

# The Election Results

By Our Berlin Correspondent

The result of the German elections proves that electoral participation was extremely increased. It considerably surpassed 80 percent. By the growth of the electorate and the participation of the young element (2,500,000), the number of votes rose from 30,000,000 to 35,000,000, and the total number of mandates from 493 to 576, increasing the number of deputies by 83. More than half of these six million new electors are proletarians. These facts must be emphasized in order to analyze the election results.

## The Middle Bourgeois Parties Beaten

In spite of desperate efforts, the parties of the middle bourgeoisie forming the Bruening government were unable to halt their disintegration. Only the Center, the party assembling under the banner of the Catholic Church the big industrialists of the Rhine and the workers of the Rhineland and Upper-Silesia, succeeded in maintaining its positions (68 mandates instead of 62), that is, to increase, due to the increased participation, the number of its votes by about 5 percent while the increase in the electorate was about 20 percent.

The other government parties (State party, Right wing Democrats, People's party) suffered very heavy defeats, in part even crushing. The dictatorial regime which had hoped to convert its parliamentary minority into a majority, obtained hardly a third of the mandates out of the total.

In spite of the growth in the number of electors, the socialist party fell from 9,150,533 votes (1928) to 8,572,000 (143 mandates as against 153). In certain regions however, it held on, for instance in Saxony, where it succeeded in rising from 871-327 votes obtained in the Landtag elections (June 1929) to 992,547. As a whole, the defeat of the social democracy is undeniable, but it would be wrong to speak of a "crushing defeat" (see Rote Fahne, September 15, 1930); one must rather speak of a process of crumbling.

The press of the German C.P. announces that "the Communists are the victors of the electoral battle". The Party has succeeded in rising from 3,262,876 votes (1928) to 4,587,000, a gain of about 40 percent. Considering the increase in the electorate, the Party succeeded in gaining about 500,000 to 600,000 new votes. That is certainly an important fact, which does not indicate the correctness of the Party policy but the enormous, the intense effectiveness of the masses in the crisis.

## Fascism, the Real Victor

The National Socialist party (Fascists) bounded from 809,939 votes (1928) to 6,400,000 and their mandates from 12 to 107! As we had foreseen, it became the strongest bourgeois party and at the same time the strongest party in general after the social democrats. What interests us above all is to know at the expense of what class this victory was achieved.

At the very outset it is apparent that the fascists have taken the heritage of the petty bourgeois parties. They took 2 million votes from the nationalists, 1 million from the People's party, and about a half million, without doubt, from the other bourgeois parties. As for the increased participation, it also went in large part to Fascism. At first sight it might seem that the enormous victory of Fascism is due to the simple fact that it drew the bourgeois masses to it. But a deeper examination of the electoral results shows that Fascism succeeded in making a deep breach in the proletariat. That is what the figures from the industrial regions show, in which the Fascists almost increased their 1928 vote ten-fold. Thus, East Dusseldorf, 210,106 (1928: 19,926); West Dusseldorf, 168,635 (1928: 10,104). Chemnitz-Zwickau, 264,871 (1928: 41,497); Hamburg, 144,584 (1928: 17,761).

In the industrial regions of the Rhineland, the Fascists went from 600 to 8,400 in Hamborn, and from 1,222 to 26,079 in Wuppertal-Barmen.

In Berlin, the figures are still more alarming. In this city, there were municipal elections in November 1929, that is, in the period of the crisis. Here the Fascists rose from 132,031 to 393,266, and that in ten months. In the proletarian bastions, the Fascists increased, in Wedding (a particularly striking instance), from 8720 (November 1929) to 20,655; in Neukoelln, from 7,124 (1929) to 22,128, in Friedrichshain,

from 2,324 (1929) to 24,900, in Pankow from 855 (1929) to 11,773.

## And Now?

Nothing would now be more dangerous than dizziness of the Party before its own success, nothing would be more dangerous than the way the bureaucrats treat the Fascist victory as a mere bagatelle ("Last night Herr Hitler had his 'greatest day', but the so-called election victory is the beginning of their end . . ." Rote Fahne, September 15).

The Party has advanced. It has advanced in virtually all the proletarian regions. But the fact that the Fascists did so also in a whole series of industrial sections (West Dusseldorf) or even strongly surpassed it (Chemnitz-Zwickau, Hamburg, Dresden-Bautzen, Northern Westphalia) is alarming. The Rote Fahne writes: "The rise of our growing influence among the workers and all the exploited, the rise in which we won the tolling masses in the cities and the country for our program of revolutionary emancipation, showed itself to be even more impetuous than we thought before September 14"; that is one of the most dangerous ways of deceiving oneself.

