

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

THE BRITISH SCENE

England Goes to the Polls

(Continued from page 1)

banner of capitalist slogans. It does not require a profound knowledge of Marxism to see through the pretence of "Socialism" as advocated by the Labour Party Congress at Scarborough. A very slight knowledge of the record of the two Labour governments is sufficient to reveal only too well the nature of the "socialism" that the Labour Party advocates in practice. It is a "socialism" that differs from capitalism precisely as tweedledum does from tweedledee! The Labour Party that was put out by a Red Letter will not return by means of an obvious red herring! The sight of Mr. George Lansbury leading the Labour Congress to the refrain of the "Red Flag" no longer moves the British workers. The excursions of the Indian people find it difficult to act a revolutionary part, and if Jesus fed the multitude, his Labour disciples were quite prepared to starve the unemployed!

All this cant about socialism cannot hide the transparently obvious fact that the Social Democracy is now a part of the normal machinery of the capitalist state. The slogans of the opposition may have a "left" sound, but their program is a program of capitalist reform and reconstruction, and we know that in practice such reconstruction will be at the expense of the broad working masses. The General Election is, therefore, a bourgeois election. The alternative programmes that are offered to the workers are merely programmes for the reconstruction of capitalism. In actual fact, the workers are merely asked to write on the ballot the name of the party which is to reduce their wages!

Tories Shift to Protection "Issue"

The economic necessities of the bourgeoisie find expression in politico-economic formulas. The 17th century revolutionary bourgeoisie put forward its demands under cover of the demand for the supremacy of the House of Commons. To-day, the demand for tariffs represents the necessity of the declining ruling class of Britain. The desire of the Tory party for protection precipitated the election, and protection versus free trade will form its chief battle-cry. (While the Beaverbrook wing of the party advocates Empire Free Trade (protection) this does not seem likely to become a practical issue.) Before British politics pass into the openly revolutionary stage of fascism versus communism, it must be demonstrated that capitalism is itself the inevitable cause

of the terrific plight of the masses. It is still possible to throw the blame for the crisis not on capitalism, but upon its local form, i. e., free trade. Until protection also has demonstrated its complete incapacity to restore Britain's lost prosperity; British politics will not, in the opinion of the writer, pass into the revolutionary stage.

Protection has thus a twofold root. It is a necessary prop to declining British capitalism, (and is, as such, a convincing proof of the decline of British capitalism, which once arrogantly spurned all forms of protection). It is also a psychological necessity to the British bourgeoisie, in that it enables them to offer free trade as a scapegoat to the starving masses who are thus prevented from realizing that it is capitalism which is the cause of the crisis, and that its forms are immaterial. By this means, the political representatives of the ruling class are able to draw the masses from the broad highway of revolution into the side-track of tariff reform. It is not until this also proves a blind alley that the issue of revolution as the inescapable issue from permanent crisis will raise itself with irresistible force in the minds of the masses.

If a forecast may be hazarded, it would seem that a conservative victory at the polls is indicated, backed as it is by a terrific mass drive on the part of the press. It may also be predicted with reasonable certainty that, in the event of a decisive victory, the Tories will serve MacDonald as in 1922 they served Lloyd George when they no longer needed him. An imperialist bourgeoisie invariably cherishes an immense esprit de corps which makes it instinctively despise Judas Isariots of the MacDonald Thomas type whom it spurns when it no longer needs them.

The opposition will consist of the Labour Party plus the free trade Liberals with a programme of free trade plus a few platitudes about bankers ("Shylock versus the people", etc.). In this opposition it is probable that Lloyd George will swallow Henderson and become leader of the Labour Party in fact if not in name. In that case, Labour would probably shed its "socialism" (which is in any case too obviously absurd to continue to be of any use; the I. L. P. and the "left" would be expelled, and the Labour Party would become an avowedly liberal party; a position which could not last long in the conditions of British decline.

— CARUS GRACCHUS.

A Communist Party - The Problem of the Revolution in England

The contemporary situation in Britain can only be understood against its historic background. Considered as a "thing in itself" the present crisis is as meaningless as would be a single algebraic formula deprived of its correlative factor. The problems of Britain are problems that history has placed on the order of the day. And problems of such an order are not to be arbitrarily checked or swept back by the broom of the bourgeois Mrs. Partingtons.

