

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Official Organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International



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28th February, 1927

Vol iv. No. 3.

3d.

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

English Edition Published at 16 King Street, London, WC2

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The Common Enemy

THE Chinese revolution is occupying the centre of the historical stage at the present time, and around it forces are gathering for a mighty conflict between the international imperialist bourgeoisie and the international proletariat. The world bourgeoisie has mobilised all the social forces possible against the development of the revolution in China. The proletariat has only just managed to outline the fundamental path along which its activities should develop in support of the Chinese revolution, and in its defence against the military forces of imperialism from without, and against the compromising and wavering elements within. Only the most progressive section of the proletariat, represented by the Communist Party, has as yet come forward as the organised force which clearly understands all the difficulties and dangers confronting the Chinese revolution. It is prepared, in spite of all obstacles, to lead the Chinese revolution as part of the world revolution, to final victory.

The complex and extremely important task of rallying the masses of the working class and of the oppressed nations for the struggle has still to be accomplished. This task should occupy the centre of attention of all the Sections of the Comintern, the Profintern, and all the trade unions. In order to mobilise all the reserves of the international revolutionary movement it is necessary to carry out, with the speed commensurate with the exceptional importance of the matter, the united front under the slogan of "Hands off China," while at the same time the Communist Parties must act independently and employ all forms of mass revolutionary struggle.

The mobilisation of the reactionary forces against the Chinese people was carried out under the slogan of combatting the "mob," "Moscow influence," etc., *i.e.*, against the leading role played by the working class in the national revolutionary struggle. In so far as this aim of causing a split in the national revolutionary front, and of reducing the Right bourgeois wing to compromise with imperialism, is the common aim of all bourgeois governments and their compromising lackeys, we may say that the world bourgeoisie has established a united front in its attack upon revolutionary China. This front extends from the Pope of Rome, Pius XI., to the

pope of reformism, Ramsay MacDonald. It is equipped not only with battleships, cruisers and aeroplane carriers, but with all other kinds of weapons from diplomatic cunning and falsehood to Liberal hypocrisy and Social Democratic treachery.

Needless to say, the internal conflict of appetites, conflicts of interest, rivalry and competition, roused first of all by the insatiable greed of the bourgeoisie of each country, continues incessantly within the imperialist camp. To these antagonisms must be added the differences as to the methods of struggle which each predatory imperialist considers most convenient to employ, in the given circumstances and time, from the point of view of the geographical situation and its strategical and economic positions both in China and out of it. It would be a fatal mistake if the Chinese revolutionaries failed at each stage of development of the revolution to watch closely the growing acuteness of these antagonisms, the play of conflicting imperialist passions, and to strive in their manoeuvring to utilise these differences in the enemy camp in its own interests. A breach in the imperialist front in China, where the interests of the imperialists are closely interwoven into a tight knot, has become possible because these interests conflict; but this knot, because it is tied so tightly, can only be cut by the sword of the revolution. At all stages of the struggle the Chinese revolution must proceed along the following lines: (1) utilise the antagonisms among the predatory imperialists; (2) utilise the hypocritical declarations of the compromising leaders, who, owing to the pressure of the masses, are compelled to make promises to the national revolutionary movement.

At the same time, it would be a no less fatal mistake to assume that the antagonisms among the imperialists operate automatically by a spring that is wound up once and for all, and that these antagonisms will not be temporarily put into the background at a decisive moment by the common hatred of the imperialists towards their dangerous class enemy.

There are grounds for fearing that we are approaching a decisive moment such as this in China. It is imperative that all the forces of the revolution should be speedily prepared to meet this danger.

The Common Enemy—continued

IN all probability the British bourgeoisie will continue for some time to play the part of the pioneers in the attack against the Chinese revolution. The general collapse of British capitalism, as well as the exceptional power of the blows which are being rained upon it by the victory of the revolution in Southern China, are the cause of the blind, frenzied aggression of the Baldwin Government.

The powerful lever of covert intervention has already been torn out of the hands of British imperialism. Wu Pei-fu has been routed, Sun Chuan-fang is also on the eve of defeat. Not because they like it, did the British imperialists create a state of war not only in Shanghai but also in the capital of the British Empire. "Not only are the troops on the move," writes the "Daily Herald," in its issue on January 25, "but the war-drums are beating: war talk is beginning." Commenting on the newspaper report that the "scenes of Portsmouth barracks evoked memories of 1914," the "Daily Herald" exclaims "That is a true word."

What is the theatre of this forthcoming war like?

