

Austria Is Next in Order

(Continued from last issue)

By their seemingly dreadful but in reality pathetic chorus of "if we are attacked," the Austro-Marxists reveal their genuine suffering, they still hope that things will be left in peace, that things, God help us, will not go beyond mutual threats and waving of fists. What this means is that they are chloroforming the proletariat to facilitate Fascist surgery. A genuine proletarian politician on the contrary would be duty bound to explain to the Austrian workers that their class enemy, himself, has been caught between the paws of history; that no other way out remains for him except to destroy proletarian organizations; that in this instance there is no escaping the mortal struggle; and that this struggle must be prepared for in accordance with all the rules of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

THE GENERAL STRIKE

Otto Bauer has been hinting that in the event of a direct attack on the part of the enemy, the workers will resort to a general strike. But this too is an empty threat. We have heard it more than once in Germany. The general strike cannot be produced out of one's vest pocket. The workers may be led to a general strike, but to do so one must fight and not play hide and seek with reality; a call to battle must be issued, one must organize for the struggle, arm for the struggle, widen and deepen the channel of struggle, not confining oneself to the legal forms of struggle, i. e., the framework dictated by the armed enemy. And first of all, the party itself must be permeated through and through with the idea that unless it engages in a decisive battle, it is lost.

It is quite possible that the Central Committee will actually issue a call for a general strike, after the "open," (that is to say, the decisive) blow had been dealt. But this would mean that after leaving the stage, one calls upon the masses to a naked protest, or manifestation of impotence. Just so did the liberal opposition call upon the people not to pay their taxes after the monarch had told it to go to hell. As a rule, nothing ever came of it. In all probability, the workers will not respond at all to the belated and hopeless appeal of a party already smashed.

But let us allow that the Fascists will give the social democracy time enough to call for a general strike at the last minute, and that the workers will respond solidly to the call. What then? What is the goal of the general strike? What must it achieve? In what forms must it develop? How should it defend itself against military and police repressions, and against the Fascist pogrom? Wiseacres will reply that it is impossible to answer such questions beforehand. That is the usual subterfuge of people who have nothing to say, who hope in their hearts to get along without fighting, and who consequently shy away in cowardice and superstition from questions of military resources and methods.

The general strike is only the mobilization of revolutionary forces but still not war. To utilize the general strike successfully as a demonstration or a threat, i. e., to confine oneself only to the mobilization of forces, without engaging in battle—that is possible only within strictly defined historical conditions; whenever matters touch an important but still a partial, task; when the enemy wavers and waits only for a push in order to retreat; when the possessing classes are still left with a wide field for retreat and maneuver. None of this obtains at present, at the time when all the contradictions have reached their highest intensity and when every serious conflict puts on the agenda the question of power and the perspective of civil war.

The general strike could prove to be a sufficient means for repelling the counter-revolutionary overturn only in the event that the enemy is unprepared and lacks sufficient forces and experience (the Kapp Putsch). But even in the latter case, after having repelled the adventurist onset the general strike only restored fundamentally that situation which obtained on the eve of the conflict, and consequently gave the enemy opportunity to utilize the experience of his own defeat and to prepare better for a new attack. But the general strike turns out to be completely insufficient even for defensive purposes in the event that the enemy is powerful and experienced, all the more so if he leans upon the state apparatus, or even has at his disposal its benevolent "neutrality".

No matter what the basic reason for the conflict may be, under the present conditions the general strike will close the ranks of bourgeois parties, the state apparatus and the Fascist bands, and in this united front of the bourgeoisie the preponderance will fall inevitably into the hands of the most extreme and determined elements, i. e., the Fascists. When face to face with the general strike, the counter-revolution will be compelled to stake all its forces on one card in order to break the ominous danger with a single blow. In so far as the general strike remains only a strike it inevitably under these conditions dooms itself to defeat. In order to snatch victory the strategy of the strike must grow into the strategy of the revolution, it must elevate itself to the level of resolute actions, replying with a double blow to every blow. In other

Bonapartism and Fascism in the Austrian Crisis

words, under the present conditions the general strike cannot serve as a self-sufficient means for the defense of an impotent democracy but only as one of the weapons in the combined struggle of two camps. The strike must be accompanied with and supplemented by the arming of the workers, the disarming of Fascist bands, the removal of Bonapartists from power, and the seizure of the material apparatus of the state.