The Industrial Revolution created new conditions in Britain, its classical home. To serve its newly-acquired world market, British capitalism brought into existence a population of wage slaves far in excess of its domestic capacity to maintain on even the barest subsistence level. Now that the Victorian age is gathered to its fathers and the world hegemony of Britain is a thing of the past, the British bourgeoisie finds itself faced with a reaction of proportionate dimensions to its previous gigantic action. The markets have gone but the working class remains! The problem of British Imperialism to-day, is to reduce its population in proportion to the rapid loss of its markets. How this can be done without riot, insurrection, and, ultimately, civil war; that is the question of the day for the British ruling class.

Taken in its broadest sense (and history, unlike the historian, is never narrow) the present crisis is merely the first stage in this process. Now that the World Banker, London, has followed London, the commercial metropolis, into limbo; the British bourgeoisie has lost no time in reminding the British working class that it must no longer remain on the stage now that its raison d'être, the world market, is a thing of the past. The concerted attack on the whole working class, (unem-

ployed and employed alike) is merely the first step in the process that will render the socially unnecessary working class socially impossible. The issue is now transparently clear. If the capitalists are shown in the light of Marxian science to be a socially unnecessary class, it is clear that the continued existence of the working class (in, at any rate, anything like its present dimensions) is incompatible with the necessities of the bourgeoisie. And this fact is most of all evident in Britain, the classical parasitic rentier, whose World Empire has gone but whose swollen slave class yet remains.

British Situation Is Beyond Reform

Viewed from this angle, nothing could be more mechanical and insane, than to isolate the crisis both from what preceded it and also from what will come after it. The present attack on the British workers is merely experimental, and, with an Imperialist bourgeoisie, notoriously, "appetite comes with eating". The British working class is not, therefore, fighting merely for trade union standards. It is, ultimately, fighting for bare existence. And this, save the mark, is the time that the mandarins of the C. P. G. B. deem fit and proper for the slogan of a workers' charter and a guaranteed minimum wage! If the issue were left to reformism, the only concession that the members of the working class are likely to get is a "stake in the country" large enough to contain their coffins!

It is clear that the situation has now gone beyond reform. It is no accident that there is a simultaneous collapse of the bourgeois reformist Liberal Party and the working class reformist Labour Party whose policy is, in any case, merely the cast-off clothes of liberalism. It is Socialism or starvation, Communism

or chaos! Only the iron broom of revolution can be relied upon to cleanse with complete efficiency, this Augean Stables.

The events of the last few weeks have shown that the "inevitability of gradualness" only applies to overthrowing Capitalism. There was nothing gradual about the methods taken by Messrs. MacDonald Snowden and Co., to save it! Reformism presupposes a stable and expanding capitalism as an essential preliminary to its reforms, and an even relatively stable capitalism can in Britain only be achieved over a literally declamatory working class. The logical conclusion of reformism is, undoubtedly, that of MacDonald; since, unless Capitalism can be first saved, obviously, it cannot be reformed! The position of the Fabians in their 'cloud-cuckoo-land' is, therefore, a fantastic farce, and the attitude of the I. L. P. in trying to pour the new wine of revolution into the old bottles of reformism, is merely a grotesque comedy.

If the I. L. P. is a comedy, the Communist Party is a tragedy. In an era when speedy revolution has become the one crying necessity of the working class, the only alleged revolutionary party indulges in chartist antiquarianism, converting the living slogans of the period of capitalism's rise into musty falsehoods in the period of its decline. When the proletariat needs its party as never before in British history, the party is skulking in a sectarian corner, striving vainly to cling to the coat-tails of the militant workers outside.

Objective Conditions Favorable to Revolution

Indeed, so completely has a vulgar empiricism succeeded and superseded a Marxian analysis, that theory in the C. P. G. B. is despised on the eminent grounds that it is "unpractical"! In the laboratory of these alchemists, the word "intellectual" has undergone a "translation". In the epoch of Marx and Lenin, the term "intellectual" denoted a revolutionary student preoccupied (sometimes excessively) with the intellectual problems that are inseparable from a revolutionary analysis. In the epoch of Stalin and Polit, an intellectual is scouted and condemned as a counter-revolutionary merely because he possesses an intellect! It is only such an attitude that could produce such theoretical Siamese Twins as the Workers' Charter and the doctrine of socialism in one country, with its corollary of friendly (sic) competition with the world bourgeoisie.

