

WHY HITLER CAME TO POWER

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It was with this revision of all the teachings of Lenin that the Communist Party of Germany with the assistance of the social democracy, confused and paralysed the workers and then handed them over without a battle into the hands of the fascist executioner.

The British hypocrites who now slander the German workers applauded this policy of betrayal at the time when the revolutionary socialists were raising their voice all over the world in an effort to prevent the tragedy which was impending in Germany.

"It is significant" jeered the DAILY WORKER of May 26th, 1932, "that Trotsky has come out in defence of a united front between the Communist and Social Democratic Parties against Fascism. No more disruptive and conniver revolutionary class lead could possibly have been given at a time like the present."

At the eleventh hour, just before Hitler's coming to power in the Communist Review of December 1932, Ralph Fox wrote:

"... The Communist Party of Germany has now succeeded in winning the majority of the working class in the decisive industrial areas, where it is now the FIRST PARTY in Germany. The only exceptions are Hamburg and Saxony, but even here the Party vote has enormously increased at the expense of the Social Democrats."

These successes have been won only by the most unswerving carrying through of the line of the Party and the Comintern. Insisting all the time that Social Democracy is the chief social support of capitalism, the Party has carried on intense and unceasing struggle against the German Social Democratic Party and the new 'Independent Socialist Labour Party', as well as against the right wing and Trotskyist renegades who wanted the party of the proletariat to make a united front with Social Fascism against Fascism."

It is this suicidal policy of Stalinism against which Trotsky and the international Left Opposition waged a struggle in the critical years 1930-33 when the fate of Germany hung in the balance. Trotsky's works on Germany will remain forever as textbooks on the problem of the United Front. They will serve as models for the revolutionary movement of the future. That we commence publication of Trotsky's material on this question in England for the first time, is a reflection on the revolutionary movement in Britain. Every student who desires an understanding of the degeneration of Stalinism will study this material with great care.

Even though Germany—the Key to the International Situation was written in 1931, it retains its freshness at the present time. The outline of the situation, not only in Germany, but in the other countries dealt with, indicates clearly Trotsky's profound understanding of the political process of development of our period. Trotsky and the Fourth International alone warned of the catastrophe that the coming to power of Hitler would mean for the workers of Germany, Europe and of the Soviet Union. When the Stalinists refused to learn the lesson of events, and in a most cowardly way, surrendered the German masses to Hitler without a fight, or even a shot being fired; when they even went so far as to proclaim the coming to power of Hitler as a victory for the working class—as it expressed the crisis of capitalism and his victory was merely that of the caliph of an hour, boastfully proclaiming 'our turn next'—it was then that Trotsky proclaimed the end of the Comintern as a force making for world socialism.

How pitiful, how despicable are the writings of the pen prostitutes of the Kremlin on Germany, when the real historical events are analysed. These Dutts, these Rusts, these Ehrenburgs—not satisfied with having betrayed the German workers into the hands of the Nazis, now systematically disseminate chauvinist poison to the Allied workers in order to assist Anglo-American imperialism to enslave the German people. Having proved incapable of leading the German workers to victory, they now actively oppose the socialist revolution in Germany. Thus as always in politics, ineptness and stupidity, if not corrected, become transformed into treachery.

The German and British workers will yet present their accounts not only to their imperialist oppressors, but to their hirelings in the ranks of the working class. Once the working class realises the full depth of their treachery, like the traducers of the Commune, they will forever be held to scorn in the memory of the working class.

It would have been impossible to conceive that elements claiming to represent the working class should stoop to such depths as the Stalinists. From the Social Democrats nothing more could have been expected—they remained faithful to their past tradition of reformist betrayal. The Stalinists have often enough in the past referred to the murder of Liebknecht and Luxembourg and the betrayal of the revolution of 1918. But nothing in their record could equal the long list of crimes marked up to the account of Stalinism.

Surely, all the gods must have laughed at the spectacle of the Stalinist leaders solemnly intoning that it was necessary to "re-educate" the German workers—and their educators? Allied imperialism and Stalinism! Yes, re-education is necessary! Re-education of the ranks of the working class as to the rôle of the leadership of the organisations claiming to represent them. Re-education which will assist them to burn out the cancer of Stalinism and reformism which will lead the workers only to further catastrophe. In order to accomplish the task of "educating" not only the German but the British and world workers, it is necessary that the advanced guard should be trained and armed with a knowledge of the Marxist method and of the history of past defeats. As an indispensable means of understanding the position in Germany today, it is necessary for the workers to conscientiously study the works of Trotsky. Germany is still the key to the international situation—with an understanding and with a knowledge of the past and future tasks we will go forward to the building of a new socialist world.

"LIBERATED" BELGIUM

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workers answered by calling on the local Resistance forces, who helped them to occupy the factory.