Once again we repeat if the establishment of a Soviet regime cannot be realized without the seizure of power by the Communist party—and we admit that this is altogether excluded by the unfavorable correlation of forces in the immediate future—then the restoration of democracy, even temporarily, is already unthinkable in Austria without the previous seizure of power by the social democracy. If the leading worker's party is not prepared to bring the struggle to its conclusion then the general strike by sharpening the situation can only hasten the crushing of the proletariat.

The Austro-philistine will catch up these words in order to immediately deduce reasons in favor of "moderation" and "cautiousness." For, is it permissible for a party to take upon itself the revolutionary "risk" involved in the revolutionary methods of struggle? As if the Austrian proletariat has the freedom of choice! As if millions of workers can depart for their villas in Switzerland like Otto

Braun! As if a class can duck mortal danger without incurring any danger! As if the victims of Fascist Europe, with its perspectives of new imperialist wars, will not surpass one hundredfold the sacrifices of all revolutions, past and future!

TODAY, THE KEY TO THE SITUATION IN THE HANDS OF THE AUSTRIAN PROLETARIAT.

Otto Bauer welcomed with ecstatic amazement the fact that the German workers gave seven million votes to the social democracy in the election, despite the closing down of the newspapers, etc., etc. These people opine that the emotions and the thoughts of the proletariat are created by their piddling articles. They have conned Marx and the history of the slightest but they have not the slightest inkling of what inexhaustible reservoirs of power, enthusiasm, perseverance and creativeness the proletariat is capable of unfolding whenever it is assured of a leadership which to any degree corresponds to the historical background.

Isn't it obvious right now that had there obtained a far-seeing revolutionary policy from above, the German workers would have long since overthrown all the barriers blocking their road to hegemony, and moreover that they could have done so with immeasurably and incomparably less sacrifices than the inevitable sacrifices of the Fascist regime? The same must also be said about the Austrian proletariat.

Of course, the policy of the unitary front is obligatory at present also for Austria. But the unitary front is no panacea; the crux of the matter lies in the context of

Voices From Germany

We extract the following passages from a series of letters received from Germany.

I. The occupation of the People's House in a large German city, with a long workers' tradition, occurred in the following manner:

About 10 o'clock in the morning the police occupied the Peoples House promising to leave immediately if they found nothing. Although the searches were fruitless in possession. The police pretended, on being asked by the administration as to why they did not evacuate the House, that they were remaining in order to prevent its occupation by the Storm Troops.

The People's House was surrounded by workers. There were around 200,000 of them. Immediately after the occupation, the factories were informed of it and they demanded that the administration take the necessary steps.

The (socialist) administration tried to calm and pacify the workers by saying: "That will not help us at all, the police will save us from the Fascist hordes. It is useless to remove the office equipment from our headquarters, because it will be returned to us again in a few hours." The socialist party categorically refused to defend the workers' Home. However, the workers remained at their post. At this time the C. P. was already absent, it had abandoned the field.

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon several Storm Troop contingents arrived; they cleared the streets with blackjacks and revolvers in hand. Between the time that the workers left the factories and the socialist party gave the express orders to come immediately from the factory to the Home, the People's House, guarded by the police, was in the possession of the Storm Troops. It is noteworthy that the police, in this city, are in the hands of the social democrats, the chief of police was a social democrat and 80 percent of the policemen were members of the social democratic party.

After the streets were cleared, the Fascist hordes arrived at the People's House, the police opened the doors to them and they seized it, clearing out the workers. With blows from their blackjacks they chased the secretaries and the functionaries from their desks. The House is still occupied today.

The economic administration was maintained in order to provide for the Storm Troops. All food products are consumed by these murderers and better; yet the personnel must be paid by the trade union house.

The Nazis organize visits, with guides, to the House and demand 30 Pfennig admission so as to fill their coffers.