"Formerly it may have been thought that the whole business will amount to defending a few streets. Now it appears that it is a matter of a front 21 miles long," writes one bourgeois newspaper, in pointing out that it will be necessary to defend Shanghai. "But what is Shanghai?" asks another newspaper, and replies, "It is a head, the loss of which will be irreparable, but for all that a head without a body is dead." "1914," consequently, does not apply only to Shanghai, but at least to the whole of the Eastern Section of the Yangtse. J. H. Thomas was quite right when, in his speech at Newton Abbot, he declared: "I do not hesitate to say . . . I prefer a large army to be sent rather than a handful of soldiers." The British bourgeoisie has become so frenzied already that it will not hesitate to send a large army to China, and consequently is prepared to begin a serious war unless the British working class and the Chinese people put it in a strait jacket in time.

It would be entirely wrong to believe, however, that open violence is the only method British imperialism intends to employ in China. While troops are being despatched the British Government is playing a complicated provocative game, with a view to splitting off certain of the leading groups of the revolutionary movement, and is converting them into a support for their rule in China. MacDonald with his feigned indignation against military intervention as a matter of fact is aiding and abetting it, is being used as a bait by the Baldwin Government in order to decoy a certain section of the Kuomintang into its trap. Moreover, it is not Ramsay MacDonald alone that has been given the honourable part of a worm on the hook of intervention.

The "Manchester Guardian" and even the "Observer," are zealously angling for the national elements of the revolution, which are not infected with Bolshevism. "The irony is," writes the "Observer," of January 23, "that British policy in its substance entirely agrees with Mr. Chen. The real difficulty is that while Mr. Chen agrees with Sir Austen Chamberlain, they are both hampered by misinformed pressure from their supporters. Mr. Chen has to save his face

before the 'bag and baggage' propagandists on whose political support he is dependent. Sir Austen has to contend with Die-hard ignorance whose natural bend is towards the use of force." Is it necessary to add that all these intermediaries, bourgeois and reformists, guarantee Mr. Chen the complete liberation of Sir Austen from the influence of bad counsellors immediately he, Mr. Chen, breaks his compromising connection with the "propagandists"?

This game of double dealing has gone so far that in the height of the preparations that are being made for war, Ramsay MacDonald is trying to throw a golden bridge for the retreat of the Government in the event of General Duncan having to repeat in Shanghai in 1927 the same ignominious manoeuvre that he was compelled to make in Odessa in 1919. "I observe," declares MacDonald in the "Daily Herald," on January 25, about the military preparations, "an air quite different from that of the Foreign Office communications, that I suspect that once again we are faced with the problem of whether, in circumstances such as those in which we now are, the military is to be the servant of the State, or the State the plaything of the military." Hence, it is quite possible that even after the sanguinary conflict has broken out MacDonald will desire to act the part of honest broker between the Right Wing of the national movement, if the latter proves to be sufficiently terrorised to agree to make a treacherous deal with the British Government (which, of course, will have no hand in the game of the military authorities and will remain as pure white as the Alpine snows).

THE tactics of American imperialism contain the elements of the same game, but in different proportions. Powerful American capital does not stand in need of artificially created privileges in order to maintain its domination in China—on condition, of course, that bourgeois "law and order" is firmly established. This explains the "liberal" tinge of American policy in China. Washington adopted a waiting policy with regard to the successes of the revolutionary movement, in the conviction that it will develop along capitalist lines. Wise Mr. Kellogg, in his official statement, described this policy, which is directed towards subjecting an economically weak country to the powerful pressure of American capital, as the United States having "no imperialist interest in China." If that is the case, then it has to be explained why the Washington Government was the first to beat the alarm concerning the colonial conference that was to be held in Brussels, and called upon the Belgian Government to prohibit it.

The European press is dazzled with the brilliance of American successes, and is urging their bourgeoisie to adopt the same "liberal" policy in China. The German press particularly is broadcasting these wise counsels, and is positively gloating at the sight of its neighbour's house burning. Even the French press is sufficiently imbued with hatred towards England to give her advice in the most friendly manner as to how to rest on a dislocated foot. Sauerwein, the journalist, commenting on the speech of comrade Tang Ping-tshan, writes in the "Matin"; "The Bolsheviks fear most of all politics of the American type, which strengthen the position of the Right Wing of the Kuomintang. The League of Nations must abandon excessive caution, and

The Common Enemy—continued

seek the means for avoiding a conflict which will be to the advantage only of the U.S.S.R." This wise counsellor, who recalls to mind the hero of the Russian story who danced at a funeral, fails to observe that the development of the Chinese revolution has reached a stage which is causing American imperialism to revise its "liberal" tactics and to call up infantry for a landing in Shanghai.

