade Urbahn would have done better to reprint it in the organ of the Leninbund than to publish Korschist and semi-Korschist articles.

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class is left without direction in the decisive moments and lives without being capable of drawing any profit from events, as was the case in Germany in October, 1923, at the last First of May, and as is the case at present in Austria.

On November 30, the congress of the revolutionary elements who form the trade union opposition, was held in Berlin. The representatives of the opposition existing in a certain number of trade unions, those of the red factory councils, and those of the unemployed, assembled to deliberate on the organization of a vast front of defense against the offensive of capital.

The reformists are attacking this congress ferociously, and particularly the Communist Party of Germany which they denounce, as "the organizer of the trade union split". But all the revolutionary workers will support this initiative, for the congress can give a new and powerful impetus to the exploited masses on the condition, it is understood, that it is conscious of its tasks, that it appreciates correctly the situation in Germany and that it elaborates a program of revolutionary struggle capable of drawing the workers together and assuring their defense.

It is to be feared, unfortunately, that the German Communist Party is failing once more in its role and does not know how to give effective aid to the assembled delegates. On the eve of the congress it had done nothing, studied nothing and prepared nothing serious.

What will it bring to the congress in order to group together the millions of German proletarians into a powerful front of defense? Everything indicates that it will seek to cover the absence of a maturely considered policy by the customary petty methods concerning organization exclusively: they will speak of creating new committees! And they will repeat the mistakes that have so often been committed. What account will the central committee of the German Communist Party take of the systematic splitting offensive of the reformists? Continue to allow itself to be isolated until there is no longer a single Communist left in the trade unions? Until the reformists will have succeeded, without even having to fight, in demoralizing the millions of trade union workers?

And how does the party think of acting practically in order to lead the enormous mass of unemployed workers into the struggle, so as to avoid that misery does not discourage them and throw them into the arms of fascism? It is hardly permitted to hope that the present leadership will show itself capable of tackling these problems seriously.

Finally, it is inconceivable that the Leninbund, which wants to be and should be the organization of the Communist advance guard, has not yet taken a position towards this congress, that it makes no efforts to send delegates to it, and does not occupy itself with problems that it has to solve.

Berlin, November 29, 1929.

—KURT LANDAU

## The Betrayal in Austria

On Saturday, the national council made the constitution reform that gives dictatorial powers to Chancellor Schober a law after an eight-hour session.

Since noon today the Austrian parliament has been meeting under a strong police guard in order to push through the fascist constitutional bill in all three readings at once. Since firm agreements have been made on all important points between the government and the social democrats, the adoption of the bill is assured.

About nine in the evening, the second reading was ended. The bill was adopted in the draft of the sub-committee. Various amendments, including social democratic ones, were rejected. The third reading begins about 10 o'clock. The last vote is still expected today.

The reporter on the bill was Schuschnigg, the Tyrolean Christian-socialist supporter of the Heimwehr leader Steidle. After him spoke Schober, who announced the extension of the constitutional reform, and thereby joined in with the proclamations of the Heimwehr and bourgeois press that the present bill should only be an installment, the first stage.

Schober declared, among other things, that he thanks (!) the parliament for the great work (!) it accomplished so swiftly.

The "popular movement conducted by the Heimwehr" must now recognize the constitution after the change, and there is already a "plainly visible pacification", so that the hope exists that Austria can finally proceed upon the upward grade. "Much good" was attained through the conversations with the opposition (!) Now it is necessary to fill the changed constitution "with real life".

On the unity with the social democracy, Schober declared that the government did not surrender a single point of its program and the "Opposition" participated much more positively in the completion of the work on the constitution (!)

The social democratic deputy Eisner declared that his party had voted for the constitutional bill "in order not to keep the parliament from the more important questions of Austrian economy." (!)

The whole region around the parliament is occupied by a strong police reserve. A large number of fascists with sticks and blackjacks has marched up to the support of the police. In spite of this, a few hundred revolutionary workers succeeded in penetrating the parliament on the steps of which a speaker was arrested after a few words by a large number of policemen.

Protest demonstrations also took place in the provinces. A protest meeting in front of the Rohrbach spinning mill, near the industrial center of Neunkirchen in Lower Austria was violently dispersed by the gendarmes.

The Austrian social democrats have brought their treason to a crowning point. In a "legal" way, they have put the fascist dictatorship in the saddle; they are delivering the Austrian proletariat to fascism.

The revolutionary crisis in Austria is by no means "solved" by the vote in the national council. Fascism, which has temporarily found a cover under the Schober constitution, is determined to go the whole way. It will not shrink from civil war and terror.

Various bourgeois papers are emphasizing the provisional character of this "constitutional reform." The Austro-Marxists are not doing the slightest thing to organize the defense front of the proletariat. The difficult task of organizing the masses for the counter-offensive against the further plans of the Austrian reaction lies before the Communist Party of Austria.