The swastika flag "adorns" the workers' Home. The trade union bureaucrats are in the saloons and are wracking their heads as to how to establish a new registration of the membership because they did not save a single membership card. What is more, they have facilitated the task for the Fascists: the better functionaries are abandoned to reprisals, for the membership cards carry all the necessary information as to party membership, etc. The greatest crime is that of not having safeguarded the membership cards.

Naturally, they have sent a vigorous telegram of protest to president Hindenburg who will surely make good use of it. They have not forgotten to paste up a placard calling for quiet and the maintenance of order.

This example shows how well the socialist party "protects" and defends the workers' interests. But

this is also an illustration of "social Fascism", that is, Fascism protects its twin brother, as Stalin says.

This fact should open wide the eyes of the workers.

II. At the Reichstag session of March 1933, the "devoted" leader of the German proletariat, Otto Weis, said, "Every one of your proposals regarding the interests of the workers, the peasants, the employees could be accepted, if not unanimously, at least by an enormous majority." (Applause from the social democrats, laughter from the Right.) See the Saarbrück Volksstimme of March 25, 1933.

What is this that Weis is trying to make Hitler swallow! Poor socialist party!

III. Weis said: "We, the socialist party, were the first to try to destroy Bolshevism," (that is, the revolutionary workers) says the Frankfurter Zeitung of March 25, 1933. Poor Hitler, you come only after Noske; you haven't the honor of being the first.

IV. Otto Braun, active fighter for democracy and socialism, prime minister of Prussia, has resigned his seat as member of the Reichstag and the Landtag in order to retire from political life and to go to Switzerland to rest. True pillar of the social democracy, "banner of democracy and socialism"

V. The social democratic leaders are launching the illegal organizations. They recommend to their followers, in the sport organizations, to join the Steel Helmets and to continue their athletics there, but on the condition of no political activity.

VI. In Magdeburg, the seat of the Reichsbanner headquarters, they carry on the struggle against Fascism and for democracy and socialism, with such activity that its organization is dissolved of itself; they sent the members home to sleep.

VII. The social democracy of Saxony was so greatly "concerned" with organizing and preparing the struggle against the Fascist bands that it had no time to hide a single file, a single membership list, so that after the occupation everything was in the hands of the Fascists.

What! Do they still talk about the passivity of the socialist party!

VIII. Reichstag deputy, Yanke, and Schubert, deputy in the Saxon Landtag, good Stalinists up to yesterday, are such "marxist-Leninists" that, with flag unfurled, they passed over to Fascism without difficulty. Unfortunately the Nazis shut the door in their face and demanded a probation consisting of petty treason and espionage on the C. P. These Stalinists will swallow this also.

IX. It is a fact that there were frauds in the elections. In several small districts in Silesia the S. P. and the C. P. received 60 and 80 votes in the preceding election, whilst they only received 1 or 2 on March 5. Is this possible without fraud?

X. The betrayal of the social democrats has provoked such indignation in the German proletariat that one hears it said: if we catch a social democratic leader, we will beat him up.

XI. Reformism and Stalinism "have failed. We need a new leadership composed of the best remaining forces, 2,000 social democratic workers forming part of the defense groups, have addressed us asking us what we intend to do

the policies, in the slogans and in the methods of mass actions. With the reservation of preserving complete freedom of mutual criticism—and this reservation is unalterable—the Communists must be prepared to make an alliance with social democracy for the sake of the most modest mass activities. But in so doing the Communists must give themselves a clear accounting of the tasks that are posed by the march of developments in order to disclose at every stage the incongruity between the political goal and the reformist methods.

The united front cannot merely signify a summation of social democratic and Communist workers for beyond the confines of the two parties and outside of the trade unions there still remain Catholic workers and unorganized masses. Not a single one of the old forms of organization which are laden down with conservatism, inertia, and the heritage of old antagonisms can suffice for the present tasks of the united front. A real mobilization of the masses is unthinkable without the creation of elected organs which directly represent the trade, industrial and transport enterprises, corporations and factories, the unemployed and the contiguous layers of the population which gravitate toward the proletariat. In other words, the situation in Austria calls for workers' Soviets, not so much in name as in their nature. The duty of the Communists is to persistently bring forward this slogan in the process of struggle.

