

# Alliance or Struggle Between Social Democracy and Fascism?

To understand the interrelationship of the classes in the form of a schema, fixed once for all time, is comparatively simple. The evaluation of the concrete relations between the classes in every given situation is immeasurably more difficult.

The German big bourgeoisie is at present vacillating—a condition which the big bourgeoisie, in general, very rarely experiences. One part has definitely come to be convinced of the inevitability of the Fascist path and would like to accelerate the operation. The other part hopes to become master of the situation with the aid of a Bonapartist military-police dictatorship. No one in this camp desires a return to the Weimar "democracy".

The petty bourgeoisie is split up. National-Socialism, which has united the overwhelming majority of the intermediate classes under its banner, wants to take the whole power into its own hands. The democratic wing of the petty bourgeoisie, which still has millions of workers behind it, wants a return to democracy according to the Ebertian example. In the meantime, it is prepared to support the Bonapartist dictatorship at least passively. The social democracy figures as follows: Under the pressure of the Nazis, the Papen-Schleicher government will be forced to establish a balance by strengthening its Left wing; meanwhile, an alleviation of the crisis will perhaps ensue; the petty bourgeoisie will perhaps "sober up"; capitalism will perhaps decrease its frantic pressure upon the working class,—and with the aid of God everything will once again be in order.

The Bonapartist clique actually does not desire the complete victory of Fascism. It would not by any means be disinclined to utilize the support of the social democracy within certain bounds. But for this purpose, it would have to "tolerate" the workers' organizations, which is conceivable only if, at least, to a certain extent, the legal existence of the Communist party is to be allowed. Moreover, support of the military dictatorship by the social democracy would push the workers irresistibly into the ranks of Communism. By seeking a means of support against the brown devils, the government would very soon become subject to the blows of the red Beelzebubs.

The official Communist press declares that the toleration of Brüning by the social democracy paved the road for Papen and that the half-toleration of Papen will accelerate the arrival of Hitler. That is entirely correct. Within these boundaries, there are no differences of opinion between ourselves and the Stalinists. But this precisely signifies that in times of social crisis the politics of reformism no longer turn against the masses alone but against itself. In this process the critical moment has at present come into play.

Hitler tolerates Schleicher, the social democracy does not oppose Papen. If this situation could really be assured for a long period of time, then the social democracy would become transformed into the Left wing of Bonapartism and leave to Fascism the role of the Right wing. Theoretically, it is not, of course, excluded that the present, unprecedented crisis of German capitalism will not lead to any conclusive

solution, i. e., either end with the victory of the proletariat or with the triumph of the Fascist counter-revolution. If the Communist party continues its policy of stupid ultimatum and thereby saves the social democracy from inevitable collapse; if Hitler does not within the near future decide upon the overthrow and thereby provokes disintegration inside of his own ranks; if the economic conjuncture takes an upward trend before Schleicher falls—then the Bonapartist combination of Paragraph 48 of the Weimar Constitution, of the Reichswehr, the semi-oppositional social democracy, and semi-oppositional Fascism could perhaps maintain itself (up to a new social impetus, which is to be expected in any case).

But offhand, we are still far from such a happy fulfillment of the conditions, which form the subject of social democratic day dreams. It is by no means guaranteed. Even the Stalinists hardly believe in the power of resistance or the durability of the Papen-Schleicher régime. All indications point to the decomposition of the Wels-Schleicher-Hitler triangle even before it has begun to take shape.

But perhaps it will be replaced by a Hitler-Wels combination? According to Stalin they are "twins, not antipodes". Let us assume that the social democracy would, without fearing its own workers, want to sell its toleration to Hitler. But Hitler does not need this commodity: he needs not the toleration, but the abolition of the social democracy. The Hitler government can only accomplish its task by breaking the resistance of the proletariat and by removing all the possible organs of its resistance. Therein lies the historical role of Fascism.

The Stalinists confine themselves to a purely psychological, or more exactly, to a purely moral evaluation of those cowardly and avaricious petty bourgeois who lead the social democracy. Can we actually assume that these inveterate traitors would separate themselves from the bourgeoisie and oppose it? Such an idealistic method has very little in common with Marxism, which proceeds not from what people think about themselves and what they desire but from the conditions in which they are placed and from the changes which these conditions will undergo.