Vienna, December 8, 1929.

## In France: A la Americaine

A l'Americaine is the slogan of the Tardieu bourgeoisie. It has launched its good fellow like a new moving picture is launched, with the most modern methods of commercial advertising. All over the front pages of the newspapers, in shop fronts, across the screen of passing events is displayed the optimistic smile of Tardieu, succeeding the surly countenance of Poincare. Big posters on all the walls of Paris vaunt the merits of the new product and rail at the unhappy rivalry of Daladier and company. The citizen standardized by advertising has let the new popular heroes be imposed upon him like Cadum soap. Scientific methods are being tested for manufacturing popularity. A l'Americaine, the new government is making interchangeable parts, without worrying about the old party labels, which put the old, outmoded and slow machines on the scrapheap in order to set the traditional political parties in motion. Tardieu is beating the speed record in establishing his government. He does not spare expense to get a better and quicker yield. He takes men from here, from there, from the Right and the Left, in the largest possible number in order to satisfy the largest possible amount of appetites and to assure himself of the largest clientele.

The old political parties of democracy are indignant at these new methods of competition which disarm and beat them on a ground that isn't their own, like the petty tradesmen protests against the methods of big stores. This ministry of confusion, composed of anomalous and unprincipled personages, is gravely denounced. It is gravely demonstrated that it cannot last because it violates the traditional rules of the game of the parties in a democracy. It is predicted that the unprincipled ministry will not last, that it will succumb to the joint assault of the Right, discontented with the foreign policy, and the Left, dis-

contented with the domestic policy, and then they will see how they deluded themselves.

The success of Tardieu is stirring up a fever of political Americanism. The Right wing of the Socialist Party has not borne the torment of Tantalus inflicted upon it for many weeks in order to lead it to the final deception—it also hoists the banner of political rationalization inside the Party, of autonomy for the parliamentary group, of the revision of the statutes, of the struggle of the young against the old. Like Tardieu speaks to the "country" above the heads of the deputies, it threatens to speak to the voters over the heads of the militants and the regularly constituted organs. The struggle between the Right and the Left in the S. P. appears more and more as the struggle between the modernizers and the mossbacks. While the Left remains attached to the old revolutionary forms, devoid of all content, which petrify and demobilize it into a grandiloquent dogmatism, the Right wants to arm itself with the methods of the most modern political technique so as to make its way along the new pathways of the bankers' democracy.

With American methods, American results. Prosperity! Tardieu cries after Hoover. Optimism is on the order of the day. After the period of the lean time, the period of the fat; after the days of penitence, great merriment. The economy of the speculator succeeds that of the father of the family. New days, new people. The countenance of Poincare, draped in "the old honesty of a republican in the days of the empire", watching at the bedside of his sick mother, the bourgeoisie, and his little franc, has given way to the broad smile of the cynical and corrupted Tardieu, the man of N'Goko Sangha and Homs Bagdad, who is leading the dance of the five billions and the reduction of taxes. Poincare and the other republicans are in the discard, Tardieu triumphs with the methods of efficiency. And the political parties beaten in the competition, like the radical party and the socialist party, raise a loud outcry by accusing him of having stolen their program. But Tardieu moves fast and well. . . This proves only one thing: all the bourgeois political parties (including the S. P.) are in accord on the general policy to be carried out. Their estimations of the kind of merchandise fit to pour upon the political market, converge for the moment but they are more or less well stocked up for the competition and all of them have let themselves be outdone by the "unprincipled" crew of Tardieu.

This fever of Americanism, of rationalization and of efficiency in every field, is not peculiar to France. It reaches right into the U. S. S. R. where the International Press Correspondence informs us of the manufacture in series of young "Soviet Americans" (sic!). And that is normal, inasmuch as American capitalism is the firmest, the best equipped with the most modern methods. But wait! The moment that Tardieu chooses to tire our ears with his standardized screechings about prosperity, is the same time that the colossal crash in New York bares the underside of this renowned prosperity. We learn of the formidable inflation of credit that lay at its base and which, all of a sudden, gives way, reducing it to its real and doubtless respectable proportions. The electoral myth of Hoover gives way before the reality of the crisis that they sought to hold back. It is the law of the capitalist regime that all prosperity is unstable. By the American reality can be judged the value of Tardieu's American myths!

In the language of the coarse mountebank, Tardieu promises prosperity precisely at the moment when events make the very possibility of this prosperity questionable, at the moment when the Bourse, in spite of the flattery and encouragement of power, is seriously weakening.

To be sure, French capitalism no longer suffers from post-war agonies; it lives and grows. But the harbingers of the international crisis which it will have to undergo are already apparent. The workers must take cognizance of them and gather together their forces. No decade will pass before Tardieu's prosperity shows its real face: the furious efforts of capitalism to assure a stable rule, which allow of nothing, ruins everything, and which the workers will batter down.

PIERRE NAVILLE  
Paris, November 1929