

RADEK REPLIES TO ZINOVIEV AT SIXTH SESSION

Discusses Slogan of the Workers' Government

Editor's Note—Today's story from our Moscow correspondent reports the continuation of the discussion on the United Front tactic of the Comintern and its application in the German situation. As Karl Radek came in for severe criticism as a result of his conduct of the party maneuver during the October crisis in Germany, his speech in defense of his policy, which is substantially given here, should prove of unusual interest.

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(Special to the Daily Worker.)

MOSCOW, June 21.—(By Mail.)—After the opening of the sixth session on June 21 Rossi (of Italy) declares in the name of the Bordiga group that attacks on the leftist mistakes of Bordiga are unjust. Bordiga is not preaching sectionalism; he is fighting opportunistic interpretations of mass parties. Bordiga is propagating no idealistic Neitschean views in the realm of philosophy. The United Front policy became subject to opportunistic interpretations.

The Bordiga group accepts the United Front tactic from below in the industrial field, but challenges it in the political field. If "workers' government" is only a synonym for "proletarian dictatorship," then it is admissible, but why use the synonym? Concerning the matter of union with the Italian socialists, the Bordiga group advocates union with the socialist masses under the leadership of the Communist Party. The policy of the Comintern is eclectic, which is a mistake, for the great Lenin could maneuver, but the little Lenins, hanging on the outskirts, degenerate thru opportunism. In the Comintern there is only a right-wing danger; leftist dangers do not exist.

Made Mistakes.

In the name of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, Smeral explains that the party is not thoroly Bolshevistic. The party should take reproofs in the proper spirit and should increase their efforts and their field of activity, altho Zinoviev's reasoning is not quite correct. The party

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was active, and for this very reason, of course, mistakes occurred.

The criticism of Hulla's article, the policy in the elections in the Carpathian section of Russia, the policy in the agrarian question, are attributable in part to misunderstandings, and in part to incorrect information.

The correct interpretation of the United Front policy and advantageous maneuvering in the agrarian question led to the disintegration of the agrarian party and the clerical party and shattered the Social-Democrats and the National Socialists. Thirty-five to forty per cent of the soldiers vote the Communist ticket. The decisions of the Prague convention are based upon the resolutions of the Fourth Congress. It would be astonishing, if the sum total of the resolutions of the Congress were to amount to a complaint against opportunism. United Front policy from below will be applied frequently by the party; the United Front policy from above will be used sparingly.

Radek Speaks.

The next speaker was Comrade Radek. He said:

"Comrade Zinoviev's speech, which, in my opinion, represents the annulment of the resolution of the Fourth Congress on the united front (Interjection: Oh, Oh) has induced me to put my point of view, which, because of the unanimous decision of the Russian Communist Party against my views, I should otherwise have hesitated to do.

"Four questions are presented here. 1. How did our united front tactics arise, what were they, and what are they? 2. What experiences have we gained in the last year with regard to the united front, particularly in Germany? 3. What is the present situation, and what is to be done? 4. What is the situation in the Communist International, and how must Communist tactics be defined within our parties?

"I shall begin with the origin of the united front policy. Comrade Zinoviev makes two assertions in explanation of the history of the united front. The first is that in the year 1919—20, the Communist International, in the West, outside Russia, consisted of small propaganda parties and groups, and that we first became mass parties in the year 1921. This statement is incorrect. In 1919 our small Communist Party in Germany stood at the height of greater revolutionary mass struggles than since the year 1920. In Bavaria we conquered power and defended it. We had our small Hungarian Party which achieved power and defended it by arms for four and a half months.

Latin and Russian.

What is the united front and what is the watchword of workers' and peasants' governments. For Zinoviev this is quite simple. The Russian peasant understands no Latin, he does not know what the dictatorship of the proletariat is, and this watchword has therefore been translated, first into Russian, then into German and into English, etc.