We are on the eve of decisive struggles in Germany. The rise of the counter-revolutionary wave has exceeded all previous ones. Now everything will depend upon the extent to which our Party will be able to utilize the confidence which the masses place in it in order to lead the extra-parliamentary struggle, the struggle against the capitalist offensive, and mass unemployment, the struggle against Fascism. The greatest danger is the continuation of the present course whose culminating point is now the "program for the national and social liberation of the German people". Fascism cannot be vanquished on the basis of national-Bolshevism; the Fascists cannot be conquered by exchanging amicable discussion articles with them in the Communist and national socialist press (Berlin am Morgen, Nationalsozialist). If this course is continued, the present success of the Party will be transformed into its opposite. In the competition of "national Bolshevism versus Fascism", it is Fascism that will triumph.

In the struggle against Fascism, the central point, now as before, is the social democratic workers whom we must win over, with whom we must make a united class front against Fascism.

The Left Opposition in Germany will have to work in the weeks to come, under still more difficult conditions. The Party masses still follow the policy of Centrism in their majority. The success of yesterday threatens to render them insensible to the dangers before us.

The Left Opposition was not taken unawares by the events. It will continue to fight with increased strength to save the Party from disaster, the danger of which is greater than it would seem; in this electoral struggle during which the Party leadership trampled the principles of Communism under foot it has begun to poison the most precious thing the Party has: the internationalist class position of the cadres of the Party, it has undermined the ideological resistance power of the Party, it has yielded ideologically to Fascist pressure.

Today's victory brings to light the elements of an inevitable defeat, unless the pressure of the proletarian kernel of the Party radically changes the political life of the Party.

Berlin, September 15, 1930

—KURT LANDAU

## ON MAURICE MALKIN

Last minute technical difficulties made the omission of a report on the visit made to Comstock Prison, New York, to see comrade Maurice L. Malkin, unavoidable. In the next issue the Militant will publish an account of this visit made to our Opposition fighter in prison by Max Shachtman, Sylvia Bleeker, Rose Karsner and other comrades. It will be highly interesting. In the meantime, all comrades are urgently requested to write to comrade Malkin. He told his visitors that the day he receives a letter from a comrade is a Red Letter day in his life. Write about the movement and the struggle. Write often. Write regularly. Remember our fighters behind the prison bars and do not neglect them. He should be addressed: Maurice L. Malkin, No. 10061, Box 51, Comstock, N.Y.

# The C.P.G. in the Campaign

The outcome of the German elections has been a violent—though not unexpected—political shake-up, an indication of the rapid shifting of class forces that has been taking place for some time—to be precise since the adoption of the Young Plan. The enormous Fascist victory and the quite substantial gains of the Communist Party are only the beginning of a radical trend which German politics will follow in the days to come. We may yet witness many vacillations in the degree of influence of the Fascists and the C.P.G. during the course of developments, but with the increasing enslavement of the German proletariat through unemployment, taxation and wage cuts; with the progressive impoverishment and declassing of the small bourgeoisie due to the ruthless attempt of the capitalist class to force the burden of the reparations on the lower classes, the dilemma: Fascism or Communism, is definitely on the order of the day in Germany.

With such a perspective before us, it would be well to review the progress of the German Communist Party, to inspect its forces and fighting ability. The elections brought the Party a gain of over 1,000,000 votes, not be overestimated in importance when we consider the almost octupled increase of the Fascists, (over 5,000,000!) but nevertheless a great advance, especially taking into account the gains in such a strategic center as Berlin, where the Communists surpassed the social democrats and became the strongest party. However, we must ask ourselves: How did the Party face the elections? How did it appeal to the workers on this occasion? These questions are indispensable for a real accounting.

## The C.P.G.'s Programmatic Declaration

And here we receive as an answer the amazingly shameless document known as the "Programmatic Declaration of the C.P.G. on the National and Social Emancipation of the German People": It is a document whose very title betrays it to be a petty bourgeois electioneering device, an unscrupulous means of competing with the demagogic "national" slogans of the Fascists, the Hitlerites. It points out the social democracy to the masses not so much as the agent of the German bourgeoisie, but as "the voluntary agents of French and Polish imperialism"; it speaks of their "high treason" in almost the same tones as Hitler does; finally, it sees the "point of departure of the enslavement of all German workers" in the "Versailles robber treaty"! Not the class rule of the German bourgeoisie, but the Versailles treaty, which is the summary of the struggle between the German and the Allied imperialists has become the "point of departure of the enslavement of all German workers"! As a consequence, the necessity of the struggle for immediate demands against the capitalist offensive at home is shelved or reduced to insignificance, the entire election campaign is centered around the irresponsible and all too general slogan: "In the event of our seizing power we shall declare null and void all obligations arising out of the Versailles Peace". A very strong echo of the "national-Bolshevik" deviations of the German infantile "Lefts" of 1919 (Laufenberg-Wolfheim) and of the Brandlerites in 1923.

