

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

Revolt Brewing in India

Ghandi, V. Patel, J. Nehru have been arrested by the Indian authorities. As a protest, the cotton, the bullion, the piece goods, the seed and the stock exchanges in Bombay and other cities have been closed.

On the surface, the above incidents give a fairly comprehensive characterization of the present situation in British India. Strikes of workers are as yet not on the order of the day. The Hindu hartal or patriotic strike, still dominates the political scene. For the time being, the nationalist bourgeoisie still holds the reins firmly. The revolutionary masses are still spell-bound by the shrewd and soothing voice of the "Mahatma".

British soldiery have recently been increased to fully 68,000 men, the native to more than 175,000. They are apparently expecting serious trouble. Just how soon the activity of the masses will rise above the heads of their nationalist leaders, it is hard to tell. The Communist party, young and weak as a result of the Menshevik policies of Stalin-Bucharin in the Far East up to 1927 and due to the entire loss of revolutionary perspective since, is almost without any influence at all. The Ghandi...

Kangar textile workers and the railroad workers of the G. I. P., who have already made Indian history in the past, have not yet been heard from. But they are sure to figure more prominently in the near future. The lathi, after all, does not distinguish between the masses, it strikes and hurts them all. But it is not likely that the workers of India will long be fascinated by whatever it is that "Mahatma" Ghandi is spinning in his cell or out of it. The workers, once they are started, will act, and act forcefully. For the Communists, the present situation in India represents an excellent opportunity to approach the masses, to build up their cadres and to consolidate their influence and their following for the more decisive struggles to come.

Thaelmann's Belated Self-Criticism

The Leader of the German Communist Party «Examines» Some of Its Mistakes

For years the Stalinist Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany has been considering itself as infallible in its political decisions. But since a mistake remains a mistake whether it is recognized or not, the effects of the false line of the party leadership frequently lead to such dangerous moods in the party that it is frequently considered absolutely necessary at the top to undertake a "turn". This is thereupon motivated "theoretically" by the highest instances, and naturally a good deal of noise is made about the "Bolshevik self-criticism" with which it is done.

The result which the "theoreticians" of the Central Committee then attain is usually this: The policy of the party leadership is "entirely right, but subordinate party instances have not understood how to carry out the errorless line correctly."

Thaelmann's Self-Criticism

Entirely of this type is the "self-criticism" with which Ernst Thaelmann occupies himself in the November-December double number of the Internationale, where he writes of "establishing a series of ideological deviations and political mistakes, aye, even political mistakes in our revolutionary mass work". But in order to avoid even the appearance of wanting to criticize the line of the C. P. G. itself, he immediately adds that the mistakes were of course not committed by the whole party but were based upon an "insufficient political education of individual comrades and functionaries" or upon an "inadequate comprehension of the decisions adopted at international and German party congresses".

That the party leadership is now compelled to come out openly against these ideas definitely shows the extent to which such defeatist moods were already wide spread in the party.

A whole section of Thaelmann's article is concerned with the too well known "theory" of the people's revolution, as invented by the party leadership in conjunction with the teachings on the "national and social emancipation". These slogans were raised in their day in order to win the petty bourgeois strata for Communism, in connection with which, to mention nothing else, it was completely overlooked that the most immediate task of the C. P. G. must be not the winning of the middle classes but the winning of the majority of the proletariat. And it is precisely here that a slogan like that of the "people's revolution" is not only worthless but directly harmful, since it does not sufficiently emphasize the class standpoint.

Thaelmann himself is slowly beginning to perceive this when he writes in his article:

"Only when we win the proletarian majority for Communism can we realize the further tasks of drawing the allies of the proletariat from the middle classes into the anti-capitalist united front and thereby create the premises for the people's revolution of Marx and Lenin. Every smearing up of these fundamentals, every abandonment of the preliminary need of the struggle for our own class is a break with Marxism, a break with Leninism!"

