

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR
Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

ENGLAND

Conservatives Press Attack on Labor

Consequences of the Elections in Great Britain and Prospects for the Communists

Two days ago the General Election, described by the liberal Manchester Guardian as the "shortest, strangest and most fraudulent of our time", ended.

Most Militant readers will be familiar with the results of the Election before this letter appears in print. Some comment is however justified and necessary, for the effects of the Election are likely to be far-reaching.

First let it be said that the recent Election was the most vicious of modern times. The Conservatives set out to "smash Socialism" and its supposed advocates, the Labour Party (rather puzzling this to our comrades who say that Labour is the same as the Conservatives and who call the Labour Party "Social-Fascist"!); to establish protection, to lower the workers' wages and to drive thousands off of unemployment benefit.

The Conservative Attack on Labour
To this end a sweeping attack was carried through upon the Labour Party, an attack waged by newspapers, the wireless, the platform and the cinema.

pursued when the "economy cuts" were made, Labour helped to weaken and discourage the working class and to expose the whole movement to the attack which, now begun, will be carried ruthlessly through to the bitter end.

Seldom has the mailed fist of capitalist rule been so clearly visible through the velvet glove of democracy. "Dare to demonstrate", said the National Ministers, "and we will have you bated down."

In such circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the Conservatives were able to pull over the petit-bourgeoisie almost en bloc and even to influence the wavering in the ranks of the workers. Decisiveness, power, confidence and a bold working class program could have won Labour tremendous support; but these things cannot, in a crisis, come from the representatives of the petit-bourgeoisie; they can only come from the workers' revolutionary Party.

The weakness of Labour, together with the peculiarities of the electoral system, account for the weakness of the Labour Party in the new House of Commons. Here are the principle figures.

Table with 2 columns: Votes, Seats. Rows for Government (Tories, National-Liberals & National-Labour), The Labour Party, Opposition, Communist party.

The Party's line in the Election has been dealt with: the results certainly show that there was much wrong. For the Election weakened, as we predicted, the mass movement against the cuts and also brought very few votes to the Party candidates.

The Results for the Communists
Of the total Communist poll of 72,024 votes, 43,892 were cast in four constituencies out of twenty-six. In the 1929 election the party polled 50,000 votes with twenty-five candidates contesting; in some constituencies this election saw an increase; in some, notably Greenock, Battersea and Ogmore there was a decrease.

Prospects
It is clear that during this winter the employers will attempt to reduce wages heavily and that the application, by the National Government, of the "means test" to thousands of unemployed will worsen the conditions of large numbers of unemployed and employed workers.

But unfortunately we know that our leaders are incapable of achieving real and lasting results for the Party, and are incapable of playing a decisive role in the big struggles ahead. We have already seen, time after time, that the failure or treachery of Labour does not automatically bring increased support to the Party.

London, October 29, 1931. ANGLICUS.

IN SPAIN

The Political Situation

The Socialist-Republicans Support the Church

The socialist-republican bloc has been showing us, since its taking the power, that if the elaboration of a democratic constitution is much easier in theory than in bourgeois class constitution, on the other hand, can be made very easily, both in theory and in practice.

The democratic bourgeois constitutions of the past have been characterized, above all, by the anti-religious spirit by which they were guided and stimulated. When a monarch has been dethroned, the masses have always looked with sympathy on all revolutionary manifestations against the clergy, which undoubtedly is one of the most characteristic accompaniments of absolutism and tyranny.

In Spain, the republicans and socialists, for lack of a solid and consistent doctrine, have employed the bulk of their energies in combating the domination of religion, of that Catholicism which since before the Inquisition has inspired, and in practice exercised, the power of the monarchy.

The Church Remains a Power Under the Republic
Therefore, when the republic was installed in Spain, the people believed that, along with Alfonso de Bourbon, the clergy would have to get out. The republicans and socialists remained silent.

The power of the Church was being re-established, but the Government was losing its prestige and the confidence of the masses. Cardinal Segura was the man who knew how to terrify the government while apparently sacrificing himself, and he has succeeded in impregnating with religious and reactionary spirit the entire work of the Constituent Assembly.