What is our conclusion? It is that the era of gradual reform is over, and that of a swift reformation is at hand. The law of the pendulum applies to politics. The decline of British imperialism will be of a corresponding magnitude with its unparalleled ascent, and the speed of its world decline will be matched by the ferocity of its drive against the working class. If the 2nd Labour Government represented the last ineffective splutterings of British democracy, the "National" government represents the first stage of British fascism, which only requires time to become fully articulate. Under these conditions, the period when the working class mustered under the banner of the Labour Party, with its bourgeois outlook and "evolutionary" socialism, is doomed to a speedy end, and an epoch of revolution is already rising above its ruins. For that revolution two things are indispensable, militancy and a party that is revolutionary to the end. The militancy is there, and grows rapidly—of that there can be no doubt whatsoever. Only the party is lacking, and the time is short. If, as Disraeli once said, "adventures are to the adventurous", it is no less true that revolutions can only succeed, if, and when, they are led by revolutionaries. From the era of Wat Tyler to that of the general strike of 1926, British history affords examples to show what happens to a movement whose leaders fear victory more than defeat!

For the solution of the revolutionary problem in England, all the ingredients are there except one: the most essential of all; the party that is not afraid both to think and fight out the problems of the British proletariat to their revolutionary end. The British revolution is now attaining dramatic proportions; but it is a drama without a centre; Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, so to speak. All the problems of the British revolution are now reduced to this single problem. Without the lead of a mass party, revolutionary energy will dissipate itself in abortive and scattered riots. The problem of the revolution is now, simply and solely, the problem of a party.

—F. A. RIDLEY.

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THE SITUATION IN GERMANY

The Elections in Hamburg

Although it is a little late for discussion, the Hamburg election's are still of interest as a barometer of the German political situation.

According to the figures of the 83% of the voters taking part in the election, the Nazis gained 58,000 votes (40%) and took the second place with 202,000 votes against 214,500 for the S. P. D. which remained first. The Deutsch-Nationale, after a long period of defeats also gained (12,000 votes). The S. P. D. lost only 10% of its voters, which a Berlin liberal newspaper justly described as "surprising"; in fact, as a result of their policy of tolerance and of using the club, one might have expected a much greater loss.

The same as in the elections of September 4th, 1930, these two factors, the increased growth of Fascism on the one hand and the large masses of workers who are still more numerous in the S. P. D. than in the German Communist Party, represent the unfavorable side for communism, of the present situation. The C. P. G. gained 33,000 votes (25%), particularly at the expense of the S. P. D. This is obviously an important success.

But compared with the victory of the Fascists, the C. P. G. on the contrary has suffered a defeat, which becomes still more serious if we examine the figures since February, 1928: the Fascists have gained 188,000 votes, the Communists, 54,000. The real victors are the Nazis. They are on the upswing. The tendency of the September 14th elections has gone further. The elections in Oldenburg and in Brunswick several months ago followed the same

lines. The relation of forces throughout Germany, we can say definitely, is still worse.

This situation ought to have determined all the policies of the C. P. G. but what is it actually doing? It talks only of "Communist victory", "Red elections", "Red Hamburg". They talk about the victory of the Nazis casually, as a matter of secondary importance, they laugh at it (literally, Remmele in his speech laughed at it), or they give irresponsible explanations which are as ridiculous as they are stupid.

In the Communist press, they say that "the success of Fascism is more an echo (?) of September 14th than a new upswing". The Communist newspaper at Hamburg writes that "in spite of the gain in votes, the Nazis even in Hamburg, have become not stronger but weaker" (?), and so on. I do not take the time for these explanations, on a level with these where with shrewd sophistry they try to prove that Hamburg is a commercial town, as if this figure of 202,500 could represent the votes of employees and petty bourgeois only! At the same time the fact that the little employees have followed the Nazis only speaks against it, the C. P. G., which has not known how to attract them and has completely neglected this work as a Hamburg correspondent tells us.

