

Throughout the World of Labor

In the Soviet Union

First Flutterings of a New Course

The recent address of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has two principal objects. It furnishes the directives in the collectivization campaign and for the atheist struggle. It will smash the mounting optimism of the official press which, each day, carried figures and percentages of the progress of the collectives. The letters from the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, printed in the *Militant*, have already established the nature of the reentrance of the Kulaks into the collectives by examples of the slaughter of live-stock and the statements of the Kulaks to the effect that the collectives are a refuge. But this criticism, which takes into consideration the realities of the class struggle, is not at all the act of bureaucrats, hungry for crushing figures.

A Rebirth for the Kulaks!

The address of the Central Committee comes out against the methods of violence employed against the peasant class, which, under the cover of increasing numbers, artificially accumulated class antagonisms. Does this address mark a change in the face of difficulties of which they cannot be ignorant? Does it mark an apparatus zig-zag from "Face to the Country", to "Liquidation of the Nep"? In any case, what can one expect from contradictory orders issued without an effective analysis and without a concrete study of the class phenomena which impose their inflexible laws? The close of the address shows a desire for conciliation with the better-off sections of the peasantry: the rule regarding non-admission of the Kulaks into the collectives should no longer be strictly applied. Henceforth members of families in which there are red partisans or soldiers in the Red Army can be admitted, provided that they vouch for the members of their families. The door opens wide. Taking into consideration the study of L.D. Trotsky, who showed that because of their inadequate technical base the collectives could become a secret point of the renaissance of the Kulaks, it can be asked whether this "turn" in the bureaucratic strategy does not make a step towards a Bucharinist course under a cover of the liquidation of the Nep. In addition the address forbids the closing down of markets and authorizes the members of the collectives to sell their products on the market.

The Changed Course Toward the Church

Besides this, the address forbids the closing down of churches except in cases wherein an overwhelming majority of the peasants actually desire it. If this were concerned only with a letting up in the mechanical struggle against religion this paragraph—however mild—could be sanctioned. It has as its purpose to put an end to the bureaucratic excesses which can align the backward elements of the peasantry against the regime. But published at the time of the infuriated offensive of the clergy of all religions against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it appears like an effect of the pressure of reactionaries on the revolutionary state of the workers and peasants. It is, besides, normal that the Centrist apparatus, which, through its mechanization, is deprived of the influx of revolutionaries from the masses, should be exposed to the influence of external public opinion whose tunes are played by the world bourgeoisie.

Φ

The Elections to the Factory Councils in Germany

Berlin March, 1930

The elections to the factory councils have begun. The results already known fully confirm our previous prognostications. In many shops where the Party put forward red lists for the first time, it met with appreciable success. But where it recorded dazzling victories last year, and with the consequence it should at present

realize the expectations and hopes of the workers, there does it suffer defeats which are sometimes disastrous. Let us take, for example, the case of the Berlin Transport Organizations where on the 15th of March the elections to the factory councils for 1930 took place. They were a heavy defeat for the Party. Against 10,797 votes in 1929 it obtained but 6,317, whereas the trade unions leaped from 5,934 (1929), to 10,146 votes.

The results of the elections to the factory councils in the red factory of Leuna, which has, with good reason, until now, passed for a stronghold of communism, are almost as catastrophic. Here the party dropped from 9,256 in 1929 to 4,763 votes, whereas the trade union list which had received 5,914 in 1929 attained 5,093, thus recording but a slight loss; the decrease in the number of workers evidenced itself almost exclusively by the decrease of Communist votes; whereas the fascist lists gained 500 votes.

These results are all the more alarming in that they refute in a very definite manner the theory of "unceasing revolutionary advances". But this is not all. The figures in these elections should not be considered alone; in relation to the figures of the syndicalist movement they characterize the fundamental processes which are taking place among the masses.

The Party Fails to Lead

Despite the rapidly increasing unemployment comprising more than three million workers, the number of trade-union adherents is constantly growing....

This turn does not at all signify that the evolution of the masses toward the Left (which we have already noted on several occasions) is now moving backwards. On the contrary, this turn proves once again, still more conclusively, that the degree of maturity of the leftward evolution is quite different from the appreciation of the role of the Party. The gathering of hundreds of thousands of workers around the trade unions characterizes the initial stage in the leftward development, the very first form of class-consciousness—the consciousness of the necessity for class organization.

If, during the past two years, when these processes become more and more distinct, the Party leadership had known how to follow a Bolshevik course, we would have today a mass Party, measured not by election figures but by its capacity for action. Instead of forming a strong Left wing in the trade unions, and gathering—without regard to the question of parties—the conscious elements into an organized minority on the basis of the class struggle, the leadership, by its lamentable oscillations, has led the Party into a state of extreme confusion.

Under these conditions the Leftward push, expressing itself through the influx into the trade unions, has resulted at the same time in a weakening of the Party and its capacity for action. Moreover, it is becoming more evident from day to day that the masses no longer have any confidence in the program of the socialist party. Dozens of Communist functionaries, determined opponents of social-democracy, have been expelled from the Party, but have refused to let themselves be pushed out of the trade unions, by obeying the Party which gave them childish and stupid orders.

The Left Is Assembling Its Forces

Up to the present, the Right wing only has benefited from the growing dissatisfaction in the Party, but during the immediate past, significant symptoms have appeared: new oppositions are forming within the Party (especially in reaction to its trade union policies), which absolutely refuse to unite with the Right wing.

The first attempts of the real Left wing in the Party to reassemble once more, to free themselves from the traditions of the past and to adopt a new orientation on the trade union question, provoked commotions in the Right wing. In their daily *Die Arbeiterpolitik* of March 13th, they make a strong bid for a rapprochement with the supporters of the International Left Opposition who are still in the Party—the Wedding and the Palatine Oppositions. They give themselves up to the vain hope that some day there will be a common

struggle of the Right and Left against the Center.