On the basis of our Latin we have, in the years 1918, 1919, and 1920 torn away great masses of the social democrats, and after the Halle Conference we became a mass party. Since then however, in the year 1921, we translated the Latin words 'dictatorship of the proletariat' into German, we sit at each Congress and attempt to explain to ourselves what this translation means. (Interjection: Opportunistic translation). With the year 1920, with our defeat in Poland, our defeat in Italy, with the world economic crisis, which made plain the way for the capitalist offensive, began the so-called new stage, which we announced at the Third World Congress. We said to ourselves, now call together again the masses which are in retreat, and out of sentimental socialists we must make Communists and hard fighters. To this end we first adopted

the united front, and secondly, sought for the watchwords for this united front. After the Halle Party Conference, every German Communist felt that we had already drawn to ourselves the workers who were for the dictatorships that meanwhile the great masses would not be won by the propaganda of the watchword of dictatorship; and that we must win them over by the putting forward general slogans in their daily struggles. The situation was not, in general, immediately understood by the comrades. It is a historical fact that a number of comrades considered the "open letter" of January 8, as opportunistic back sliding. Only as a result of the intervention of comrade Lenin were directions for the united front and the "open letter" included in the resolutions of the Third Congress. These obstacles which were not overcome, found expression in the differences which we had on the Executive, with regard to the requirements of the transition period with the confiscated capital, and the taxation program. And they found expression in the question of the workers' and peasants' government.

At Fourth Congress.

What, comrades, was the position of the workers' and peasants' government question at the Fourth Congress? Comrade Zinoviev has explained here how much he felt that the watchword of a workers' government as a coalition with other workers' parties, might be opportunistic. But he gave way; (I do not know if it was because of my incitement) but so it came about that, in the meeting of the Commission at the Fourth Congress, Gretchen, under the flattery of Faust, sinned for a moment. Comrades, however flattering the role of Mephistophiles or even of Faust may be to me I must uproot this legend. Here is the first draft of Comrade Zinoviev's resolution. This draft contains, unfortunately, not only the first transgression of Comrade Zinoviev, which he has already read out, but a second. In this draft comrade Zinoviev wrote:

"When we are defending the united front, Communists must not hesitate under certain circumstances, to form a government in conjunction with non-Communist parties." The second passage is much better. It says: "Communists do not hesitate to make agreements with other parties, even if the leaders of these parties are social democrats or even Christian socialists. (Brandler: Very sensible).

"Up to this day I think it is sensible. This mention of Christian socialism came from a preference for certain leaders of the German center, who had said that it was possible that even the Christian socialists might take part in a workers' government.

"In this resolution comrade Zinoviev's two transgressions, as I have calculated, multiplied into seven transgressions. All were, as usual, the results of the first sin. The form of the resolution makes it clear to us also that the Leipzig and Prague resolution is nothing more than a repetition of this resolution, and that the object of now the ending of this resolution.

United Front.

"In the resolution it is stated, among other things: 'The Communists, in opposition to an open or disguised bourgeois-democratic coalition, present a united front of all workers, and the coalition of all workers' parties on the economic and political field, to fight against the bourgeois power and to lead to its final overthrow.

"... Even a workers' government, which arises from a parliamentary situation, is thus of purely parliamentary origin, and can create the opportunity for the establishment of revolutionary workers' movements.

"... Communists, under certain circumstances, declare their readiness to form a workers' government in cooperation with non-Communist workers' parties and workers' organizations."

This resolution unites a warning

against the dangers of the united front with the clear perception that we may perhaps be forced, by a number of transition stages, to a struggle for the dictatorship.

Bukharin, in his report to the Russian Party Congress last year, represented the failure of the left wing comrades to perceive that one must proceed to the dictatorship by sages, as a left digression. (Freimuth: On the contrary.)

We shall see. Freimuth says that he will proceed thru dictatorship to the Saxon workers' government.

(Freimuth: You say that.) It is said: It is not a matter of abstract formulae. The workers do not make these divisions. Of what do the masses of the workers, not only the Communists, think, when they speak of a workers' government? In England they think of the Labor Party. In Germany, in the countries where capitalism is in collapse, the workers say: the united front means that Communists and social democrats do not fight against each other during strikes, but co-operate. The idea of the workers' government has the same meaning for the working masses. They think of a government of all workers' parties.

Enter Coalitions.