The social democracy supports the bourgeois régime, not for the gains of the coal, the steel and the other magnates, but for the sake of those gains which it itself can obtain as a party, in the person of its numerically great and powerful apparatus. To be sure, Fascism in no way threatens the bourgeois régime, for the defense of which the social democracy exists. But Fascism endangers that rôle which the social democracy fulfills in the bourgeois régime and the income which the social democracy derives from this rôle it plays. Even though the Stalinists forget this side of the matter, the social democracy itself does not for one moment lose from its sight the mortal danger with which a victory of Fascism threatens it—not the bourgeoisie, but it—the social democracy.

About three years ago, when we pointed out that the point of departure in the coming political crisis in Austria and in Germany would in all probability be

fixed by the incompatibility of social democracy and Fascism; when, based upon this, we rejected the theory of social Fascism which was not disclosing but concealing the approaching conflict; when we called attention to the possibility that the social democracy, a significant part of its apparatus along with it, would be forced by the march of events into a struggle against Fascism and that this would be a favorable point of departure for the Communist party for a further attack, very many Communists—not only hired functionaries, but even quite honest revolutionists—accused us of . . . "idealizing" the social democracy. Nothing remained but to shrug our shoulders. It is hard to dispute with people whose thought stops there, where the question first begins for the Marxist.

In conversations, I often cited the following example: the Jewish bourgeoisie in Czarist Russia represented an extremely frightened and demoralized part of the entire Russian bourgeoisie. And yet, insofar as the pogroms of the Black Hundreds, which were in the main directed against the Jewish poor, also hit the bourgeoisie, the latter was forced to take up its self-defense. To be sure, it did not show any remarkable bravery on this field either. But due to the danger hanging over their heads, the liberal Jewish bourgeoisie, for example, collected considerable sums for the arming of revolutionary workers and students. In this manner, a temporary practical agreement was arrived at between the most revolutionary workers, who were prepared to fight with guns in hand, and the most frightened group of the bourgeoisie, which had got into a scrape.

Last year I wrote that in the struggle against Fascism the Communists were duty-bound to come to a practical agreement not only with the devil and his granddam, but even with Grzesinsky. This sentence made its way through the entire Stalinist world press. Was better proof needed of the "social Fascism" of the Left Opposition? Many comrades had warned me in advance: "They are going to seize on this phrase". I answered them: "It has also been written so that they seize on it. Just let them seize upon this hot iron and burn their fingers. The blockheads must get their lesson."

The course of the struggle has led to Von Papen getting Grzesinsky acquainted with the inside of a jail. Did this episode follow from the theory of social Fascism and from the prognoses of the Stalinist bureaucracy? No, it occurred in complete contradiction to the latter. Our evaluation of the situation, however, had such an eventuality in view and had assigned a definite place for it.

But the social democracy this time, too, avoided the struggle, some Stalinist will object. Yes, it did avoid it. Whoever expected the social democracy, over the head of its leaders and their carrying-on, independently to take up the struggle, and, at that, under conditions in which the Communist party showed itself even incapable of struggle, naturally had to experience disappointment. We did not expect such miracles. Therefore we could not lay ourselves open to any "disappointments" about the social democracy.

Grzesinsky has not become transformed into a revolutionary tiger; that we will readily grant. But nevertheless, there is quite a difference between a situation in which Grzesinsky, sitting in his fortress, sends out police detachments for the safeguarding of "democracy" against revolutionary workers and a situation in which the Bonapartist savior of capitalism puts Grzesinsky himself in jail, is there not? And are we not to take this difference into account politically; are we not to take advantage of it?

Let us turn back to the example cited above: it is not hard to grasp the difference between a Jewish manufacturer who tips the Czarist policeman for beating down the strikers and the same manufacturer who turns over money to the strikers of yesterday to obtain arms against the pogromists. The bourgeois remains the same. But from the change in the situation there results a change in relations. The Bolshevik conducted the strike against the manufacturer. Later on, they took money from the same manufacturer for the struggle against the pogroms. That did not, naturally, prevent the workers, when their hour had come, from turning their arms against the bourgeoisie.