The circumstance that Austria is separated governmentally from Germany and lags behind the latter in its internal evolution could play a decisive role in the salvation of Germany and of all Europe—under a bold and virile policy of the proletarian vanguard. Proletarian Austria would immediately become Piedmont for the new German proletariat. The victory of the Austrian workers would provide the German workers with what they lack at present, with a material drill ground, a comprehensible plan of action and hope for victory. Once set in motion the German proletariat would immediately prove itself to be immeasurably more powerful than all its enemies taken together. Upon the parliamentary democratic plane, Hitler with his 44 percent of human dust appears much more imposing than he would on the plane of the actual correlation of forces. The Austrian social democracy has behind it approximately the same percentage of votes. But whereas the Nazis lean upon the social by-products which play in the life of the country a parasitic role, there is behind the Austrian social democracy the flower of the nation. The actual relative weight of the Austrian social democracy exceeds over ten times the relative weight of all the German Fascists. This can be completely revealed only in action. The initiative for revolutionary action can come at present only from the Austrian proletariat. What is there necessary for it? Courage, courage, and once again, courage! The Austrian workers have nothing to lose but their chains. And by their initiative they can conquer Europe and the whole world!

Prinkipo, March 23, 1933

INFLATION BILL DECEPTIVE

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decidedly deflationary also—the balancing of the budget by reducing expenditures was forced through against the workers in government service, the veterans and pensioners (the inflationary way of balancing the budget would have been through increasing borrowings involving eventually printing more money, or gambling on an increase in prices or rate of taxes to bring in more money while not reducing expenses). The reforestation program, the addition to being a step toward the militarization of the homeless youth and the unemployed, was also a deflationary step, making it easier for private capital to cut wages down to the standard set by the government, of \$1 a day and keep.

The development of the cyclical crisis during the period following the bank holiday showed the presence of forces making for the kind of limited and unstable improvement which is possible within the framework of the general crisis of capitalism. Steel production, electric power consumption, carloadings, and similar indices showed a steady increase during this period, apart from the usual seasonal changes. Its noteworthy that this was in spite of the actual deflation which was going on during this period, which would normally tend to reduce business activity.

VOLKSEITUNG SALEMEN

We wish to record a little incident here which was insignificant in its results but highly illuminative while it lasted. Last Saturday the N. Y. miniatures of the German Brown Shirts came to Teutonia Hall to gorge themselves with food and drink in celebration of butcher Hitler's 44th birthday. Several scores of them attended this monstrous anniversary. And to protect them from the wrath of the workers they came surrounded by a veritable cordon of cops.

About a hundred and fifty party members held a protest demonstration opposite Teutonia Hall.

Several party speakers spoke from the platform regaling the audience on Roosevelt Fascism, etc. It began to look to little like a united front so the party chairman summoned the editor of the Volkszeitung, a reformist sheet from the crowd. He took the platform making an outrageously reformist and pacifist speech. All the party members applauded vociferously. The Left Opposition was denied a speaker.

Then came the piece de resistance of the evening. The chairman of this party controlled and attended meeting distributed the Volkszeitung from the platform! How far will the party swing to the right?

about it. Create a Communist party ready to struggle, that is our answer.

XII. The leader of the party in Weddington, one of the strongest workers' districts, has called upon us to work in common so as to build from the ruins. The Left Opposition must fulfill the task which history poses before it.

A party comrade read, by accident, comrade Trotsky's pamphlet, "How to Defeat Fascism". After reading it, she said to us, "I have been blind for years. I had confidence in our C. C. Now I see that I have deceived myself. Continue to give me literature. I want to continue to fight but with clear view and open eyes."

XIII. Here is how the party sowed confusion among its members; when the appeal of the E. C. C. appeared, which the party distributed, many comrades of the C. P. said it was a fake, a maneuver of the socialist party and that it could not originate from the E. C. C. I.

Leon Trotsky on Hitler's Victory

The old view about the backwardness of countries seized by dictatorship can no longer be maintained. Though it was possible to apply it to Italy, with some exaggeration, it cannot possibly be applied to Germany, which is a highly developed capitalist country in the very heart of Europe.