But who raised this "break with Leninism" to the point of a "theory"? Nobody but the Central Committee of the C. P. G. itself, which, for example, in a resolution of January 1931, established the "people's revolution" as the "main strategic slogan of the party". Is it then to be wondered at if subordinate functionaries of the party thereupon apply this slogan as it should be understood according to this C. C. conception? Such a thoroughly good-believer of a functionary was A. E. who wrote, as far back as December 1930, in the paper Der Propagandist that:

"for the strategy and tactics of the proletarian revolution it is primarily a matter of winning the petty bourgeois strata for the proletarian revolution or at least of neutralizing them."

This was entirely in harmony with the line of the conceptions of the "people's revolution" then advocated by the C. C. and established officially as late as January 1931. Now—Thaelmann needed a whole year for this acknowledgment—it is suddenly established that the quoted conception of A. E. "has nothing more in common with Marxism and Leninism". Which is of course correct to the extent that the corresponding line of the C. C. really had not much more to do with Leninism.

(In passing: For A. E. to be treated as a scapegoat is especially harsh. Alexander Emel was in a time published as an Oppositionist in Russia. In the German party, after a probation period of a year, he sought to earn his spurs by expressly separating himself from Trotsky's views at every opportunity, most recently in the question of the Spanish revolution. And he is just the one whom the Great Thaelmann has now sought out as the whipping boy!)

Finally, we cannot let pass unchallenged what Thaelmann has to say in his article on the question of individual terror. It would undoubtedly be correct for the C. C. to disassociate itself publicly from individual terror, but it is to fall into the other extreme when Thaelmann writes:

"Those workers who let themselves be misguided by the planned Nazi-provocations by defending themselves with the same methods of individual terror, are moving away, with regard to the methods of the proletarian struggle for freedom, from the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism"

Taken literally, this means that henceforth the C. P. G. members are to be prohibited even from forcible defense from Fascist assaults. This is going much too far. Terror can only be broken by terror and it is just the "leader of the C. P. G." who should understand that under the conditions created by the Fascist acts of violence, one cannot act in accordance with the principles of the sermon on the mount.

In conclusion, let us point to still another observation Thaelmann made at the end of his lengthy article and which we can join with heartily:

"It appears that in spite of the great successes of our party, its theoretical level, the ideological-political level of our party work, is inadequate, and absolutely requires a fundamental improvement."

But the very next sentence, which qualifies the decisions of the leadership as "unobjectionable and correct", indicates that Thaelmann is not at all the man to undertake a genuine, serious self-criticism. Bureaucratic superficiality and fakery's autocratism are the essence of Thaelmann's article. There can be no talk whatsoever of a turn for the better. Such a one can, in general, not proceed from above; it must result from the pressure of the members themselves. The Left Opposition will support with all its strength every step of the party members in this direction.

Berlin, January 1932 —W. M.

The Results of the Toronto Elections

The recent municipal elections held in Toronto have, in the shade of events of the past few months, gained a significance historic in the annals of Canadian elections.

The bourgeois candidates (in civic elections all candidates are "non-partisan"); they do not officially run on a party ticket) all agreed upon the fact that no major issues existed; that whoever was elected to sit at the City Hall would be on a program of better sidewalks, more sidewalks, and the insistence on stringent economy (naturally, at the expense of working class relief measures). That there were 50,000 unemployed in the city, well, so long as they were keeping quiet at the soup kitchens and not demanding unemployment relief, they were not an issue. If 6,000 bailiffs' notices of evictions were issued, that was a sign that prosperity was around the corner. Wages being slashed, and factories closing down, throwing workers and their families upon the mercy of charity, that was not an issue for the civic fathers. As long as the working class and the dispossessed elements of the petty bourgeoisie did not organize for the betterment of their conditions, the bourgeoisie were quite content with the status quo, and intended to further confuse the masses with the spirit of civic duty.

The Communist Ticket

But the Dominion and Provincial authorities were more concerned of the interests of the hard working capitalists, and had taken measures a few months before by the arrest of the eight Communist leaders, and their trial and conviction to 5 years in the penitentiary. After overcoming the legal red tape they were released on bail until their appeal, and to the dismay of the authorities Tim Buck was nominated for the Board of Control, and John Boychuck (another of the defendants, with another comrade, were nominated for alderman. The Communist party now being an outlawed organization in Ontario, they ran as candidates of the Toronto Workers' United Front Conference. The main campaign was centered around Buck, the controversialist necessitating a city-wide campaign and vote.