MINERS' DEMANDS

These workers were not alone. A national conference of Miners' Trade Union Struggle Committees on the 22nd October called upon the workers to demonstrate on the 30th with the following demands:

1. Immediate start of production.
2. Requisitioning of all idle pits and industries and those whose owners have collaborated with the Germans, and their management under workers' control.
3. Rational organisation of food supplies with the co-operation of the Resistance movement.
4. Legal recognition of the Workers' Purgings Committees.

The resolution ends: "Failing the immediate implementation of these measures the workers should occupy the idle pits with the help of the Resistance forces in order to re-start production."

A National Conference of United Unions and Trade Union Struggle Committees of the Engineering industry associated itself with the miners' resolution.

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

It is in relation to this background that the decision of the Government to disarm the Resistance must be seen.

The Belgian Resistance movement, like the French, is not homogeneous, but made up of several different groups representing the main political tendencies and class interests in Belgium. There is the Armée Secrète (Secret Army) organised by officer and capitalist elements which was formed with the help of the big capitalists, etc., not so much with the object of fighting the Germans but of providing the capitalists with an armed organisation of their own to face the workers once the machine guns and revolvers of the S.S. and Gestapo were no longer there to maintain "law and order."

On the other hand there is the Independence Front (F.I.) in which are represented the Communist Party, the Socialists, the Trade Union Struggle Committees and also Liberals and Catholics. The main influence is that of the Communist Party. The F.I.'s armed formations are the Belgian Partisan Army and the Patriotic Militias in which, again, the Communist Party has great influence. Under the German occupation the struggle against the "common" enemy especially the fact that the Communist and Socialist parties reduced their whole policy to "chuck out the Boche first and we will discuss afterwards the regime we will have", hid the real differences in aim and social composition of the different movements.

Now that Belgium is "free" of the Germans, the question is posed: "After the Germans, who will rule—the capitalists (with the help of the Anglo-Americans) or the workers?" The strikes that are taking place, the chaos in industry and especially the occupation of the factories by the workers, poses that question today—and to this question each section of the Resistance will give its own answer according to its class and political character. The reactionary Armée Secrète and White Brigade will act as the bosses' special guards, whereas the Patriotic Militias and Partisans of the F.I., being largely working class, will act—and have already acted—as Workers' Militias. When the Patriotic Militia helped the workers occupy the S.A.F.E.A. works, and when maybe tomorrow they will help the miners occupy the pits—they were and will thereby be acting as exclusive organs of the working class—as Workers' Militias. Under the pressure of events a rapid regrouping and resorting will take place inside the Resistance groups: the capitalist and middle class

elements in the F.I. and other groups, the W.B., the O.M.B.R., etc., will, with the A.S. act as a Belgian S.S. to repress the workers. The capitalists are well aware of the danger to them represented by the armed workers in the Resistance—particularly the Partisans and Patriotic Militias.

That is why Pierlot decided to disarm the Resistance—the workers must not have arms to defend themselves from the bosses' attacks.

The Belgian Trotskyists—the Revolutionary Communist Party of Belgium—have put forward the slogan of "Workers' Militias" based on the factories, with elected officers and under the control of the Workers' or Factory Committees. The workers will realise the necessity of preparing for future struggles, for thousands are hiding their arms rather than give them up.

THE TREASON OF THE STALINISTS

In their struggle, the Belgian masses are being betrayed by their misleaders. Both the Communist Party Ministers and the "Resistance" representative Demany, resigned in protest, and through the Independence Front called upon the people to demonstrate against the Government. Their counter-proposals, however, are a capitulation to the Government and show they have no real differences with Pierlot. They propose that the Resistance forces be incorporated in the regular army—as whole units and under the command of their own offi-



cers. But the regular army is controlled by the reactionary capitalist class; it is the instrument of the capitalist class, and to propose the incorporation of the Resistance forces in that army is to propose turning them openly into instruments of the capitalists. Are the Resistance leaders and the so-called "Communist" leaders naive enough to believe that the General Staff would not, once the Resistance forces were in the army—and subject to military discipline—weed out officers that were not subservient to them? What guarantee have they that after a few months or weeks the capitalist higher officers would not split up the Resistance units all over the army?

No—our Belgian Trotskyist comrades are quite right in pointing out that the workers must build up their own Workers' Militias as their weapon in the working class struggle against the capitalists, and must fight for a Workers' Government.

The Belgian working class is realising through bitter experience that the "liberation" has changed nothing and

that they still have a struggle ahead—to kick out the capitalists and take power for the working class. The workers are turning in masses towards the Belgian Communist Party, believing that under its leadership they can achieve their aims.