There is one common reason for the collapse of democracy: capitalist society has outlived its strength. The national and international antagonisms which break out in it destroy the democratic structure just as world antagonisms are destroying the democratic structure of the League of Nations. Where the progressive class shows itself unable to seize power so as to reconstruct society on the basis of socialism, capitalism in its agony can only preserve its existence by using the most brutal, anti-cultural methods, the extreme expression of which is Fascism. That historic fact appears in Hitler's victory. In February 1929, I wrote as follows in an American review:—

"On the analogy of the electrical industry democracy may be defined as a system of switches and fuses directed against the violent shocks of national or social struggle. No epoch in the history of man has been so filled with antagonisms as our own. The switches of democracy are fusing or breaking under the violent pressure of class and international antagonisms. That is the kernel which explains the rapid rise of dictatorship."

My opponents relied on the fact that the process had only laid hold of the fringe of the civilized world. But I replied: "The strength of internal and world antagonisms is not declining but growing...Gout

Reprint of Article in 'Manchester Guardian'

begins with the little finger or the big toe, but once it has begun it progresses till it reaches the heart." For many the choice between Bolshevism and Fascism is rather like a choice between Satan and Beelzebub. I shall find it difficult to say anything comforting about this. It is clear that the twentieth century is the most disturbed century within the memory of humanity. Any contemporary of ours who wants peace and comfort before anything has chosen a bad time to be born.

A Desperate People

Hitler's movement has been lifted to victory by 17,000,000 desperate people; it proves that capitalist Germany has lost faith in decaying Europe which was converted by the treaty of Versailles into a madhouse but was not provided with strait jackets. The victory of the party of despair was only possible because Socialism, the party of hope, was unable to seize power. The German proletariat is both numerous and civilized enough to achieve this, but the party leaders have shown themselves incompetent.

The social democrats, with their peculiar conservative limitations, hoped, along with the other parliamentary parties, to "educate" Fascism gradually. They gave the position of chief drill sergeant to Hindenburg, the Field Marshall of the Hohenzollerns; they voted for him. The workers had the right instincts and wanted to fight. But the social democrats held them back, promising to give the signal

when Hitler should have finally abandoned legal methods. Thus the social democracy not only summoned the Fascists to power through Hindenburg but allowed them to carry out the governmental revolution by stages.

The policy of the Communist party has been thoroughly wrong. Its leaders started from the absurd axiom that social democrats and National Socialists represented "two varieties of Fascism", that they were, in Stalin's formula, not "undoubtedly true, that social democracy, like Fascism, stands to defend the bourgeois regime against the proletarian revolution. But the methods of the two parties are entirely different. Social democracy is unthinkable without parliamentary government and mass organizations of the workers in trade unions. The mission of Fascism, however, is to destroy both. A defensive union of Communists and social democrats should have been based on this antagonism. But blind leaders refused to take this line. The workers were left divided, defenseless, without plan or prospects, before the attacking enemy. This position demoralized the proletariat and strengthened the self-confidence of Fascism.

Predictions

Two and a half years ago, in September 1931, I wrote as follows: "Fascism has become a real danger in Germany; it expresses the extreme hopelessness of the bourgeois regime, the conservative part played by the social democrats in relation to that regime, and the incompetence of the Communist party to shake that regime. Whoever denies that is either blind or boastful."

I expressed this idea in a series of pamphlets which have appeared during the last two years in Germany. Thus in October 1931, I wrote:

"The advance of the National Socialists to power means, above all, the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the breakup of its organizations, the destruction of faith in itself and in its future. In view of the much greater or ferocity and bitterness of social antagonisms in Germany, the hellish work of Italian Fascism will probably appear mild and almost humane when compared with that of German National Socialism."

The Stalinist faction said that this was panic-mongering. Out of the vast political literature devoted to this question I shall refer to a speech made by the official leader of the German Communist Party, Thaelmann, before the Executive Committee of the Communist International in April 1931, when he exposed so-called pessimists—i. e., people who were capable of foresight—in the following words:

"We have not allowed panic-mongering to divert us from our path...We are convinced that the 14th of September, 1930 (when the Nazis won 107 seats in the Reichstag) was Hitler's best day, and that now he cannot expect to do better, only worse. Our estimate of the development of that party has been confirmed by events... Today the Fascists have no reason to be pleased."