At the IVth Congress of the Communist International we declared that in the interests of the revolution it might be necessary: 1. To propose to the mass of the workers to enter into a coalition even with the Social-Democrats. 2. To be ready in certain circumstances actually to carry out in practice and not merely to agitate for it. And how was that understood? It is not only comrade Smeral who does not find himself in a very cheerful position at the moment, who had reason to excuse himself on the ground that he was seduced. Quite a number of the comrades have been seduced by the influence of our comrade Zinoviev. I have in my hand an article published by comrade Kleine on the first of February 1923. In this article, which is a polemic against the "Left," written before the party congress and before Brandler's thesis had been published, he says:

"The readiness which recently we have so often shown to take the final decisive step by joining the common fight for the interests of the proletariat in company with the reformist parties, is not a trick, it is not a tactical maneuver, but a sheer fact. And in the same way the possibility which we have faced of a workers' government is not a trick or an artifice.

"Simply because the workers' government is not as yet a proletarian dictatorship but only the government of a labor party which has to rely on the extra-parliamentary fighting organization of the United Front, deviations in its policy are inevitable."

Saxon Experience.

That is what comrade Kleine said before the Party congress. Since that time we have been thru our experiences in Saxony and our chairman, comrade Treint, has written an article on the results of the elections in France. This article ends with the words: "The Workers' Government is a step towards the dictatorship." He has also written an article for the special congress number of the "Communist International" in which he again says that it is not a dictatorship but merely a stage forward. Yesterday he got up here and said he was "in perfect agreement with Zinoviev, that his form of workers' government is admirable, that, in short, the Workers' Government is the dictatorship of the proletariat in evolution."

(Exclamation from the German delegation: "A good road to improvement.")

But it is not a question of who is in the wrong and who is in the right. Comrade Zinoviev is quite right when he says that at the IVth Congress we took a step which was opportunistic whether we knew it or not; we can still learn something from that.

Bulgarian Situation.

I will pass to the second part of the

report—to our experiences.

After the incidents in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Communist Party proposed to the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party, which had at one time supported Zankow, to form a bloc. That is the first point. Next we decided here that the German Party was to take part in the Saxon government. After the defeat in Saxony our French comrades, with our consent, offered to form an election alliance with the Social Democratic Party in France, where this is only possible by putting forward common tickets. Comrades, let us first examine the two steps which were taken without any catastrophe resulting, where a bloc was not formed, because the opposition did not wish it. People talked in this sort of way: "Comrades, the labor government is the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is a synonym; it is a pseudonym." I always understood that one used a pseudonym when one wanted to conceal something. But if I say, my name is Hasse, but I am Radek, then surely, comrades, this has no sense.

Now for the third point to be explained: how are the social democrats to be unmasked? We know that the social democrats can and will never fight. But we propose to them that they should fight with us in order that we may then unmask them. Comrade Trient knew perfectly well that the social democrats would never join with us in forming a bloc, and so we were able to permit ourselves the luxury of offering them this union. They have refused it, therefore, they now stand unmasked. But we rather spoil the effect of this unmasking when we announce beforehand: "Our object is not a common struggle, what we are out for is to unmask you." The whole point in our being genuinely and honestly ready to go a bit of the way with every working-class party which is ready for a fight.

Unity of the Workers.

(Exclamation: "But the social democrats will never fight.")

We should be trampling the interests of the working class under foot if we did not honestly and without reservation aim at the unity of the proletariat at every stage of its battle.

Comrades, if the Executive allowed the Bulgarians and the French to do this, it cannot turn around now and say: "This was a proposal made with good intentions; but he knew all along that it would not be accepted."

In September we decided that the German comrades should enter the Saxon government. They did enter it and the whole Executive was convinced that they had managed the affair very badly. We had suffered a crushing defeat. And what did Comrade Zinoviev write about our entry into the Saxon government after his defeat? In his pamphlet on "The Problem of the German Revolution" he says in the introduction, which was written after the defeat:

Useful Experience.

"The comrades who look only at the situation in Germany from the point of view of Saxony are making the mistake of provincials, they have not got their perspective right. The Saxon experiences were not accidental, and they were not useless to the party. (Hear! Hear!) The most important task in Germany is to capture the workers who support the Left wing of the social democracy—the present Left wing of the social democracy is playing the same part as the independent socialists played in 1920. The masses of the workers are clinging to the left social-democrats as they might cling to a life buoy, still hoping to get salvation without the bloodshed of a civil war. All these sections of the working class would have held us Communists responsible if we had refused to try in company with the left social democrats to bring the country out of its crisis by peaceful means."