The military successes of the national army have not yet compelled American imperialism to abandon its position of a "Liberal onlooker." Even the first stages of Britain's struggle to retain its concession in Hankow left the White House relatively calm. The victory of the revolutionary troops, the determined action of the National Government against extra-territoriality, did not in themselves imply that those social forces which will upset the calculation of American capitalism for the peaceful conquest of China have ripened, taken definite form and become strengthened. Only when the activity and the persistence of the working class and its influence upon the progress of events were revealed was Washington roused.

Of course, the United States has "no imperialist aims in China." The official declaration of Mr. Coolidge advances the pious formula of the protection of the life and interests of American citizens, but as experience in Nicaragua teaches, behind this sentence there trails a long train of gun-boats. Washington liberalism is dead.

AT the time when the White House still occupied the position of the impartial observer the British press could hardly conceal its irritation. The Washington correspondent of the "Times" writes: "If it were not for the amazing willingness to believe that the Chinese mob would distinguish between one red-headed barbarian and another, always to the advantage of the American, there would be less complexity in the present problem as the Administration sees it." It is not the fear of the excesses of the mob, but on the contrary the undoubted proof that the state of organisation and the activity of the workers will prevent the bourgeois elements putting a stopper on the revolution, that compels American imperialism to resort to threats of intervention.

What is the point of the proposals which the United States Government has made about China? The key to the vague and contradictory statements of Messrs. Kellogg and Coolidge is provided by the "North China Star," which puts forward the following remarkable suggestion: "Chang Tso-lin, Chang Kai-shek and Feng Yu-hsiang being the strongest men in China at the present time should each appoint a delegate, who, in conjunction with the Chinese Minister in Washington, Alfred Shih, should negotiate a new treaty between Shanghai and the United States." American imperialism not only strives for peace and harmony between the revolutionary government and the Mukden reactionaries, but also to revive the moribund Peking Government of Wu Pei-Fu. At whose expense do the peacemakers of the White House propose to abolish the civil war on all fronts in China? Is any proof required that it is to be at the expense of the workers and peasants, who are interested in uprooting the economic foundations of imperialist domination in China?

Only a few months ago when America had every ground for believing that if the Chinese revolution was left to itself it would inevitably come to a halt in the capitalist *cul de sac*, American policy may have been practical; and that is why the tactics of Washington differed from the tactics of London by appearing to be more "liberal." Now, however, this view is proving to be more and more Utopian, and the Washington Government is not disinclined to borrow weapons from the London arsenal. The British slogan: to break the worker and peasant backbone of the Chinese revolution by the threat of intervention, or by direct intervention, is gradually being adopted by American imperialism.

OF all the imperialist powers, Japan alone has managed to maintain in China a powerful and as yet unshaken military base. Whatever the differences between Chang Tso-lin and Japan may have been over the speculation in currency and the super-predatory economic policy of Japanese capitalists in Manchuria, the Mukden militarists have nevertheless remained vassals to Tokio. On the other hand, the disintegration and internal quarrels within the Mukden camp must not be exaggerated. Chang Tso-lin's army still represents a powerful factor of covert Japanese intervention in China. This explains why Japan so magnanimously abstains from open intervention. Moreover, owing to her geographical situation, Japan does not need to make long preparations beforehand for intervention.

All this gives the Japanese, who are past masters in the art of intrigue, more chance to cause a split in the national revolutionary movement. There is perhaps no other Government in the world which betrays so much zeal and ability in utilising not only social antagonisms but also personal differences within the national revolutionary movement as Japan.

In this connection the "peace" programme which Chang Tso-lin submitted to the national revolutionary government, published in the Chinese press, is characteristic. One of the four points of the programme consists of a proposal that the Canton Government shall not hinder Chang Tso-lin, with the aid of his own forces, from coming to an agreement with the army of Feng Yu-hsiang! Chang Tso-lin's sudden outburst of "nationalism," his recent protest against the landing of foreign troops at Shanghai, and his demand for the annulment of the unequal treaties should be placed in the same category. The ambitious aims of the Mukden despot will be satisfied with nothing less than the title of President of the Chinese Republic. But this would imply that Japanese imperialism had at last managed to get the Peking Government into its own hands; Peking then would not be the impotent body it is now, but would be considerably strengthened. Foreseeing this danger, the British Minister in China is already demonstrating his restrained attitude towards the Peking Government, and refrains from any official communication with them in writing, but conducts all business he has with them verbally.

Of the disagreements which are to be observed at the present time in the camp of the imperialists, Anglo-Japanese disagreements are most acute. Nevertheless, a single aim may at a certain moment combine these two imperialisms. That aim is: at all costs to prevent the Chinese revolution from becoming a victorious struggle against imperialist oppression in all its forms.