The aim of the leadership of the Communist Party is, however, entirely different. Their rôle, as in Britain, France and the U.S.A., is in fact to save capitalism by diverting the revolutionary sentiments of the workers. When the Pierlot Government was formed soon after the "liberation", they entered it, thus giving the workers the illusion that something good could come out of such a government. The Pierlot government, however, showed by its actions and by its attack on the Resistance that it was a faithful watchdog of big business. Now the Belgian C.P. has left the Government, but its new demand, "For a Government of Democratic Concentration", is also meant to fool the workers. They propose a government of Communists, Socialists and progressives.

This programme, containing many demands with which revolutionary communists can agree—i.e. smashing of the trusts, workers' participation of management, planned economy, etc., is however merely a camouflage to hide the C.P.'s capitulation; the C.P. leaders know very well that no capitalist government will take any steps to smash the monopolies (i.e. their own backers) or plan economy in the interests of the working masses of the country. The capitalists will fight tooth and nail against any real encroachment of the workers into the sacred domain of their management of industry. The C.P. leaders know quite well that economic security is impossible so long as capitalism exists, they know that the capitalist class is incapable of getting Belgium out of its present mess and that only the complete smashing of the capitalist State and its replacement by workers' power will make possible a real planned economy controlled by, and for the benefit of, the working class and the overwhelming majority of the population. To achieve this the working class must build up its organs of struggle, its Workers' Committees based on the factories and elected by all workers, its workers' militias etc.—But the "Communist" Party does not say a word about these, and by pretending that their programme can be carried out merely through Cabinet reshuffles and the "concentration of democratic forces" it is deliberately fooling the workers.

Both the Belgian Socialist and Stalinist Parties claim that the present Pierlot Government with its majority of Catholic Party and liberal capitalist ministers does not represent the views of the majority in the country. It is undoubtedly true that free elections today would result in a "socialist" and "communist" majority. Why then do not the Socialist and Stalinist leaders demand a general election? Is it because they are afraid of taking power, because then the masses would expect them to apply their programme and really kick out the capitalists? The Revolutionary Communists of Belgium will demand that the Labour and Stalinist leaders match words with deeds. They say this is a government of collaborators: then down with the government! Let them fight for power and end their capitulation to the capitalists and their government. By this means our Belgian comrades will demonstrate that they alone can carry out a programme of socialism and in defence of the interests of the working class.

On the foreign field as well as at home the "programme" of the Stalinist leaders in Belgium is a capitulation to imperialism. They call for the old catchwords of "collective security" and a "lasting peace based on the destruction of the imperialist foundations of Germany". As if Germany were the only imperialist aggressor! No, destruction of German imperialism alone will not assure peace. Only the destruction of all imperialism—German and American, British and Japanese, and the establishment of workers' power, and as a first step a United Socialist States of Europe can assure lasting peace. The Belgian working class will take part in the mighty struggle by fighting side by side with their French, German and British comrades for a Workers' Belgium and a Workers' Europe.

THE TASKS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

The capitalist Government in Belgium would not last for a minute were it not for the Labour and Stalinist misleaders who hold the masses back on the one hand, and support the British army on the other. During the demonstrations in Brussels, British and Canadian troops were standing by to help the Belgian police and gendarmerie if necessary. As yet, they have not had to fire. But the British workers and soldiers must understand that the struggle is only beginning and that British troops will be used, sooner or later, against the Belgian and European workers, to keep in power the ex-collaborationist capitalists. The British and American capitalists do not want the workers to triumph anywhere in Europe and the British and American armies will be used to keep in power the old discredited capitalist and pro-Fascist and reactionary cliques who yesterday co-operated with the German capitalists in the exploitation of the German and European workers.

Yesterday, the Belgian bosses called in the Gestapo and the S.S. to suppress their workers, break their

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EBBW VALE STRIKE

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bilities of their private police force.

A resolution to end the strike was then adopted unanimously.

LESSONS OF THE STRIKE

The outstanding feature of this stoppage was the fact that, for the first time in Ebbw Vale, a dispute was led and organised by a Joint Committee of all the unions involved. This new form of organisation expressing as it does the solidarity of all the workers, irrespective of trade and craft, must be maintained and extended. In future struggles, no matter what particular union is immediately involved, the Workers Committee, representing all the unions at Ebbw Vale, must be called in to co-ordinate the struggle. And meanwhile, the Works Committee itself must be strengthened. First and foremost the A.E.U. must send delegates to this important and all-embracing committee.

Insofar as the existing Strike Committee has decided to notify all the workers at the Ebbw Vale works of their rights in relation to Richard Thomas's private police force, the strike can be termed a partial victory. It was not a complete victory because the struggle against the State Police has been left uncompleted.

But the fine solidarity shown by the Ebbw Vale workers bodes well for the future. It is a warning to Richard Thomas, and to the employing class in general, that the workers are not prepared to tolerate a police dictatorship in the workshops—or elsewhere.

