

A German Communist Meeting

By William Z. Foster

The day that Hugo Stinnes died, I was in Berlin. The capitalist papers were overflowing with glowing eulogies of this master industrialist, who probably did more than any other one man in the past several years to reduce the German people to their present pitiable poverty. But the revolutionary journals shed no crocodile tears over the passing away of this super-parasite. They showed his true role as a gigantic bloodsucker. It seemed a very fitting occasion to visit a big Communist mass meeting called for that evening, so I went.

The German Communist Party is at present an underground illegal organization. By outlawing it, the authorities hope especially to cripple its influence in the coming elections to the Reichstag. The big party headquarters on Rosenthalerstrasse are vacant save for a few comrades here and there. But public mass meetings are still held under the name of the Party, and the one scheduled was such. These meetings, however, are often the scene of bloody clashes with the Fascisti, who seek to break them up. At the meeting in question, a visit from the Fascisti was particularly expected, owing to the peculiar nature of the program and the fitness of the occasion. As it turned out, however, no disturbance of consequence developed, altho a few shots were fired outside of the hall.

The program was one of the best pieces of propaganda work it has ever been my good fortune to see. It consisted of a series of stereopticon views of the German revolutionary movement, accompanied by a lecture. It was a history of the counter-revolutionary activities of the Social-Democratic Party, and was entitled "S. D. P. Words vs. S. D. P. Actions."

The whole traitorous record was there in broad outline. This history began with the Second International Congress just before the war, where the Socialist Democrats declared they would use "every means" to prevent war. Then came the great "betrayal" in 1914, with the Socialists mustering their forces to help the Kaiser overthrow Russian, English, French, and American imperialism. The pictures graphically portrayed the organized and systematic treason of the Social Democrats during the war, the jailing of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, the outbreak of the Russian revolution, the signing of the Brest-Litvosk treaty, and eventually, the overthrow of the Kaiser.

Here began a new record of betrayal by the Socialist Democrats, the assassination of the German revolution. All the main developments were covered by the pictures; the agreement with the capitalists that the present social system should continue, the murdering of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the shooting down of German workers by Moske's assassins, the overthrow of the Munchin soviet; the abolition of the proletarian troops and the substitution of white guard organizations, the defeat of the "March Action" in 1921, the treasonable agreement to fulfill the reparations demands of the Allies, the betrayal of the workers in the Ruhr, the suppression of the revolutionary movement in 1923, the abolition of the eight-hour day, and a hundred other events, all pictured in such a simple and effective way as to bring home most powerfully to the workers assembled the tragic lessons of the past ten years. It was a most terrific indictment of the Social Democracy, as well as a glowing defense of the

Communist Party.

But if the program was highly interesting, the audience itself was hardly less so. The great hall was literally jammed, at least 3,000 people, men, women and children being packed into the building, whose gloominess, frigidness, and generally rundown condition reflected the status of present day Germany.

The crowd was stern and cold and calm—marvellously so. Never at any time did the assembled workers show any emotion. There was no applause whatever. Many of the pictures were blood-stirring, and the crowd was intensely interested in and sympathetic with them, but it sat quiet as they were shown. Occasionally a worker would cry out his indignation at some scene or individual being shown, or perhaps, a titter would run thru the house at the humorous portrayal of some incident, such as the flight of the Social Democratic government during the Kapp-Putsch, while the workers fought the battle. But that was as far as the emotional demonstrations went. The whole thing was most deadly serious.

The meeting reminded me of nothing so much as a meeting of strikers in the last weeks of a long and bitter struggle. Time and again I have seen that same spirit at meetings of hard fighting miners, steel workers, railroad men. Not a smile, not a bit of enthusiasm, nothing but grim determination to go on with the struggle. That was the dogged spirit of the Russian workers in the early hard years of their revolution, it is the spirit of the revolutionary German workers now. In this remarkable meeting this unconquerable, do or die spirit dominated and pervaded everything. It portrayed to me even

more forcefully than the pictures themselves, the bitterness of the great struggle that the German working class is now passing thru.

AS WE SEE IT

By T. J. O'FLAHERTY

Fred R. Marvin, editor of the Searchlight department of the New York Commercial, is whining because the papers are not taking himself and his red exposures as seriously as he thinks the product of his fertile imagination deserves. His department carries from day to day "up-to-date and reliable information on the activities of destructive movements seeking directly or indirectly to overthrow the government of the United States." He is sarcastically referred to as a "100 per cent American" by even some of the capitalist papers that do not know better, he complains.

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Of course he continues it is not surprising that such papers as the Communist DAILY WORKER of Chicago should ridicule him but the "pinks" too have entered the fray. He is thinking of getting out an injunction restraining the press from criticizing his actions, particularly his efforts to shake down the bankers for cash. He swears that all his published stuff is authoritative. All those who have ribs prepare to break them now laughing at this idiot. Who do you think this gentleman considers reliable authority? Well, no less a person than the well-known crook and liar, Harry M. Daugherty, and his predecessor in office under Wilson, the unspeakable A. Mitchell Palmer. Marvin says he does not mind the hostility of the Com-