

84

possible to speak of the Nationalists as a Party that has a certain organization, a Party that is able to move this organization along certain policies? It is my opinion though I have no material to prove what I am going to say, that the Nationalists represent a group of political speculators, who have succeeded in utilizing the hatred against Machado, the collapse of the country in order to overthrow Machado and to take power in their own hands. They are loud-speaking, which shouts to the world that there is a movement. But the activities are among the students. On the streets are only the students and the workers, the Nationalists were always somewhere in the background. They make no attempt to publish a paper, they make no promises to the masses. I believe it is only the hatred of the masses for Machado, the economic collapse of the country that enabled the Nationalists to fool, to swindle the masses, and give them the impression that there is an organization to lead them. All attempts of the Nationalists to overthrow Machado were a failure. Why? The Nationalists never had any mass power on which to base themselves. In the fortress of Havana, the condition was such that the locks of the machine guns were broken off and taken away, the commander of the guard was with the Nationalists, but nevertheless the thing failed. Whatever attempt was made was made in the form of pretending to engineer some kind of attack in order to frighten Machado and give him the impression that the masses were behind the Nationalists, but as a matter of fact the masses were never mobilized behind a struggle against Machado. This is the story of all of the Nationalists struggles.

I wonder whether the Latin American comrades would agree with this analysis of the estimation of the nationalists. From my point of view of the Nationalists, you can understand how tragic was the failure of the Party, when it went to the Nationalists offering its services to the Nationalists. I was very brutal with the Party because it had offered its services to the Nationalists before the October strike. I have requested the comrades to give a statement of the character of the ~~negotiations~~ negotiations carried on with Mendieta. In this conversation, our representatives came to Mendieta and said: "We are ready for a general strike. Will you give us sufficient arms?" In this first phase of the nationalist activities, before the terrorist acts were proven to be a failure, one of the Nationalist leaders declared: "Yes, we know how to begin a revolution, but we don't know how to finish it,--and I refer to Russia". What did he want to say by that? That at the beginning when the Nationalists hoped that their terrorist acts would succeed, then they abstained from negotiating with the workers, expecting to do it by themselves. But when their terrorist acts were failures, they came to the opinion that only one force can bring them to power,--only when they utilize the workers. This is a mistake that we made, that we have not established up to now, we have not reacted properly to find out through which channels the Nationalists were penetrating the Party. I am convinced that Cotona was an agent of the Nationalists in the Party, but the other ally of the Nationalists in the Party was the Party's lack of understanding of its own role in the situation.

I have material here, showing, that even after the change of the Party's line, after the letter of the American Party, and after I have been there for a month, Cotona was seeking in various ways to demoralize the workers, to prove to them that it is wrong for the Party to refuse to take money from the Nationalists in order to prepare the general strike.

I was trying to find out, were the Nationalists against the Chadbourne Plan. They were not for a moment against the Chadbourne Plan. The people who wrote articles, etc., for the Plan were either Nationalists or people inspired by the Chadbourne Plan. They knew that it was a plan which would ruin the Colonos, and which would strengthen the American position, that Cuba was the only country that was offered on the altar of the Chadbourne Plan. But on the eve of the International Agreement for the Chadbourne Plan, the Nationalists declared that since they were on the eve of getting into power they would refuse to recognize this agreement. Otherwise they have never said a word against the plan.