The Common Enemy—continued

THE task of the international proletariat in this most serious moment for the Chinese revolution is, first of all, to prevent an open military attack, even at the cost of extreme sacrifices. But in developing the mass militant energy that is necessary for the fulfilment of this task, the international proletariat will at the same time raise the significance and weight of the Chinese proletariat to the level necessary for it to assume the leadership in the revolutionary alliance.

The VII. Enlarged Executive of the Communist International pointed to two dangers which threaten the Chinese revolution at the present time. First, the formation of a counter-revolutionary alliance, with the aid of the imperialists, to crush the national revolutionary movement, and, secondly, the attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the nationalist movement to secure into its hands the leadership of the movement, in order to put a stop to the revolution. This warning has been confirmed by the progress of events. During the transition of the Chinese revolution to a new stage of development, these two dangers are becoming more and more imminent.

The resolution of the VII. Plenum on the Chinese question says: "Certain sections of the big bourgeoisie and even the militarists, who hitherto have stood outside the national revolutionary struggle and have even been hostile to it, are now coming over to the side of the Canton Government in order to strengthen the position of the agents of imperialism within the nationalist movement." The rapid progress of the national revolutionary armies will only serve to accelerate this process. New armies, the commanders of which have social ties with the bourgeoisie, have joined the revolutionary army.

On the other hand, the bourgeoisie, which was formerly on the Right Wing of the revolutionary movement, urged on by the activities of the masses, is becoming hostile to the Kuomintang without, however, officially leaving the national revolutionary organisations. We saw above what a complex system of pretence, hypocrisy and provocation the imperialists are employing in order to link up with these bourgeois elements, in order with their aid to break up the revolution from within. To this must be added the wavering, the individualism and the personal frictions which the representatives of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, who subjectively are revolutionary, but who have not been sufficiently hardened in the mass struggle, inevitably bring into the movement.

This complicated regrouping of forces on the theatre of the civil war is taking place in the sight of the powerful imperialist enemy, who are past masters in the arts of cunning, and will stick at nothing in their effort to utilise every symptom of weakness and every mistaken step taken by the masses of toilers in revolt. In these circumstances the young proletariat of China, which has only just grown up out of the severe battles, the most consciously organised and the only class capable of actually leading the movement, is obliged to conduct a most complicated war of manœuvres.

THE fulfilment of this task and the preservation of the mighty revolutionary front, in spite of the inevitable desertion of the big bourgeoisie, is facilitated by the fact that the movement is spontaneously sweeping in millions of the masses of the peasantry, who bring with them a burning hatred of the imperialists and their agents, and are imbued with the determination to march to the end with the proletariat at the present stage of the revolution. However, the rapidly growing peasant movement, while increasing the reserves of the proletariat, imposes at the same time upon the latter the very complicated task of organising the movement for the purpose of directing the peasant revolts and outbreaks on to a conscious class road.

The Chinese proletariat will only fulfil this task if it takes advantage of the experience of the international struggle as a whole. If the revolutionary movement of China were to become isolated from the international proletariat, and from the principal fortress of the proletarian revolution—the Soviet Union—this would disarm the revolution. This fact explains the fresh outbreak of the campaign of hatred against the U.S.S.R. initiated by the Baldwin Government as a result of the defeat of British imperialism in China. This explains the feverish efforts being made by the reformist leaders to erect a wall of mutual misunderstanding and estrangement between the toilers of China and the proletariat in capitalist countries. But the reply which Eugene Chen sent in the name of the Canton Government to the Joint National Council of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. shows that MacDonaldism is powerless, that the ties between the Chinese revolution and the proletariat of all countries will be strengthened in joint revolutionary struggle.

The slogan, "Hands off China," merely formulated a part of the duties that the Chinese revolution imposes upon the international proletariat. The other part is—joint revolutionary struggle against the common class enemy.



The Reformists' Report on the Strike

J. T. Murphy

THE recent inquest on the General Strike and the Miners' Lock-out has brought out a crop of documentary statements, an examination of which will enable the workers to draw very decisive conclusions. The General Council has issued its supplementary report. The miners have issued their version of the events. The Independent Labour Party has expressed its views in the "New Leader" and "Lansbury's Weekly" has published an article by Cole and endorses it editorially. There is a striking unanimity on many aspects of this great struggle as well as deep and fundamental differences to which it is necessary still to direct attention.

The one outstanding feature of the inquest is the fact that it is an investigation of the leadership of the struggle and not an investigation of the actions of the masses. All and sundry bear tribute to the spirit, the solidarity, the self-sacrifice of the masses. All else within these reports is an examination of the line taken by the leaders. In the examination it is necessary to observe that all the criticism is directed either against the General Council or the miners as trade union bodies and there is not the slightest reference to the parties and sections of the parties involved.