Does all that has been said mean that the social democracy as a whole will fight against Fascism? To this we reply: part of the social democratic functionaries will undoubtedly go over to the Fascists; a considerable section will creep under their beds in the hour of danger. The working masses also will not fight in their entirety. To guess in advance what part of the social democratic workers will be drawn into the struggle, and when, and what part of the apparatus they will tear along with them, is altogether impossible. That depends upon many circumstances, among them, also, upon the position of the Communist party. The policy of the united front has as its task to separate those who want to fight from those who do not; to push forward those who vacillate; finally to compromise the capitulationist leaders in the eyes of the workers in order to consolidate the fighting capacity of the latter.

How much time has been lost—aimlessly, senselessly, shamefully! How much could have been achieved, even in the last two years alone! Was it not clear in advance that monopolistic capital and its Fascist army would drive the social democracy with fists and blackjacks toward the road of opposition and of self-defense? This prognosis should have been unfolded before the eyes of the entire working class, the initiative should have been taken for the united front and this initiative should have been retained firmly in our hands at every new stage. It was not necessary to shout, nor to scream. An open game could have been played quietly. It would have sufficed to formulate, clip and clear, the inevitability of every next step of the enemy and to set up a practical program of the united front, without exaggerations and without haggling, but also without weakness and without concessions. How high the Communist party would stand today if it had assimilated the A B C of Leninist policy and applied it with the necessary perseverance!

Prinkipo, August 9, 1932. —L. TROTSKY.

## On the Proletarian Revolution in the United States

The accelerated pace of the decay of capitalism in the present period, regardless of the ebbs and flows, raises more sharply the question of the coming American revolution. Many workers dismiss this question with a sentence or two. It is either around the corner; a general strike will usher it in; or the revolution in America is decades away. Communists cannot leave this question unanswered. We cannot draw a blue print but we can define the general features of the coming revolution, to enable us to work out tactics and strategy leading toward revolution.

In the post-war period it was the duty of the Communists to settle the question of the state because the leaders of the Second International revised the Marxian concept on this fundamental problem. It was necessary to reexamine the state, explain what it is, and tell the workers that our road to power leads through revolution, to the smashing of the capitalist state and to the establishment of Soviets and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. For the vanguard this is a settled question, especially since the 1917 revolution. Under Lenin and Trotsky this abstraction was brought to life in Russia, but under Stalin the concept of Soviets and of the Dictatorship is kept in the abstract for all other countries.

Unless the Marxists proceed to clothe this abstraction with at least the general outlines of the American form we will be lost on the road between here and power. Up to the present we have not accomplished this task. Due to this shortcoming the Communist party, first under the leadership of the Right wing and now under the leadership of Stalinism has presented tactics and strategy leading in the wrong direction, a direction which will, if continued, prevent us from establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

**American Revolution—When?**  
It is our task to explain the American form, its peculiarities as well as the relations to the first Soviet Republic, not only from the standpoint of the Dictatorship, but especially from the point of view of the process on the road to power. In this respect we can present variants which are possible and eliminate what is not possible. This will enable us to offset the incorrect, harmful, non-Marxian trend of Centristism today.

At one period in the development of the Marxian current in America, before the 1917 revolution, many "Marxists" were positive the revolution would proceed from the maturing highly developed capitalist countries rather mechanically, in their industrial order. The Russian

revolution of 1917 and what followed corrected this non-Marxist theory, but in its place the mechanical materialists, grading as Marxists, have developed the theory that the United States will be the last to have the social revolution, because it is too strong, because it is so highly developed. Marxism gives no grounds for either concept, but some muddle-headed Communists do.

The idea of strong links and weak links of the capitalist chains does not flow mechanically from the idea of highly developed and under-developed capitalist countries. Backward countries are not strong links of the capitalist chain but it is false to think that developed countries are strong links of the capitalist world system. Such a concept does not explain the contradictions in this decay stage of capitalism. Germany as a highly developed capitalist country is the best example to refute such mechanical reasoning.