By its policy of concealing the victory of the Fascists and of shouting deafeningly about its own victory the leadership of the C. P. G. only demoralizes and disorients the masses, instead of orientating them and concentrating all its efforts on the struggle

against Fascism as the principal danger. To put itself in position to subdue Fascism which has gone over to the offensive on all fronts, the C. P. G. the only one who can subdue Fascism, must make a sharp turn in its policies. Today in the face of the threat of counter-revolution in Germany, this turn is more indispensable than ever.

The first elements of this turn should be, to tell the truth, not to understate the success; to re-establish Party democracy; to break with National Communism; instead of trying to gain Scheringer's on this soil, to find a way to the Social-democratic worker; to give up the theory of social fascism and the Red Trade Union policies of the R. G. O. The creation of the Workers' Socialist Party (Seydowitz-Rosenfeld) is a striking proof of the crisis in the S. P. D. on the one hand and at the same time a proof of the inability of the C. P. G. to win the revolutionary workers away from social democracy.

Without a sharp and immediate turn, the C. P. G. will certainly not be able to meet the enormous tasks which it faces.

—M.

Berlin, Oct. 31st, 1931.

* All these figures are in comparison with the elections of September 14th, 1930

** By the way, this shows that the "defeat" of the Fascists loudly proclaimed by the Social Democratic and Democratic press after the plebiscite, did not in any way correspond to the facts. The party that really lost, in the plebiscite, was the C. S. G.

Notes from Berlin

The Abend, the evening edition of the Vorwarts in its issue of September 17, claims that the social-democratic press has retained all its readers, but that, on the other hand, the economic crisis has at the present caused a drop in the sale of the various other papers. It quotes the Frankfurter Zeitung, the Deutsche Tageszeitung, the Germania and other paper trusts. Then the Abend proceeds to the Communist press, on which it says, it is in a position to give annihilating figures. The material, we are told, does not have its origin in the police occupation of the party headquarters during a period of ten days of the occupation, according to the affirmation of several party functionaries, no domination made itself felt and nothing prevented the Central Committee from beginning to function either. There is a central publishing house of the party, the V. Z., where all the different publications of the party are required to give an account every month, particularly on the state of its readers in the local groups. These reports are given in terms understandable to all and kept on file. A trunk full of these files was, probably carried off during the occupation in the haste, and no measures having been provided for such a case, it was entrusted just to any one at random. After the evacuation of the Karl Liebknecht House, when they wanted to bring the trunk back, it could not be found. According to information we received, it was in this manner that the S. P. D. got into possession of the exact data on the party press. "A great part of the Rote Fahne," the Abend says, "goes to Russia and hundreds of copies are read by the Russian embassy, the trade representation and other organizations close to the party."

On the other hand, according to information we have received from a well situated comrade, the Rote Fahne has 18,873 subscribers and sells only from 5 to 6,000 copies besides, which shows a great decrease with relation to the Here is the information of the Abend which has been confirmed entirely by the comrade mentioned above.

"There are several hundred local groups," says the Abend, "that do not have in their ranks a single reader of the Communist press, mainly in the following regions:

Munich—62 groups without a reader
Nuremberg—34 " " "
Pomerania—44 " " "
Koenigsburg—34 " " "
Dresden—33 " " "
Essen—26 " " "

as well as others in Brandenburg, the domain of the Rote Fahne itself, the greatest figure of all is attained with 154 groups without a reader. This—says the Abend—is taken from a report to central organs of the party. "Six months ago, the administration of the R. F. was 'reorganized'. The new responsible director complained continually about the lack of support from the party functionaries. 'If this continues,' he wrote, 'the R. F. will soon fall down to the level of a small provincial sheet.' On solidarity days, the comrades who went soliciting for the R. F. in the coffee houses, were often thrown out. And still, how many organizations are kept up by the party for its short-lived readers, with an army of secretaries and employees: there is the Gecha, the United Publishers, the Central Publications, A. G., the Vulkan and the Peuvag (the central printing establishment)."

A few remarks in regard to the notorious demonstration of the Nazis on the Kurfuerstendamm, the day of the Jewish New Year. The demonstration was well organized, the demonstrators did not gather in large masses, but formed little groups shouting: "Deutschland Erwache, Juda, Verrecke!" and later on mixed with the crowd, re-forming their ranks again further on. For more than an hour, the police, which arrived much too late, could not reestablish "order" in the street, precisely because the demonstrations were held by little groups and at different corners. What is noteworthy in these demonstrations is the fact that they were made up of young unemployed workers and employees,—partly also of rowdies, to be sure. Their dress contrasted violently with the garments of the Kurfuerstendamm crowd, and it was by this mark, cap and no necktie, that they were recognized by the police.