Lenin gave the "national-Bolsheviks" and the infantile "Lefts" of 1919 the proper Marxist reproof. It still holds good today for the Thaelmanns and Neumanns, and all those who carry out the Centrist, nationally limited line of Stalin in Germany.

## Lenin's View

"We Communists," wrote Lenin, "are not at all bound to repudiate the Versailles treaty—or what is more, to repudiate it immediately. The possibility of successfully repudiating the treaty depends not only upon the German, but also upon the international success of the Soviet movement." (Left Wing Communism.)

The election campaign, with the crassly nationalist note that accompanied it, was the purest expression of ultra-Left opportunism. At a time when the oppression of the masses is heading for a crisis, when it is necessary, in a campaign of broad struggle to break the ground for the decisive blows against the class enemy by a sharply outlined, patient and sober campaign to win authority and leadership among the workers, the German Party leadership offered nothing more than the as yet vague slogan of a Soviet Germany.

That this slogan of necessity expressed the immediate reaction of over four and a half million German workers is gratifying, to be sure. But what guarantee is there that these workers, who thus voiced their dissatisfaction with the existing regime and their desire for a workers' Germany, will follow the Party in the struggle beyond the ballot box? Do the recent economic struggles, perhaps, offer such a guarantee? No, indeed! The defeats of Mansfeld and the Northwest in July of this year, the latest in a whole string of strike failures since the Ruhr fight of 1928, bespeak the contrary.

In a moment of splendid opportunity for mass work in the factories and in the broad working class organizations the Party leadership present an ultra-Left sounding parliamentary spectacle to the German working class, hiding its real impotence to cope with the situation as a Bolshevik Party should. The nationalistic mimicry of the Fascists, heaped upon the general confusionist theories of "social-fascism" and the "immediate revolutionary situation" with all their subsequent isolationist tactics, keep the Party corralled, bound, unable to carry out its historic task.

## The Capitalist Offensive

Immediately after the paper-mache "victory" of the elections, the fierce, all-round offensive of the bourgeoisie is only coming into its real swing, is gaining its full amplitude. A Times dispatch, dated Berlin, September 26, reports:

"The conscription of labor probably will replace the system of unemployment doles in the government's new program of financial reforms, and it will be only one of several innovations to which recourse will be taken in a final attempt to prevent the collapse of Germany's financial structure."

"The government's plans include also an increase in the number of indirect taxes in the move to reduce direct imposts . . . In keeping with its scheme for cuts in production costs and retail prices, the government intends to reach an agreement with the trade unions providing for a reduction of 10 percent in wages."

The drive of the capitalist class against the standard of living of the working class, for the abolition of even the meager "dole" is coming to a head. The social democracy, in the Mueller coalition government, in the yellow trade unions, has supported this drive by the most revolting acts of treachery and deception. But as yet not even the most elementary steps have been taken to organize the proletarian defensive which would reveal the true countenance of fascism and social democracy before the workers.

## The Role of the Thaelmanns

Confined in its stifling atmosphere of self-deception and illusion, the Party leadership has failed to do its duty. It is not yet too late to regain lost time, to repair the Party and prepare it for the historic battles to come. Our German Opposition comrades are leading in the fight to unmask the incapable epigonic Thaelmann-Neumann leadership before the Party, to instigate the membership to throw off the shackling theory of "social fascism" and all its tactical deductions, as well as the whole dangerous playing with "national-Bolshevik" phrases, to rehabilitate and reconstitute it as the weapon of the working class, now more indispensable than ever.

The struggle to follow, the fight against unemployment, for the seven hour day, for credits to the Soviet Union, for a broad defensive against wage cuts, will in Germany, as here and everywhere, prove the justice of the policy of the Left Opposition. We, the Leninists of the entire world, know the import of the coming class struggles in Germany. It is for this reason that we look ahead with such anxiety towards the progress of the German Party, fighting for its renovation and the Comintern's, in order to help that "international success of the Soviet movement" which alone can forever tear up the Versailles Treaties, the Young Plans and every other remnant of capitalist class rule.

—SAM GORDON

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