R.J.

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strikes. Today the same bosses look to the Allied army. But the British soldiers do not want to become an Allied S.S. They have been told they are fighting to "liberate" Europe and destroy Nazism. They do not want to be used to protect the collaborators and profiteers of Nazism from the wrath of their Belgian and European fellow-workers.

The capitalists will distort or suppress the truth, will tell all sorts of lies. It is the duty of the British labour movement to expose these machinations, to explain to the British workers and especially to the British soldiers, the counter-revolutionary use the capitalists will want to make of the troops, to explain the real situation.

So far, the official labour movement has not protested against the intervention of General Erskine, as head of the Allied military mission on the side of the capitalists. It is known that General Erskine summoned the Resistance leaders, and the Communist Party ministers, to a conference and no doubt warned them that British troops would be used against the Resistance if necessary. It is also known that Walter Citrine, general-secretary of the T.U.C. was also in Brussels at the time. Was that just a coincidence? Or was he there to add the pressure of the British labour leaders to that of General Erskine in support of the disarmament of the Resistance? The "Tribune" of November 24th comments on this matter:

"Something else happened in Brussels that day that needs explanation. While the Socialist rank and file, which had been in the forefront in the resistance groups, particularly in the mining areas, made unmistakable common cause with the Communist and Liberal leaders, the Socialist Ministers were issuing equivocal statements saying that they had not made up their mind and giving no direction to their followers except indicating that they would not resign. This statement does not fit into the known background of some of the Socialist Ministers whose resistance record is well known. Questions have, therefore, been asked in Brussels whether the interference in this Belgian affair was confined to the military, whether the presence of Sir Walter Citrine in Belgium on that day was entirely accidental, and if the influence of the secretary of the T.U.C. was required to fortify that of the Allied Commander?"

When the British soldiers come to realise the dirty work they will be made to do, in defence of ex-collaborating big business, and ordered to come out against their Belgian fellow-workers, they, in their overwhelming majority, will be disgusted and opposed to being used as S.S. But they are shackled by military discipline. It is therefore up to the whole labour movement to mobilise its forces in defence of the Belgian workers.

Workers, in your trade union branches, in your factory committees in your shop-steward's committees, trades councils, etc., demand that the labour movement oppose the manoeuvres of the capitalist reaction. The labour ministers must leave the government. The labour movement must not be made responsible for the suppression of our European fellow-workers.

Hands off the Belgian workers! British troops are not S.S.! Long live the unity of the British and Belgian working class! Long live the revolutionary Communist Party of Belgium!

Gas Strike

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part of the night shift. The Government decided to act quickly. The notices were served on 36 of the strikers as a means of intimidation.

BRADFORD WORKERS ISOLATED

Cajoled and pleaded with by the union officials, and threatened by the Government; isolated and lacking contact with each other, the Gas Workers throughout Lancashire did not come out in support of Bradford and Stockport. Because of this, the strikers feared that skilled men would be drafted from other works.

On November 9th, Bro. Moores went to the Trade Union office and warned of the chaos and danger involved in gas production as a result of the action of the Government. He asked for a definite assurance that negotiations would take place.

The trade union officials, who do not suffer under the miserable conditions of the men they are supposed to represent, wouldn't give any assurance.

T.U. OFFICIALS FORCED TO RAISE MEN'S DEMAND

At a meeting of the workers held in the Bradford Road Works Canteen on November 11th, there were 6 representatives from Stockport present. The mood of the men was ugly. Exasperated by the delay and enraged with their leadership they were determined to bring the whole workers out on strike. So far the Key men and the Maintenance men were not involved. During the course of the meeting, a

message from the union was received to say that the demand for time and a third was on the agenda for the Joint Industrial Gas Council, to be held the following Thursday.

This was a victory for the men. But their justified mistrust for the slow and unsatisfactory machinery of arbitration was shown by the large number who voted against returning to work. When the vote was taken, 98 voted to go back, and 40 voted against. The Stockport workers came to a similar decision in order that the strikers should return in a solid body.

FOR A JOINT GAS WORKS COMMITTEE

Although the holding of the Joint Industrial Gas Council was speeded up, the back of the strike was broken due to the lack of support from the other works. No Joint Committee of workers' representatives exists, although the men have been attempting to form such a committee. The only means of publicising their case was through the capitalist press. This is obviously a bad method, since boss class press accounts are seldom true, and are more often than not unfavourable to the workers. The union bureaucrats who have the means of contact, are tied to the capitalist machine and are not prepared to fight for the workers' interests.

The first step for the Gas workers is the formation of a Joint Gas Works Committee. Only along the road of united action on a local, regional, and national basis—can the workers gain their demands.