Buck, as the Communist candidate, naturally was the only candidate to bring out the working class issues; the need for relief and insurance at the expense of the state, and the fight against Section 98 of the Criminal Code, which suppressed the rights of free speech and assembly. At every election meeting Buck was received with tremendous enthusiasm; a Communist candidate was receiving sympathetic hearings and ovations such as the bourgeois candidates did not receive. The press religiously kept a strict silence on the Communist campaign, not a word of publicity did they give it. A contract was entered into with the Daily Star, a Liberal (!) paper, to let Buck speak at its radio station, but after the Star realized they were acting as liberals in allowing this, the contract was immediately broken, the money returned, and an excuse offered that "under the circumstances, etc., etc."

A Safe and Sane Candidate

But there was a "labor" candidate in the field, and a very popular one. The social democracy may be proud of its sons; the Toronto branch, known as James Simpson, and the backing of all the newspapers and he received plaudits from all sections of the capitalist class for his wisdom, and especially his "safe and sane" labor policies. For him but one issue existed—to be re-elected to the Board of Control and taste further of the fruits of office. On the slate of the reactionary Orange Order he was first

choice. After working his way on the backs of the working class, he was no longer interested in its problems." Backed by a powerful press, and every means of agitation he was sure of election. To offset the influence of the Communist program the bourgeois concentration block put out Simpson as the man to look after their interests during the present period.

Election day, January 1st, was a day as dull and dirty as capitalism itself. A continual rain kept back many people from the polls, and especially destitute workers who could not clothe themselves properly.

Simpson, the labor faker, headed the list. Although the total number of votes polled was lower than last year, the vote of Buck doubled; the reactionary press lamented that "Tim Buck Communist was the only one of nine candidates who increased his vote over last year. Despite his recent conviction on charges of membership in an illegal association and seditious conspiracy, he polled 5,974 votes, 2941 over his last year's figure of 3,033—an increase of 97 per cent." The two other Communist alderman candidates polled 505 and 758 votes each, both being higher than last year.

The qualifications for voting demanded that one be a tenant or householder; those whose taxes were in arrear were deprived of the privilege of democracy; thus the dispossessed workers were not able to vote. The votes for Tim Buck were votes of protest against capitalist reaction and for immediate unemployment relief. The thousands of people who applauded him, did not all vote for him; it was a spontaneous enthusiasm.

Government Repression in Republican Spain

The repression being carried on by the Republican leaders takes on forms that even Primo de Rivera and Berenguer never dared to resort to. Spaniards are being expelled from Spain. We of the Left Opposition are the favored victims.

A very striking example: The comrade Jose Ramos Lopez is, to be sure, Spanish—the son of Spanish parents born at Buenos Aires, but a naturalized Spanish citizen. The Argentine police expelled him from that country as a revolutionist and as a Spaniard. Ramos came to Spain, to Sujo to live with his family. He is a Communist and one who stands up for his ideas. First he is arrested at Sujo, then at Cadiz, where he is held a government prisoner for three months. The governor of Cadiz promises him his release on the condition that he return to Sujo. A few days later, several "Civic Guards" and gendarmes come to the prison at six o'clock in the morning and seize our comrade. His protests are of no avail. The governor had promised him his release on that very day. But instead, he is thrown on board the steamer "Uruguay", leaving a few minutes later for the Argentine. No one was informed of anything until our Cadiz comrades came to the prison on their daily visit to comrade Ramos.

The bourgeois, reactionary Republic has committed another abominable crime. What sort of fate will Urburu have in store for our comrade?

The bourgeois press has refused publication to our protests. The cynicism of the reactionaries is becoming more detestable and more criminal under the Republic than it ever was under the monarchy.

Liberty and Equality Under the Republic

A short time ago, the Spanish Catholics met at Valencia and held a mass meeting and demonstrations against the Republic. The workers who wanted to demonstrate against Catholic and monarchist reaction found the "Republican" authorities on the side of the latter. The Catholics and monarchists can speak and act against the Spanish people, only we are denied the right to propagate our ideas.

In Valencia also, I gave a lecture on December 14, which had been announced in advance. The governor refused permission to announce the meeting as one bearing a political Communist character and it had to be announced as an educational affair. The workers attended en masse. We had excellent success.