Logic of the Irresponsibles

For example, a large proportion of the General Council and the Miners' Executives are members of the Independent Labour Party and the Lansbury group and practically all of them are members of the Labour Party. Have these no responsibility for what has taken place? If membership of these bodies means that in the greatest crisis in the history of the British working class they have nothing to say, nothing to do, no part to play, of what value are they? If it be asserted that these are political parties and not groups we have to ask does not this fact add to their responsibility rather than take from it? We answer yes without reserve and the Communist International and its parties are prepared to be judged on this basis and have unhesitatingly and publicly submitted their conduct to examination.

But it must be observed that the most significant feature of the reports of the General Council and the Miners' Executive is the repudiation of the General Strike as a political event with the greatest political significance. In the midst of the strike they were unanimously denouncing its political significance. The Labour Party's leading organ said likewise. The I.L.P. headquarters closed down. "Lansbury's Weekly" closed down and the "Left Leadership" with it. All of them fell in behind the General Council and said not a word as to the course the General Council was pursuing.

In order to justify this surrender of responsibility for the action of their adherents, "Lansbury's Weekly" and the "New Leader" now advance the theory that it is necessary to close down under such circumstances, and the miners were wrong in not realising that once they had called on the rest of the unions to strike on their

behalf it was indispensable that the entire control of the dispute, even including the right to settle it against the miners' wishes, should pass to the General Council. "When men fight as allies they must accept all the limitations which fighting together involves."

The "New Leader" of January 21st says: "The miners should have realised that when the General Council took command of the united movement it was inevitable that it should have the final word in negotiations." The logic of this means that "the miners should have surrendered to the General Council as a preliminary to surrendering to the Government, that having called upon the trade unions to fight with them and having secured repeated pledges in Congress and in the Council that they would fight with them, they ought to have become party to the policy which *refused* to fight, repudiated the Scarborough Trades Union Congress, repudiated the declared policy of the whole trade union movement including the Miners' Federation.

"Lansbury's Weekly" goes still further and says: "the miners were wrong in not accepting the responsibility of leadership," meaning in this case that the miners' leaders should have repudiated the men and acted against their wishes. Mr. Bevin of the General Council who believes also that the miners should have pursued this policy in the name of discipline to the General Council has therefore no grounds for complaint against this "outside body." The unity of "Right and Left" is established in this case.

Where were Miners Wrong?

Where were the miners wrong in their dealings with the General Council? In our judgment they were wrong in placing their faith in the General Council, in continuing to believe that the General Council would lead a fight and not promptly exposing the General Council immediately they perceived the tendency to depart from their pledges to resist wages reductions and the lengthening of working hours. By not doing this they helped to create the impression that the General Council would fight and to inspire confidence in the General Council. Had the miners exposed them from the beginning, and they were in a better position to do this than anybody else, Pugh, Thomas, Bevin, MacDonald, etc., would not have been debating now as to what each understood on the memorable April 30th, 1926, when Pugh, Bevin, MacDonald, Thomas and Co. led the Trade Union Conference to a decision in favour of the General Strike.

Both the General Council's report and the miners' report use many words on this question. There is not the least doubt in anybody's mind as to what the mass of workers were fighting for. Their decision and their view had been formed by two years of agitation and repeated decisions which were crystallised in the slogans of the miners, and the General Council's apologetics will convince nobody on the matter. *They* broke the alliance with the miners *in fact* and not *vice-versa*. That is the plain truth of the matter. They did worse. They kept

British Reformists' Report on Strike—continued

up the appearance of an alliance in order to bring the miners to submission both on wages and hours. This is proven by their own report. On February 26th, they were in favour of the miners' slogans. On March 10th, the Coal Commission Report was issued and then began the change of front—adopting a two-faced policy. Not daring to openly say that the Coal Commission Report should be accepted entirely and that now the miners' demands were out of place, they kept up the appearance of support to the miners and actually began to negotiate reductions and, as I have shown in detail elsewhere (see "The Political Meaning of the Great Strike") presented the Government with a Black Friday before the Strike which it refused to accept because it had a bigger objective in view. They called the Strike, they say, not to *support the miners' demands* but to re-open negotiations for the purpose of helping the Government to secure what they had already offered before the Strike. The story of the Strike leadership as revealed in these reports is that of the Government wiping the floor with the capitulators and using their panic to browbeat the miners. Those who refuse to fight their real enemies always turn round with ferocity upon those who urge them to be manlike and fight. So the end of their capitulation on May 12th only intensified their anger with their "allies." The report of the General Council then gives the following mournful story. In June

"... the Council, however, were anxious not to prejudice the discussions that were taking place with the Miners' Federation, and hoped that by the time the Report was ready, a *basis of settlement might be found*. . . ."