The final developments will be a bitter pill for them. The Left which is regrouping itself once again, will in the future fight the Right as bitterly as it has in the past.

—K.L.

Φ

Strikes and Peasant Uprisings In Greece

Athens, March 12

The last two strikes of the gas and transport workers were caused by what we call the "third order" (end of year bonus) granted thus far at the beginning of each year and which certain enterprises wished to do away with, at one blow, although they represented an acquired right of the workers. The Venizelos government naturally took the part of the companies and placed at their disposal its police who were particularly brutal toward the strikers. But it was under this very same Venizelos government that this custom, now defended by the workers, was established a few years ago.

These strikes, which were not movements of a day, but lasted for a long time, were finally put down by the government and the companies, who subjected the workers to a regime of implacable terror. A large number of workers were imprisoned and deported and all the "leaders" were discharged.

The chief functionaries, sailors, officers in the navy and students in the upper classes of the polytechnic school took part in the repression. The students did not however take part of their own accord: they participated only under the threats of the school directors. This corps of strike-breakers soon found itself reinforced by a group of adherents to the yellow trade unions confederation who from the outset divested themselves of all signs of sympathy for the strikers.

The attitude of the government is neither new nor surprising to us. We had learned from its actions in a number of former strikes (the metal workers of Laurium, the workers of Elefsis, the transport workers of Piree). Thus, its reactionary role was exposed and its liberal mask torn away when it betrayed the workers at the August 1927 elections; where it clearly showed itself to be a capitalist government whose purpose was to stabilize the forces of production on the backs of the Greek proletariat.

Rationalization and Suppression

The carrying through of the projected plans in this field under the former ministry of Kafadaris (a bloc of all the bourgeois and democratic parties) could not be accomplished except through the most intensive exploitation of the workers. The heavy taxes bearing directly on the people, the successive measures directed against the workers (increase in productivity, maintenance of the twelve and fourteen hour day, frightful exploitation of women and children, reduction of wages, etc.), this was the course of capitalist stabilization.

Peasant uprisings broke out simultaneously in all parts of the country; they were extinguished by the same methods employed in the strikes (Aeropolis of Messina, Messaria of Crete, Langada in Macedonia, etc.).

In proportion as the stabilization widened, those enterprises which did not have a solid foundation, which were basing themselves on inflation, on hazardous speculations, or on fluctuations in the stock market, began to falter. It was in this manner that a certain number of important bankruptcies came about: banks (Bank of Thessaly, Anglo-American Express Company, etc.), corporations (Kyrkinis Wool, Alexopolis Soap and Oil), certain commercial enterprises such as the Palios Maritime Society.

Mass Unemployment Develops

In order to put an end to these bankruptcies which disturbed the economic situation in the country, the government adopted certain measures which increased still further the pressure on the working masses; it expunged from the order of the day in the Chamber the debate concerning the plan for social insurance, at the same

time that it reduced the taxes on the corporations.

Paralleling the rationalization of industry by the union of a number of enterprises in single branches of production there was created mass unemployment, and to this permanent industrial unemployment there was added that resulting from the stopping of work in the tobacco manufacturing of Maceonia and the raisin production of Peloponesia.

Thus the number of discontented workers and peasants increase without limit; the illusions which arose as a result of the access of the "liberal" government are vanishing; everyone seeks means for defending himself against the worsening exploitation.

The necessity for a strong Party which should have for its task the complete demasking of the government and the gathering of the workers and of crystallizing their discontent into a struggle having concrete objectives is today clearer than ever before.

The Adventurist Party Course

Such a Party cannot be other than the Communist Party of Greece. Unfortunately, there is actually in Greece no Communist Party capable of carrying through a Communist course. The small group which leads and still exists as the Party, is composed of loud-mouthed sectarian and petty-bourgeois elements who oscillate unceasingly between opportunism and ultra-Leftism but are always incapable of laying down a Communist course. Deluded by the vision of a "third period" of capitalism they call upon the workers, almost every day, through the central organ of the Party, to take part in demonstrations which collapse in ridicule and compromise the communist movement. They have provoked the trade union split and thereby have separated from themselves a considerable number of workers who today furnish the cohorts for the monarchist or democratic leaders. The enormous majority of Greek workers is actually outside the trade unions and forms a "human material" which the bourgeoisie know well how to utilize.

Our Opposition group has struggled against the trade union split; it is now striving for a unification of the trade unions and for the organization of the unorganized.

—A GROUP OF MILITANT GREEK OPPOSITIONISTS

Φ

Spanish Opposition Endorse International Conference

We have been informed by the Communist Opposition of Spain on the project of an International Conference. Our Spanish comrades write:

"Already on several occasions we have clearly stated our position with reference to the necessity of a conference of the International Left Opposition. The immediate preparation of this conference is absolutely necessary. It must clearly fix our position, especially as the opposite of the splitting attitude of the Comintern, that is, it must clearly state our desire to establish unity and to revive Communist democracy within our organizations.

"The International Communist Opposition must work out its international platform immediately. The critical examination made by Trotsky of the Program of the Communist International should serve as a basis for our international platform. This platform should be the central point of the conference. We must clearly fix our estimation of the international political situation, of the trade union problems, of our position toward the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and of socialism in one country, etc.... We must not forget also to state our position toward the opportunists of the type of Paz and Urbahns. The Spanish Oppositionists, among whom there are no differences, believe it necessary to break immediately with all types of opportunists."

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LETHBRIDGE, Alta.—(FP)—Militarist propaganda is responsible for the restoration in the high schools of cadet training against the Opposition of Lethbridge organized labor. The majority was 123 in a city referendum.