Other lectures were organized by the comrades in the various provinces. But when I had completed my lecture in Valencia, I was called before the chief of police who informed me that he would not authorize any more of my lectures and that I had committed an offense comparable to libel against Largo Caballero

partly aroused by the recent trial, and not yet crystallized into a working class expression. With a campaign of publicity a powerful contact could have been made with the working class, but the vote was, insofar as elections are a criterion, a consciousness of a Leftward sentiment in the working class.

The Party Program

The election programme of the party was not centralized in its demands, but diffused over a host of "municipal" issues. The fight to-day is for the elementary rights of free speech, press and assembly for the working class, which is centered around the movement for repeal of Section 98, and it is upon this issue that all efforts should have been concentrated. The struggle for unemployment insurance should have been linked up in the fight against Section 98, explaining how this section was for the purpose of gagging the vanguard of the working class. We demand its repeal not merely for the sake of repeal, but as the working class can propagate and fight for its demands.

The party mobilized its forces for an energetic election campaign, one in which the comrades of the Left Opposition took an active part in the canvassing, scrutinizing and general propaganda work to which we were assigned. This campaign was a means of rallying the party workers, and the election should not be considered as the climax; it is but the beginning anew of the struggle for elementary working class rights, in which we shall be found with the party in the struggles.

Toronto —S. GREEN.

(the minister) and against the Republic. Since my lecture had been announced under the name Henri Lacroix, they believed that I was a Frenchman and had no doubt taken preparations to deport me from the country when the Police Department of Madrid let the misinformed chief of police of Valencia know that Henri Lacroix is really a Spaniard and demanded my immediate return from Valencia. I was forced to take the first train out and to escape to Galicia, where the Republic also "governed". —HENRI LACROIX.

Before leaving the United States for Spain, after the proclamation of the Republic, comrade Ramos was an active militant among the Spanish-speaking groups of the anarchist and I. W. W. movement in New York. Our movement attracted him to the extent of engaging for quite a time in friendly discussions between him and some of our comrades. Upon his arrival in Spain he joined the Communist party and became an adherent in it of the views of the Opposition. His revolutionary activity in Cadiz brought about his imprisonment and the recent decision—entirely arbitrary—to deport him to the Argentine. While in Spain recently, comrade Shachtman established contact with comrade Ramos in prison, from whom he subsequently received the letter which we reprint here:

Cadiz Prison, 11-17-1931

Dear comrade Shachtman: I received your letter and was glad to hear from you. How are you getting along. I was surprised to hear of your arrival in Madrid. I believe you can gather some notes about the Spanish revolution and the forces of the workers throughout the country, notes which you can later reproduce in the pages of The Militant.

You can see how my old friends, the anarcho-syndicalists, are playing the game of the bourgeoisie. If you remember, when I was in New York, I didn't believe this; but when I saw how they cooperated in the establishment of the Republic and fought together with the bourgeois forces, I woke up and learned that only a proletarian party can lead the revolution.

The official party does not want to carry on a serious work and give a political education to the proletariat. It rather wants to fight against the "Trotskyists", but now I think that under the flag of the O. C. E. (Left Opposition in Spain) and with the solidarity of the international unity of the Spanish Communists on a revolutionary line with the goal of the proletarian dictatorship. Yours for the victory of Bolshevism, RAMOS.

Minneapolis Open Forum

Among the lecture arranged for forthcoming weeks at the Minneapolis Forum are the following:

All meetings, unless otherwise mentioned are at 3 P. M.: Sunday, January 24, 1932: DEBATE: "Socialism versus Communism". Speakers: O. P. Victorian, representing the Socialist Party against Carl Cowl representing Communist League of America (Opposition).

Sunday, January 31, 1932: "The Proposed Railroad Wage Reductions". Speaker: C. R. Hedlund.

All these lectures and debates will be held at the Workers Open Forum, 1530 East Franklin Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. The admission is free.

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By this is completely confirmed what the Left Opposition and particularly Trotsky has criticized most sharply for months in the C. P. G. which not only considers the seizure of power by the Fascists as inevitable, but as downright desirable under certain circumstances.

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