**The World Position of U. S. Imperialism**  
In the present stage the American imperialists play a dominating role in world politics. From this world position flow the factors undermining this strong link of world capitalism. It is laying the basis, with coming sharp turns in world events, to America's becoming a weak link of the chain.

Will the Communist party be equal to its task? Only we can answer this question. The economic foundation of American imperialism no longer rests upon the 48 states. Its structure rests upon the quicksands of world capitalism: in South America, Asia and Europe as well as the whole North American continent. The contradictions of the world capitalists have become the contradictions of American capitalism.

The revision of the world markets becomes the burning problem of the world imperialists. The revolutionary storms of any nation become of utmost importance for the capitalists in America. American wealth and capital today require a world police force and a world outlook. The economic stability of the United States depends upon the economic stability of world capitalism. The internal contradictions of American capitalism are so great that the American imperialists are forced into deeper water for a solution, and this in turn shakes the whole structure.

The developing civil war in Germany, with the danger of a Fascist dictatorship hanging as a living menace over the Soviet Union and the world proletariat, looms as a military guarantee and a breathing spell for decay capitalism. The contradictions between the imperialist

powers themselves and the contradictions between the imperialists and the Soviet Union are bundled up into a knot in the present German situation. The relation of the German situation to the U. S. will be taken up later.

**Our Approach**  
We must approach the coming revolution in the United States from two angles. First, a theoretical analysis: to consider what kind of a revolution is in store for the United States. Second: a review of the line of march of the party under Stalinist leadership in order to find out if Stalinism is leading in the correct direction.

The American revolution of 1775 was a product of the birth stage of capitalism. The coming revolution will be a product of decay capitalism. The first American revolution was a struggle to establish the bourgeois system. The coming revolution in America will be a struggle to destroy the capitalist system in America. The first revolution was a war between a rising colonial bourgeoisie and its mother country.

The American colonies were unhampered by feudal carry-overs and were able to plow forward swiftly. But the American revolution did not settle all of the problems of the rising bourgeois class. The problem of state power was not entirely to their liking. In Europe, the capitalists were forced to share their power with the feudal landowners. In America the capitalists were forced to share their power with the chattel slave owners. Both groups of capitalists had to compromise with other exploiters because a new enemy, the proletariat, was developing from the left. The bourgeois revolution could not be considered complete so long as the class did not have the state power in their hands, as their own instrument of suppression.

No sooner were accounts with England, the mother country, settled, after 1812, than the struggle between the two American exploiting classes, the rising capitalist and the chattel masters, took on new and sharper forms. A struggle for state power, for example control developed. The carry-over in America was more backward than that which the capitalists of Europe contended with, a backward system warping the substance of the struggle with the race issue, cloak the class problem in the race form.

**The Capitalists and the Civil War**  
Every expansion move the American capitalists made met with resistance from the plantation owner of the South. Only by compromise and joint expeditions of conquest were the capitalists of the north able to push westward. Such

conquests were planned and carried out. Mexico was defeated, land was "bought" from Spain and France and in all of these joint struggles the landowners of the South obtained more than their share of the robbery. However, the parallel needs of expansion soon crossed each other, became entangled, and finally led to the Civil War.

Texas was "ceded" long before the final conflict and showed the uncompromising position the two forces were heading toward. They planned to divide it into three states that would send six senators instead of two to the Senate. In the race for the colonization of Texas, the landowners of the South had more than an even break. The fight for control of the government shifted more and more away from "peaceful" struggles into open conflicts. A struggle for the West followed. Bloody Kansas was a prelude to the Civil War to follow: just like John Brown's action, it also cast a shadow on the future from the class angle.

The Civil War was the second edition of the bourgeois revolution and settled the question as to who was master of the state. Following the let-up of the post-war dictatorship against the landlords in the South, the world crisis of 1873 ushered in a new period for American development. The capitalists moved forward with rapid strides—towards monopoly capitalism.