That quotation is enough! Thus, while bourgeois democracy was collapsing Fascism was assisted to power by the united efforts of the leaders of both the workers' parties.

Hitler's Difficulties

Hitler's government has lost no time in setting a fast pace. It announces that it will educate the Communists in concentration camps. Hitler promises to exterminate the social democrats, that is, to achieve, in much harder conditions, the task which was beyond the strength of Bismarck and Wilhelm II. Hitler's political army is made up of officials, clerks, shopkeepers, tradesmen, peasants, all the intermediate and doubtful classes. In point of social consciousness they are human dust.

It is a paradox that Hitler, for all his anti-parliamentarism, is much stronger in the parliamentary than in the social plane. The Fascist dust remains dust after each new coating of heads. On the other hand, the workers are united by the process of production. The productive forces of the nation are strongly concentrated in their hands. Hitler's struggle for control is only beginning. His main difficulties are before him. The change of trade and industry is changing the relation of forces not in Hitler's favor but in favor of the proletariat. The mere fact of the reduction of unemployment will increase the self-consciousness of the workers. The spring which has been too tightly compressed must ease itself. After the extraordinary decline of the workers' standard of living during the years of crisis a period of widespread economic struggles can be expected with confidence.

Hitler's principal difficulties are before him, like his principal struggles. In the international arena further gestures and phrases cannot be expected from Hitler in the immediate future. He has too long and sanguinary a war to fight out inside Germany for him to think seriously of war against France. On the other hand, he will try with all his strength to prove to France and the other capitalist states the necessity of supporting him in his providential mission of fighting Bolshevism. Allow for all diversion, the foreign policy of Fascist Germany is essentially directed against the Soviet Union.

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Inflation Bill Deceptive

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control of production as a road to the dictatorship of the proletariat." The Daily Worker has finally waked up to the fact that the fight for higher wages and unemployment relief is the proletarian answer to inflation, and has made this the first slogan in a group of seven demands. The last of these, however, is ridiculously impractical and anti-Marxian—"Housewives, organize to fight higher prices". It means attempting to carry on the economic class struggle at the point of consumption, in the grocery store, instead of at the point of production, in the factory, a Proudhonist and not a Marxist approach.

Nowhere is the struggle for immediate demands in the fight against inflation linked up with the ultimate aims of the revolution; they remain purely isolated slogans and thereby opportunistic ones. Nor is any concrete proposal made for carrying these demands into action, such as the organization of workers' representatives on a broad united front basis and on a national scale to determine the extent of the wage cut which is concealed behind inflation. The function of a Communist party is leadership, not the mouthing of mere pious wishes.

The party should immediately proceed to the elaboration of a concrete program for the organization of the fight for higher wages beginning as a defense against inflation, and should agitate among all strata of the workers for the calling of a nation-wide united front conference to fight inflation.

—R. J. FRIED.

P. M. A. Under Fire

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the official policy has tended to narrow down the differences between the Progressive Miners and the type of unionism against which the rank and file rose, in revolt.

Since the inception of the new movement the Left Opposition has warned against a repetition of the cruel experiences of the past and urged the militant elements to consolidate their forces in a firm left wing on a policy of class struggle. This warning must be repeated again now when the demoralizing agitation of the bosses is reaching into the union and finding direct and indirect supporters there. The Left wing must rally its forces for a resolute counter-attack. In the circumstances the strategy of the militant forces cannot reconcile itself with that of the leading circles in the union. The Progressive Miners of America is the product of a miners' revolt. Its preservation and further development depends on a sustained militant policy which is impossible without a free participation of Communists in the union. The progressive character of the union, which has distinguished it from the Lewis organization, cannot be maintained if it permits the bounding of Communists. At the present stage this is precisely the crux of the problem of the P. M. A. What is a progressive union for if it allows the operators to dictate the opinions of its membership? An open fight for the right of workers of all political opinions—including Communists—to participate freely in the life of the union is the only way to reply to the attack of the reactionary press.

The resolutions of the local unions and of the Ladies' Auxiliary, printed in the "Progressive Miner" show that the rank and file can be mobilized to fight on these lines. What is needed is an organization of the fight and leaders who are equal to it.

—J. P. CANNON.