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New Belgian Government Shaky

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BRUSSELS, April 1 – After six weeks of governmental crisis, Belgium now has a new government. For how long ? That's the first question we must ask, knowing that the Coalition of the workers' parties and the Liberal party, on which the new Van Acker cabinet is based, has a majority of only two seats in the Senate and can therefore be accidentally overthrown at a moment's notice.

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Why Not Government of "National Union ?"

As early as the formation, and speedy fall, of the Spaak government, it had become clear that the four parties were preparing the formation of a new "National Union." The Socialist Party leadership had accepted the new formula. The Liberals rushed to approve it. The Stalinists themselves had stated that the most important thing was "that the Communist Party should not be excluded from the government," thus indicating that they were ready to ally themselves with the "deepest reaction," with the Christian Socialist Party. And finally, the latter also appeared to accept.

However, the conditions it laid down caused the failure of Van Acker's attempts to form a government of the four parties. The Catholics were ready to accept the presence of the Stalinists in the cabinet, on condition that it be headed not by Van Acker, but by Soudan, former reformist minister who had been deported to Buchenwald during the German occupation.

This was not a petty demand, the product of a "partisan" resentment, as the governmental parties tried to portray it. Soudan was the only "socialist" leader, who did not approve the party's policy on the monarchist question, and was in favor of the return of Leopold III. The attitude of the Catholics thus signified in reality : We are ready to form a government with the other parties, on condition that we can completely maintain our position on the monarchist question, on condition that we can use all methods to promote the return of the King

How disgraceful for the workers' parties to have to acknowledge that the most reactionary bourgeois party was remaining "loyal" to its election platform while the BSP and the CP, both of whom had conducted their election campaign under the slogans : "Keep the Catholics from power," "Nationalizations," "Increase wages," were ready to abandon everything for some miserable ministerial portfolios ! The results of this capitulatory attitude did not take long in making themselves felt. If the working class does not reverse the trend by launching into ACTION, it is completely possible that in the next elections the Catholics will win an absolute majority in Parliament.

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Van Acker Government, Gov't of Transition

Why has the bourgeoisie accepted a new government headed by "socialists" when the bourgeois parties hold a majority in Parliament ? Spaak, the cynical renegade, clearly explained this on the occasion of the meeting of the

General Council of the Socialist Party : "At the present time, no government is possible other than a government headed by socialists, for the workers will agree to work only for such a government."

This means : given the REAL relation of forces which exists in the country, given the possible resistance of the proletariat, only a government headed by "socialists" will be able to impose new privations on the workers, in order to permit the capitalist "reconstruction" of the country !

THE "SOCIALIST" LEADERS THUS EXPOSE THEMSELVES ONCE AGAIN AS THE MOST SERVILE AND IN THE GIVEN CONDITIONS, AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE LACKEYS OF THE BOURGEOISIE. The Stalinists have no other role than that of lackey candidates, offering their good services to the bourgeoisie but as yet being accepted only circumspectly.

For the same reason, we must not as yet expect a theatrical move on the monarchist issue. Comfortably installed in his "Retreat" in Switzerland, Leopold III multiplies his secret letters and his overtures to the bourgeois "Liberal" leaders. His secretariat at Brussels is the center of a truly vast conspiracy extending its tentacles across the whole country and awaiting the propitious moment for showing its hand. By again demoralizing the workers with a policy of unceasing capitulation to the requirements of the bourgeoisie, the reformist and Stalinist leaders bring this moment closer and closer.

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Reaction of the Socialist Militants

But the most striking fact of the whole governmental crisis has been the furious resistance at the bottom of the Belgian Socialist Party against the decision of the leaders to orient towards a coalition with the Catholics. Almost all of the federations of the party voted resolutions opposing collaboration with the Christian Social Party in any form. And at the meeting of the General Council, the old leader de Brouckere pathetically intervened : "Fascism is being reborn. It is being reborn in the circles which are preparing the return of the King and to attain it are ready to bypass the will of the people."

The most interesting speech was that of the representative of the Liege Federation, the most proletarian of the party. He implored the party to become an opposition if it was incapable of realizing its election platform. He warned the leaders of the party that the workers were expecting action, bold action ; in economic and social matters.

Nothing is truer. While the working class is in general disinterested in the vicissitudes of the governmental crisis, it closely follows all signs of the policy which the government means to conduct in the question of prices and wages. The old reformist leader, Cailly, of Charleroi, also warned the party that the passivity of the proletariat could very well be the prelude to the storm, If the spread between the rise in the cost of living and the stabilization of wages was not rapidly corrected. But Van Acker is for conducting an economic policy "which pleases everybody," that is to say, the bourgeoisie ! The result will soon make itself felt.

To the socialist and communist militants, disgusted with their leaders' abandonment of their election program, to the masses demoralized by the capitulatory policy of the "left" government, the Trotskyists are more than ever advancing their slogan : "BREAK THE COALITION WITH THE BOURGEOISIE". They show how much this coalition paralyzes the forces of the workers' parties and they point out that only breaking the coalition will permit a mobilization of the workers' forces in struggle for the demands of the workers.

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