After the introduction of the eight-hour law

"... the General Council decided to invite the Executive Committee of the Miners' Federation to consult with them in order to ascertain the best means of rendering practical assistance to the Federation in resisting the attempt to lengthen the working day, and to ascertain whether the Council could assist *in bringing about negotiations for a settlement of the dispute*."

Settlement

When on October 22 the miners asked for a special conference to decide upon an embargo and levy, the General Council says:

"At this meeting the question was again raised as to whether the Council could take any *action to assist to re-open negotiations*. . . ."

A special "Mediation Committee" was appointed to "explore the possibilities of settlement." On October 28 the Mediation Committee met the Government to "elucidate further information as to their attitude." On November 5th, it met the miners and from then onwards proceeded to quarrel as to what they were mediating about, disputing with the miners on the point that in discussion with the Government everything must come under view, wages and hours, too. And "Lansbury's Weekly," Bevin and Co., and the I.L.P. have the cheek to call this "entering into an alliance," "fighting as allies." It is, but not with the miners. The General Council "changed horses while crossing the stream,"

and the I.L.P. and "Lansbury's Weekly" have gone with them. From March 19th, the alliance with the mineowners and the Baldwin Government began to be established and subsequently was established.

Miners and I.L.P. Leaders

Of course, the miners' leaders are not immune from criticism by any means. This report shows all too frequently their efforts to do what "Lansbury's Weekly" says they ought to have done much earlier, i.e., "accepted the responsibility of leadership" (Lansbury version) and sought a settlement in the true spirit of trade union collective bargaining principles. They sought an accommodation with the General Council (a pact of silence) and the postponement of the special conference as a bargain for financial aid, and got stabbed in the back for their pains by Bromley and later by others. They listened to the Bishops, they flirted with the I.L.P. cartel scheme, indeed, they denied the political character of the struggle. But with all their shakiness they have listened to the voice of the masses.

They did not crawl before the Government. They did accept international aid. They did attempt to prepare the workers for the crisis.

We cannot say this of the Independent Labour Party. The I.L.P. Conference prior to the strike ignored the oncoming crisis. There is an unusual amount of tiredness and detachment in the I.L.P. leadership even when the fight was on. Its members on the General Council were permitted to pursue their own course. In general, it waited for something to turn up, refusing all united front proposals made by the Communist Party. Its leader, MacDonald, denounced "unscientific reductions" and schemed for *real reductions*.

When the General Council began to change its front on the publication of the Coal Commission Report, it was declared by the "New Leader" on March 12th, 1926, that the Labour movement should prepare with courage but "first of all address itself to the good sense and the co-operative conscience of the nation." It did nothing to prepare the movement or its own members for the struggle. Its leaders on the General Council were too cowardly to tell the workers that they believed the miners to be wrong. MacDonald himself supported the strike decision and afterwards when the struggle assumed the form of an isolated struggle of the miners the party leadership especially, refused the united front offer of the Communist Party for the embargo and levy, and its leaders grew more detached. MacDonald went for a trip to the Sahara. He was very tired and the American newspapers would more than pay his expenses.

The Blue Lagoon

The Editor of the "New Leader," after boosting certain phases of the Coal Commission Report and succeeding in sending Cook on to the *wild cat scheme* of "selling cartels," grew more detached. He found it increasingly difficult to write about the miners. On November 12th he wrote "with increasing reluctance I have just laid down a fascinating book about native life in the South Seas. It is time that I wrote my article about the miners. But try as I will, what I see is the blue lagoon and the rustling palm grove." How sad! Bring in the tea, William—and the ladies! The struggle? Leave it to

British Reformists' Report on Strike—continued

Maxton, our Left leader. So MacDonald got the desert, the editor got dreamy and later *got the sack*. Perhaps this accounts for Maxton's quandary as 1927 opens with the miners defeated, the government preparations for its offensive on the trade unions and the unemployed, etc., in full swing, for by January 7th, Maxton has got to the following condition: "I had been writhing in mental anguish to find a subject upon which to write this week. Parliament was not sitting, Christmas and New Year topics were exhausted. The subject I had anticipated did not develop as expected. . . Nor have I any desire to hold either the honour or responsibility of leadership." Nevertheless when the inquest takes place the new editor of the "New Leader," Brockway, who is or was prior to his editorship the secretary of the remarkably tired and detached leadership, expressed "the hope that from this moment onwards the Labour movement will be best advised to look forward rather than backwards." In other words, don't review the past for fear you may discover too much about the leadership of the present.