Part of these young Nazis, members of the Sturm-Abteilungen (shock-brigades) live in armories, kept and fitted out by the Nazis. Very significant too, was one of the remarks of an arrested Nazi before the bench: "We wanted to show the Jews, covered with diamonds and with gold, who parade along the Kurfuerstendamm, that there are people in Germany who actually suffer from hunger!"

A former ultra-leftist, a capitulationist who lives in Moscow, said that all the Opposition groups in Moscow are dead. The only Opposition that exists ideologically and organizationally are the "Trotskyites", although to sympathize with them means to go to jail or to be sent to the deportation camps. He himself, according to his statement, agrees with the Left Opposition 98%. But these two per cent are the ones that count (these are probably the two p. c. that include the Isolators?).

A letter from a village on the Baltic. "During my vacations, which I spent in my native village on the Baltic coast, I noticed that the big landlord of the locality allowed his fields to lie idle. He had no money to buy seeds. Naturally, he is a national-socialist. He can't even keep up his poultry-yard and lets his fowl starve to death. One can hear them crow of hunger. It is a village of about 200 inhabitants and serves as a residential section for small employees. This year, the railroad has issued a thousand tickets less for this station than last year. However, the conditions of the unemployed agricultural workers are not very bad at present. They receive some relief, and they get little jobs that cannot be submitted to control; there are also a few opportunities for them. . . ."

A comrade who works in the building trades tells us, that despite the great unemployment current in the trade, there are still workers who work as much as 17 hours a day. Formerly, it was impossible for such elements to exist in the building trades. The contractors use this mode of working, so as to be able to save on their part of the contribution to the social insurance funds, since they employ fewer workers.

The personnel of the police force will not receive any furlough, beginning with October 1. They say among themselves that a patch from the Right is expected. It is significant that the police is engaged in imprisoning the most active elements by preventive arrests, etc. There is already a great number of these. Some comrades say that there is a

strong tendency to leave the party among many of its members. These elements are ready for "action", but cannot be confined any longer by a political organization.

The party has implied and vulgarized its propaganda methods. Instead of posters, they are now content with inscribing slogans of a primitive character on the walls and on the side walks.

The problem of the economic relations between Soviet Russia and Germany forms a very important subject for discussion between Communist and Social democratic workers.

The social democracy has begun—and this shows how important and how difficult this question is for them—a broad press campaign on this question. At times, it gives articles, like that by Heilig, that credits, cannot be of any use for the working class. Then, it also has a supplement in all the papers: "Is a Soviet Germany possible?", in which it "proves" that the possibilities for mutual economic work between Germany and Russia are very narrow. This subject has called forth a big discussion in the factories. At the sessions of the Executive of the C. P. it has been recognized for a fact that the party members are not capable of giving an answer to this question.

An oppositionist member of the party, who has been entrusted with a post, says that the organizational system is very weak. The work rests on the shoulders of a few. The majority of the membership does not participate actively. Even the majority of the functionaries—even they are only seen on "parade" (big meetings, etc.). For instance, the problem of replacing the proscribed newspapers by mimeographed sheets has met with general apathy. Berlin, September 31, 1931

Prepare for Third Annual Dance

The second week in November marks the third anniversary of the issuance of The Militant, official organ of the Communist League of America (Opposition). The first issue of the paper found in our ranks only a handful of members and just a very few sympathizers. Today our ranks have grown to more than ten times that number.

We are still a small group. But the force of our ideas, the correctness of our policies in given situations, and our criticisms of the official party are penetrating daily into the rank and file of the party members and the Left wing workers who are willing to read and think for themselves. The recent banquet held in New York City, where more than one hundred were represented and contributed over \$200 testifies to the truth of this claim.

The third anniversary of the founding of The Militant will be a jubilee affair where all the friends, sympathizers and members of the organization gather to get better acquainted with each other.

The next issue will carry the definite date and place for the affair, and it is hoped that this third annual affair will prove another step in the growth of our organization.

Watch for further announcements.

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