Even after the Saxon experiences comrade Zinoviev did not hold our entry into the government to have been a mistake, but even tho it brought defeat to our party he regards it as a great victory.

Comrades, I come now to the examination of the Saxon experiences. What did they consist of? Comrade Zinoviev does not criticise the Communist Party for not deciding to enter upon the struggle for power in October. He says in his thesis that it was right to avoid this, because we had no arms. He says, too: "Since uprisings and civil war are not undertaken in order to provide opportunities for an heroic death, but in order to win victory, it was wise to attempt them." How does he criticise the attitude of the party? He says that when we went into the Saxon government and it became evident that we could not grasp power, we should at least have demanded the arming of the proletarians and the socialization of industry, and that if the social democrats would not join with us in fighting for this, we should have broken with them and left them. He criticised Fritz Heckert for making a speech in which he said that he stood by the constitution. Comrade Heckert should not have said that. It was nonsense to say that because his adversaries did not believe him. All over the country the party had spread manifestos—"Workers Arm Yourselves," A Tragi-Comedy.

Comrades, the Saxon affair is no comedy. It is a tragic-comedy and not a parliamentary tragic-comedy but the tragic-comedy of a Communist Party which has not learned to prepare for battle.

What is the lesson of the experiences in Saxony? The lesson which we must learn if we are to avoid further defeats? The lesson is, first, that one cannot take a jump unless one has a jumping-off ground. One cannot, all at once, simply because the party has decided that one is to undertake the fight for power, enter upon actions which require a considerable time for their development, and which involve the masses of the people.

The second lesson is still more important. I am in absolute agreement with comrade Zinoviev that one cannot have a united front from above unless one has it from below. And it was the United Front from below which we had not organized; our factory councils were divided into bits, they were nothing but separate atoms. The Central Committee governing the factory councils was no better than a shadow and we had not bound them to our party.

If the Saxon government had supported itself upon the congress of factory councils. . . .

(Severing: "Why was it not called together?")

That is just the mistake which I admit.

(Severing: "We asked for it six times!")

That points the moral: without a mass organization, a workers' government is doomed to death. It must end either with a fight or with a defeat.

Refused to Consider Question.

What light have these experiences to throw upon the questions whether in certain circumstances we should enter into a coalition government with the S. D. in order to further our revolutionary ends? Comrade Zinoviev has not told us clearly here, whether he excludes the possibility of our entering a coalition government with the S. D. in the future if we are stronger than we were in Saxony. The German Left refused to consider this question. What is the view of the Executive?

I do not think that comrade Zinoviev will refuse to consider this problem, for to do so would mean that we relinquish all hopes of fruitful mass agitation among the social democratic workers and can show them no way of escape.

To say that the question is one of reform or revolution is nothing but a rhetorical phrase which nobody who has any grasp of the situation could take seriously. What we are concerned with is what Zinoviev summed up in the phrase: Finding out a way for the future.

Varga in his thesis says that since 1920 we have been in a new state of

our progress. But he was careful in his report not to draw the conclusions which logically follow from this.

Now I want to say a few words about the organization of the Revolution. The organization of the revolution may mean that correct Communist tactics are adopted from the first moment when even a group of Communists are occupied in rallying the workers for the revolution, in organizing them for the fight, and in organizing preparations for the fight until they become so wise that they grow into the party of the revolution. Or it may mean that we have reached a situation when we can calculate that within a given time, that is to say, at a moment not far off, in the next months, or in the next weeks, we shall enter upon the decisive battle. To say this means that one must force the pace of the struggle to an extraordinary degree, it demands the most extensive concentration upon military preparations—for if anybody says that one can just get hold of arms, he is very much undervaluing the experiences of revolutions, and also the experiences of the Russian revolution.

(Turning to the German comrades.) Comrades, you are simply talking in the air when you say we are ready to lead the masses in their struggle every day! In that case, why don't you lead the masses every day into the struggle for power? Why do you wait, if you can lead the mass of the workers in their struggle every day? (Freimuth: We do lead the masses in their struggle every day, in whatever struggle is the order of the day.)

Comrade Freimuth says we lead the struggle for power every day, just as it comes along. That means every one of our struggles for power. Quite true! But what is being said generally is that the German Communist Party is ready at any moment to lead the proletariat in the struggle for complete power. (Severing: Quite true!)