He further declares: "We believe that almost everyone in the Labour movement, if honest with himself, will now admit the first great mistake was the absence of organised preparation for the General Strike." "Lansbury's Weekly" also says: "The General Council did wrong first in making no preparations for the strike." But we would ask why should the General Council have made preparations for the strike if the miners should have capitulated from the beginning, for this is what both the "New Leader" and "Lansbury's Weekly" prove in effect by their subsequent argument, whilst the General Council from May 12th, we are told by their report were already convinced that there should be no fight.

Lansbury Defeatism

"Lansbury's Weekly" says the miners made a mistake in "not making terms sooner than they did although on this point we are bound to admit that all terms offered them were terms more or less of surrender." "Lansbury's Weekly" says that the miners were wrong in not realising "that once the general strike had failed it was (a) impossible to secure an embargo and that (b) consequently the possibility of an out and out victory was very unlikely." This is defeatism of the worst type uttered for the purpose of covering the failures of this group to fight for the embargo on the transport of coal. Here there is no difference whatever between the position of the General Council's Right, Left, Middle and "Lansbury's Weekly."

In order to carry justification for defeatism still further, the Lansbury group have told us more than once, "that we were wrong in judging the leadership from a revolutionary point of view." Now they outline the case as follows: "The root of the trouble lay in the failure to understand what a general strike involves, in not realising that a general strike was bound to be either a failure or a revolutionary movement designed to overthrow the government, not necessarily by force, but rather in a constitutional manner." It proceeds to say: "The Council was in part composed of people who never had the least faith in the general strike as a weapon and did not hesitate to tell the trade unionists so. Men who hold

such views should not have been asked or been allowed to take part in organising or carrying on a general strike."

Here is sophistry with a vengeance. Did "Lansbury's Weekly" ever carry on a campaign for the change of leadership before the strike? No. On the contrary, it conducted a campaign inspiring confidence in the General Council especially its Left leaders. Did it warn the workers of the danger of permitting the strike to be called by men who did not believe in it? No. The General Council was the only possible body to lead the dispute, but it could not lead it "unless it was given full powers to settle as well as conduct the strike."

Common Policy of Surrender

So we are faced with the following situation. On one side the General Council, because of its unreliability, ought not to have been allowed to lead a general strike, which means under existing circumstances there should have been no general strike, i.e., the workers should not have supported the miners and the praise lavished upon their action is humbug. On the other side, the General Council could not lead the strike, not because it was unreliable, but because it had not the power to conduct or to settle the strike. This is contrary to fact. It did not require any more power than it received to call the general strike. It did not require any more power to extend the strike. Nor does the General Council attempt to justify itself for calling off the strike on account of its lack of power.

The confessions reveal that the General Council, the Labour Party, the I.L.P. leadership and its press pursued a common policy of retreat and capitulation in the face of a situation which demanded foresight, courage and daring. They reveal the miners' leaders as unclear as to the political significance of their action as the General Council but more responsive to mass pressure which increasingly came under the ideological influence of the Communist Party and the Minority Movement which alone pursued a clearly defined class war policy.

Outside the ranks of the Communist movement there was throughout the struggle not only a complete lack of preparation, but an organised effort to suppress its political significance and confine it within the limits of an ordinary trade union dispute. The miners attempted the latter no less than the General Council. So long as this is the situation the trade unions will tread the path of defeat. Much more than the transformation of the Miners' Federation into an industrial union is necessary—important as that it. Much more than the return of a Labour government as early as possible is necessary, pleased as we shall be to see it. The value of any demand before the Labour movement, whether it be a demand for a "fighting General Council," "Industrial Unionism," "A Labour Government," etc., depends entirely upon the progress of the working class in the shedding of its illusions as to the character of the class war and the nature of the tasks which lie before it, and the development of the Communist Party into its great leading party. The documents published are an impetus to this direction for they show clearly when placed alongside the record of the Communists that the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Minority Movement were alone in making working class interests govern their policy throughout the struggle.

The Intervention of the United States in Nicaragua

Charles Wurm

SOMEWHERE in Central America there is a little country with about 700,000 inhabitants. Despite its small size it has for a long time been a subject of interest to the United States. But not in the general sense that the United States might expect to find oil or raw materials there. No, in this respect there is very little to be gained. It is true that American capital has gained a foothold there, but only in three or four important companies.