The religious orders, the "opium of the people", will continue to exercise their harmful influence on the culture and the interests of the people. The Spanish law to which they will be submitted is only an indecent masquerade to conceal the truth. Only the action of the masses will succeed in extirpating this evil.

Moreover, our "republican-socialists" have passed a Law for the Defense of the Republic, to use the organized violence of the state power to repress all manifestations and prevent the people from saying what it thinks and what it wants. Any capricious and despotic Government minister can make and unmake, at his discretion, the internal policies of the country.

At his discretion, the internal policies of the country. The working class movement, the sole victim of this law, can be dissolved if the minister in question thinks it desirable, and his militants jailed or deported if he desires. The workers cannot declare a strike except on eight days' notice. The violation of this rule involves the dissolution of the organization, the confiscation of its property, and the imprisonment or deportation of the violators.

Anyone who dares to denounce this evil can be included in the scope of the law and receive the punishment which it provides. It is a gag which everyone is compelled to swallow who does not submit to the reactionary republic, or suffer the consequences. This law was passed after the resignation of Zamora and Maura. This proves that the spirit of this law, and of the whole brand-new constitution which is being made, is inspired by the reactionary doctrine of Zamora-Maura, the two most able and determined men in the Provisional Government.

Azana's ideas are no different from those of Zamora. While he was Minister of War he could save his reputation and perform his work more or less cleverly. On becoming President of the Republic his first declaration was, "We must make the Republic respected, or we not respected, then feared". The situation is clear. The working masses, lacking a Communist Party to guide them in imposing themselves on the government, have been thrown back into second place by brutal repression. The reaction, on the contrary, has been gaining ground and imposing its wishes to the point of impregnating with reactionary wisdom the constitution which the Cortes is working out.

The Masses Demand Bread
But this will in no way resolve the social problem. The starving producing masses ask for bread, with more force each day. The governing classes are making a constitution, and creating laws to deny bread to the starving in the most "legal" manner possible. The coming winter threatens to be stormy. The Spanish Communist Party has a great mission to accomplish, but the correct policy is not that which practices, of denying the importance of the religious problem and hiding itself at critical moments.

For us, Communists of the Left Opposition, the religious problem, the republic and the constitution have no importance in themselves, because they are made for the bourgeoisie, our class enemy. What has a great importance, what we must do, is to denounce these laws, these problems, before the workers, to explain to them that these laws cannot solve our problems, nor can the constitution nor the most democratic bourgeois republic in the world.

The future of the Spanish Republic can be changed only by the working class, directed by a genuine Spanish Communist Party. The anarchist-syndicalist Federation is terrorized by the new law for the defense of the republic. Our task is enormous but full of great perspectives and possibilities. —HENRI LACROIX.

Madrid, October 23, 1931

The Rise of Fascism in Britain

There is an old proverb to the effect that "coming events cast their shadow before them". It was not an accident that, simultaneously with the dissolution of Parliament, there appeared the first number of the first avowedly Fascist paper in British history; bearing the significant title of Action. And it was also no accident that the leader of the "New" party is an ex-leader of the Labour Party and a former protagonist of the "socialism in our time" policy of the I. L. P. Nor is it by chance that the editor of Action, Harold Nicholson, is a son of Lord Carnock, (Sir Arthur Nicholson) who as permanent head of the British Foreign Office was as responsible as anyone for the Imperialist War of 1914-18.

It is true that the pages of Action show as yet little of the cynical logic and ruthless realpolitik that characterize German fascism. We do not find in the utterances of Moseley and his colleagues anything of the clarity that characterizes the utterances of Mussolini or even of Hitler. But we have to remember that the English are not a theatrical people (not of course due to the fact that they have a special brand of "human nature", but as a result of the peculiar historical experiences of the British people), and their Protestant and insular heritage does not make for lucidity of thought as does the superb training in logic afforded to the Italian people by the Roman Catholic theology and the hard clarity of Latin literature. Nevertheless English fascism is learning. Moseley is an avowed disciple of Hitler, whose methods he has studied at first hand in Germany. His bodyguard of thugs recall the squadristi of early fascism with the inimitable "Kid" Lewis as a pocket edition of Italo Balbo!