I say, if you are ready for it every day, and do not do it, you are traitors to the German proletariat. Comrades, behind this dispute is a serious matter. Comrade Zinoviev has said in his report that in the important centers in France and Germany we are advancing toward winning the majority of the proletariat. That is the kernel of the question. If Comrade Zinoviev asserts that he is mistaken. And this error, together with the idea of our left comrades, who declare that they are ready every day to take up the struggle for complete power. . . . (Interjection: Ready, ready!) One is not ready to do that which one cannot do.

Comrades, in that does the error in judging the situation lie? Comrades have said, "We have suffered a tremendous defeat in Germany," and, having said that, they are still of the opinion that nothing has changed that tomorrow we shall again be ready. That is the greatest illusion that can be entertained.

If the French comrades were so strong, why was there only one demonstration in Paris when the Ruhr workers were shot by the French troops? Comrade Trient writes very pertinently in an article in the Communist International: "The great majority of the French proletariat is still filled with pacifist and democratic illusions." And in Germany? I believe, comrades, that the Congress will have the opportunity of considering in commission one fact after another, not only the present transient situation in the German Party, but that which is developing.

A fraction numbering 62 people represent four millions of workers who have been thru all the tribulations of illegality. They enter the Reichstag for the first time, and what do we see? We hear a few parliamentary speeches I will not describe here.

When the experts' report, which is to enslave the German proletariat, comes before the Reichstag, it is the duty of the Communist Party, entering parliament as agitators, not to spout general speeches, but to give an answer which will be echoed in

millions of hearts of the Germans And you have not done that.

I pass to a wider question, our work in the trade unions. The central question here is: shall we capture the trade unions, shall we draw the masses together, or not? That will be decided by whether we are a radical party protesting in parliament, or whether we are a mass party preparing the revolution. I beg Comrade Losovsky, who perhaps knows the subject better, and is officially obliged to know about German trade union affairs, to come up here and say what he thinks about the direction our work is taking in the trade unions.

There is, in the German party, a terrible passivity. This is very strongly emphasized in an article by a Berlin comrade in the Funke (The Spark). It is the one serious phenomenon which must be examined.

Comrades, you will say that the capitalists throw our comrades out of work, they become unemployed, and cannot pay their contributions; they leave the trade unions. You will say that Amsterdam is kicking us out. That is true. The question only is: if we shall avoid everything which would make that easier for them or shall we do everything to make it impossible for them.

Comrades, the resolution of your party conference on the trade union question clears the way for leaving the trade unions.

And now, comrades, the factory councils. Comrade Zinoviev has referred to a report by Comrade Varga. I do not know what is the date of this report, and if it reviews the recent period. The result of the elections in recent weeks shows that in a number of towns we have suffered great losses. The Congress had to examine the direction of development of the party. The direction of its development which you accept on the basis of your theoretical attitude, on the basis of your judgment with regard to the ripeness of the situation with regard to the relations of force, is such that you might cut the party away from its basis. There is a danger of the determination of the party's circle of influence in the near future. And that is the greatest danger that can threaten us. The Communist International has carried thru great struggles at almost all its Congresses. The novel point now is, unfortunately, that disagreements have crept into the ranks of the comrades who have hitherto been common representatives of the Russian Party. At the end of his speech, Comrade Zinoviev raised the question of official or correct Communist discipline. If we, in the Communist International, rely only on official discipline, we would be an official framework, but not a living international. This minority, whatever it is, whatever direction it adheres to, must not only submit to the resolution of the Communist International, but has also the duty, between Congresses, of carrying out the international revolutions in organizing and agitation.

The Russian comrades, who very often, like all of us, may make mistakes, are practical exponents of the working class movement. And if Comrade Zinoviev declares a thousand times that he will never more make a coalition with the social-democrats, he will come to the day when it will be necessary; he will only declare that the situation has changed, and that it is only a maneuver, while the other, the wicked one, has opportunistic designs. The result of the discussion of differences should still allow every one, who may disagree with this or that decision, to remain in the party, subject to its discipline. We must not hesitate at criticism, otherwise we would be an organization of cliques which carries on its business behind the recess. But after we have fought here, we have the duty and the opportunity to work positively, wherever the executive of our party places us, and to leave it to time and their experience to show whether we have erred in one respect and they in another. (Applause in a part of the Congress.)