**A Third Edition of the Bourgeois Revolution?**  
The question must now be asked: Will America have a third edition of the bourgeois revolution? Are there still carry-overs, are there democratic demands the capitalists must fight for in America, as they did in Russia, in Spain, and in other countries? To say that all of the democratic demands have been realized for all the people of the United States is the height of ignorance but to confuse this with the question of the necessity of a third edition of the bourgeois revolution is even worse.

There are democratic demands and economic needs large sections of the workers and the farmers have which cannot be fulfilled under capitalism. We must fight for these demands as workers. The capitalists are not fighting for

these demands. Whom are they struggling against for these democratic demands? The democratic demands and the economic needs of the Negroes, Mulattoes, Asiatic, Mexican, the foreign born and Indians are not even questions of a bourgeois stage of the coming proletarian revolution, no matter how short its duration. American conditions have not only passed beyond the February period of Russia in 1917 but have also passed beyond the bourgeois stage of the October revolution.

The capitalists of America do not share their power with other exploiters. Other exploiters obtain part of the plunder as subordinated flunkies. Sharing profits as subordinated plunderers does not in any way signify sharing power, as for example, the sharing of power by the landlords, in Europe and Asia. In America there are no exploiting classes preventing the "good progressive" capitalist from carrying out the democratic demands and economic needs. It is the capitalists who thrive and maintain their system by the prevention of the carrying out of the democratic demands and economic needs.

(To be continued)

## Chicago Stalinists Reject Offer of Help

(Continued from page 1)  
ity after the filing of the petitions up to election day.

We, therefore, request you to immediately supply us with the necessary blanks and instructions for the obtaining of signatures, and to notify us of any meeting to which we can send our speakers and to, in general, indicate to us any activity that we can conduct to help make this campaign a success.

This stand is taken by us in all sincerity, our object being to lend all assistance in the campaign of the Communist party of which we are a faction. We are not deterred in our decision by the fact that our delegates were forcefully ejected from the party United Front Conference. That we have differences on the political contents of the six adopted slogans; criticize the complete lack of the real vital slogans which would connect the immediate demands with the goal of proletarian dictatorship; that we criticize the general course of the campaign whose slow progress is symptomatic rather than accidental; all this does not shake us in a resolution to do all that lies within our power to help bring the Communist position before the masses.

We stand ready to carry out work. Are you ready to accept our proffered help?

We await your immediate reply.  
Fraternally,  
Organizer, C. L. of A. Chicago Branch  
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Several precious days elapsed during which the Party made frantic appeals for signatures but no reply came to our letter. A committee from the Branch went to the party district office to find out the reason. It seems that our visit was totally unexpected, since there was no strong-arm reception committee on hand to throw out the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyites", who for some unknown reason wanted to help collect signatures in order to put the party on the ballot.

The spokesman for the Committee, comrade Giganti, reminded the acting district organizer, John Williamson, about our letter and requested to know the reason why we had received no response. The worthy D. O. cracked a smile and stated that they had received our letter and would take it up and let us know their decision. Comrade Giganti thereupon drew Williamson's attention to the short time left for the signatures to be filed and stated that the Left Opposition was willing to set to work immediately to collect signatures providing we were supplied with the necessary blanks. But Johnny very coolly replied that they had no blank petitions on hand, and

that we need not fret; the District would take up our letter and let us know.

After the interview had terminated thus, we left. All of us were greatly astonished at the fact that the District Campaign headquarters should be all out of petition blanks. Of course the thought that Johnny was merely stalling never entered our minds. Neither did we imagine that possibly Johnny was afraid to commit himself definitely on such a very ticklish point, because some aspiring fellow bureaucrat might, on some future occasion, use it against him. But now after a week has almost gone by and still there is no answer, we are becoming very suspicious.

Meanwhile, members of the Left Opposition, who are members of party auxiliaries and T. U. U. L. unions are collecting signatures and turning them over to these organizations. At our street corner meetings we speak on the election campaign and urge the workers to vote Communist. In contradiction to the semi-Social Democratic speeches of the party which concern themselves entirely with immediate demands, we present the Leninist position on parliamentarism. The bureaucrats' attempts to isolate us from the party ranks and from the working class will not succeed. By our practical activity as well as by the popularization of our theoretical stand, we shall draw the party masses ever closer.

—BANZEL.