The Conservatives and Fascism
Thus, it would be un-Marxist and practically the height of unwisdom to ignore or to underestimate the "New" Party (the name shows the naive inexperience of its promoters) merely because it is at present crude and inexperienced. It is a fact of immense historical magnitude that in Britain, the classic home of Constitutionalism, a fascist party should have risen whose methods can only be consummated by action that is "unconstitutional" and liable to end in civil war. Only a student of dialectics can apprehend in its fulness the significance of this apparition that finally nails the lie that in England "human nature" is different, and that, therefore, Revolution (and Counter-revolution) is impossible.

It may be added that the importance of the birth of British fascism would be in no wise diminished even if the Tory party decides to steal Moseley's thunder and to run Winston Churchill (or Lord Lloyd or Rothermere) for the office of British dictator. The fact would still remain that Moseley had crossed the bridge from democracy to fascism and that the first step is always harder than the last; actually, it is possible that this may happen. The Tory Party has a semi-Fascist wing which will be strengthened as the progressive liquidation of the British Empire sends its imperial proconsuls home to roost! This wing is at present in the shade but with the decline of British capitalism, it may push the Baldwins and Oliver Stanleys (the present and prospective leaders of the democratic Tories) into the background.

The Road to Erisicism
Should this happen the British bourgeoisie may prefer to establish fascism by means of its old and well tried servant, the Tory Party, rather than by means of the new-fangled condottieri of the "New" Party. In that case the

MILITANT DANCE This Saturday!

The Third Annual Militant Dance on Saturday, November 21 promises to be the best attended and highest spirited affair yet held by the Communist League of America (Opposition) in New York. The Greek comrades who were recently expelled from the Party and joined us as a group, will entertain with several interesting numbers. A good band will furnish the dance music, and on the balcony tables will be arranged for those who like to sit around to eat and talk. The main purpose of this affair will be to afford an opportunity to all our friends, sympathizers and members to spend an enjoyable evening and get better acquainted with each other, while at the same time learn more about the fundamental principles of the Left Opposition. According to reports received by the committee in charge, tickets are selling well, and many who have never attended our previous affairs, have definitely promised to come. Among them will be several outstanding figures in the labor movement, as well as the members of the Marxian Youth Club. Keep November 21 open. Come and bring your friends. A good time is assured to everybody. The Date—Saturday evening, November 21st. The Place—Stuyvesant Casino, 2nd Avenue at 9th Street.

Conservative Party would become fascist in fact but probably not in name. (It is, after all, a conservative party and its dislike of innovations extends to names; e. g. witness its fidelity to the old 17th century designation, "Tory". What have the politics of the age of Charles II and Shaftesbury in common with those of the age of imperialism and finance capital?) The actual development of fascism depends therefore on the British bourgeoisie as that of Mussolini did on the Italian bourgeoisie; and, while the Italian ruling class had no alternative to Mussolini, the British have always the Conservative party. As the crisis deepens, as protection fails to do aught but intensify the misery of the masses; as the Labour Party demonstrates more and more clearly that it is a reformist party with no possibility of giving any reforms; the British bourgeoisie will inevitably turn to fascism; and whether Moseley is the messiah or merely the forerunner; the result will be the same as far as the workers are concerned. The British ruling class has nothing to learn in ruthlessness from any bourgeoisie in the world and it is merely a matter of time before it learns to express itself with a clarity of which "Il Duce" himself would be proud.

In spite of its numerical insignificance the formation of the "New" Party is the most significant development of capitalism in Britain since the General Strike. But events prove to be moving at a terrific speed and nowhere more so than in Great Britain. Under these conditions it is safe to infer that the supers of today will occupy the centre of the stage tomorrow. —CAIUS GRACCHUS.

Russian-German Trade Relations

The appeal entitled, "Is a Soviet Germany Possible?" only proves all the more how important it was at the time, for the Soviet government to elaborate a model plan of cooperation between the Soviet Union and Germany, right at the beginning of the crisis. That would have had an incomparable agitational value at the present time. The least that could be done now, is: to catch up with what has been missed.

I have only cursorily glanced through the anti-Soviet manifesto of the Leipzig Volkszeitung, (lack of time) but its dull shallowness leaps right to the eye. The Russian social-democrats maintained in 1917 that the dictatorship of the proletariat was all right for a highly industrialized country—but in no case for a backward Russia, for which it could only mean disaster. Besides, the dictatorship would not last more than three days (later one, three weeks). This was the social-democratic evaluation of the October revolution. Now, after fourteen years, the German social democrats say: Soviet regime, i. e., dictatorship of the proletariat?—in a backward country: very good; there are wide dimensions, an overwhelming preponderance of the peasantry, etc. For highly industrialized Germany, the dictatorship of the proletariat would mean a complete collapse.

On a Soviet Germany and Soviet Russian Relations

On economic collaboration between a Soviet Germany and the Soviet Russia. Here, the German social democrats manipulate the present day export and import figures, in order to demonstrate how insignificant the trade turnover between Germany and the U. S. S. R. is. That only proves that if Soviet Germany were to work according to the rules of capitalist Germany, it would suffocate. Industrial import into Russia is limited by the credit conditions. In the course of several years, the collectivized agrarian economy, now for the most part merely a form of bureaucratic coercion, could be made extremely fruitful, and the entire turnover of both countries could be completely revolutionized by German industry and organizational capacity. But what of the transition period? Evidently, Germany would have to go through a few hard years. The workers, however, would at least understand why they made such sacrifices. But even in these most acute transition years, assuming that the rest of Europe would remain capitalist, Germany would not be isolated from the world market. Once the proletariat has expropriated the landowners, the bankers and the industrialists, it will immediately be able to produce for the world market at cheaper prices than at present. Under such circumstances, an economic blockade is absolutely out of the question.

Direct contact with Soviet Russia would immediately be re-established, for between a Soviet Germany and Soviet Russia, capitalist Poland would soon be crushed. However, it is quite improbable that European capitalism can remain firm for any considerable length of time, after a revolution in Germany. It is really necessary to write a more lengthy work on this subject. The German comrades could perhaps divide the material among themselves, take up the work in the different fields, and in the first instance collect material to this end. Later on, I could also join in the collective work. (Signed) I Trotsky.

Agents and newstands throughout the country that now handle The Militant will handle Your Spartacus.

The Repressions In Spain

Despite all the calumnies of Stalin's disciples in Spain, we have the honor of being the first victims of the new Law for the Defense of the Republic.

On October 22, one day after the law was passed, the General Direction of Security (Police) sent several agents to our headquarters, to make a detailed inquiry and to confiscate whatever they released. For two days they went through our files without finding what they were looking for. At the time of the raid there was only one comrade there, the watchman, aged 71. They demanded of our old friend that he leave the place during the search. When I arrived at the office, they had already carried on for more than half an hour. I protested in vain. Galazza's police wanted to carry off the magazines, the periodicals, the books, in short, everything that we had in the place. Some of the comrades who had arrived interfered and the police calmed down a bit. They gave up the idea of seizing the periodicals and magazines that appear legally. But they took all the documents, the letters, etc. from correspondents and subscribers of Communism and our Communist Publications.

It is clear that the new law authorizes the police to confiscate all they please, but we know that this authorization does not produce the desired results. Our protests, which were sent out to the press, will not be published, nor heard. But the fact that we, the Left Communists, are the first victims of the new law proves that the bourgeoisie do not seem to take much stock in Stalin's opinion on our "counter-revolutionary" attitude. For many workers, this will be very instructive. Madrid, October 25, 1931 —H. LACROIX.

BOSTON LECTURE!

A lecture on the "Rise and Fall of the British Labor Government" will be given by comrade Arne Swabeck, member of the National Committee, Communist League of America (Opposition) on Friday, November 27, 1931, at 8 P. M., at the Ambassador Gardens, corner of Berkeley and Warren Aves., under the auspices of the Boston Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition). The admission is 25 cents.

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