For example, J. G. White & Co., of New York, has a concession for the building of 159 miles of railway. The railway, however, belongs formally to the Government of Nicaragua. The Bragman Bluff Lumber Co. has held a concession since 1923 to exploit over 50,000 acres of forest. Finally, Americans control a number of banana plantations. All in all, America has in Nicaragua a capital investment of about 12 to 15 million dollars. In the whole of Nicaragua there are about 2,000 American citizens. When, therefore, Washington cables to the world that marines have been landed to protect the life and property of citizens of the United States, one asks oneself unwillingly where the property is, and where the citizens of the United States are, in whose interests military intervention in Nicaragua became necessary.

Despite the smallness of U.S. investments in Nicaragua, Coolidge found it necessary in his message to Congress to explain the intervention. He said that it was the task of the United States to support the existing government of Nicaragua. There is no doubt, he said, that American business interests and investments in Nicaragua would be seriously injured and very possibly even destroyed if the revolution continued. This is in the first part of Coolidge's message; but the message also aims at veiling the real reasons for military intervention. The President spoke much more to the point when he said that a continuation of the present disturbance would endanger the political balance of the whole of Central America and would jeopardise the right of the United States to build a canal through Nicaragua. Thus the protection of 12 to 15 million dollars of investments is suddenly transformed into a political question of the first importance. It is now a question of the political balance in Central America, and we may add of the balance throughout the Western hemisphere. These few million dollars of investments, a mere bagatelle for the United States, are only an excuse to justify intervention.

Dominance and Strategy

The essential questions are: (1) the imperialist domination of Central and South America by the United States; (2) the danger of a Latin-American alliance with Mexico at its head, against the imperialism of the United States and against the Monroe doctrine, at any rate, as this is interpreted by the United States; (3) military and strategic interests connected with the domination of the Atlantic and the Pacific, and the military control

of South America. These essential questions can be divided into two groups, military and political, which naturally are closely connected with each other.

Domination of the Atlantic and the Pacific is of primary importance for the military policy of the United States. In this connection the Panama Canal plays an extraordinarily important role; the canal tremendously increases the radius of action of American sea forces. In case of an attack on Japan it is easy in a very short time to shift the whole of the naval power of the United States to the Pacific Ocean, or to manœuvre it brilliantly to both oceans.

Nevertheless, the militarists of the United States consider the Panama Canal insufficient for the strategic interests of the United States. This was shown by the naval manœuvres of 1925. At that time it was demonstrated, for the benefit of the American people, that the Panama Canal is not enough to protect the United States against attack from the Pacific Ocean. That part of the American fleet which played the role of the "enemy" and was posted in the Pacific Ocean, succeeded in controlling the Panama Canal before the Atlantic fleet was able to enter the Pacific Ocean through the Panama Canal. It was shown from the military point of view that going through the Panama Canal takes longer than the arrival of enemy naval forces from the Pacific. For this reason a second canal is necessary, to make good this defect. This canal is to cut through Nicaragua. With this in view, the United States prepared, and in 1917 signed, the Bryan-Chamorra Treaty. This treaty gives the United States the right to build a new canal through Nicaragua in return for three million dollars.

Revolutions well Financed

Even before this agreement was concluded, Nicaragua had been under the control of the United States for a long time. The periodical revolutions in Nicaragua instigated by the United States go back as far as the '40's of the last century. Even before the war, there was a permanent detachment of American marines in Nicaragua. The United States never hesitated to intervene in the domestic politics of Nicaragua, to remove presidents and appoint new ones. In this connection "well-armed and well-financed revolutions" played a great role for the United States.

In 1913 a revolution in Nicaragua was smashed by American marines, and President Diaz was placed in power. The American marines remained in Nicaragua until 1925, when the United States considered its position in that country sufficiently secure to withdraw them.

The outbreak of a new revolutionary movement of the Liberals, under the leadership of Sacasas, gave a new turn to events. Victory for the Liberals would lead to the weakening of the position of the United States in Central America, and would greatly hinder, if not actually prevent, the construction of the Nicara-

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gua canal. For the construction of this canal it is absolutely necessary that the U.S.A. should dominate Nicaragua politically, and it is for this reason that Secretary Kellogg considers it his duty to support the present government with all the forces available. If the Liberal Sacasas came into power, then Nicaragua would look upon Mexico as upon an elder brother, as the well-known Washington correspondent, Clinton W. Gilbert, said in the "New York Evening Post." That this would actually be the case is shown not only by the recognition of the Sacasa Government by Mexico, but also by the fact that the Nicaragua Liberals have received the silent support of Argentine, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Guatemala. This support is still a very weak reply to the affectionate policy of the United States in Latin America, about which a Latin-American satirical journal recently said: "Uncle Sam embraces me so hard that he is choking me." The intervention in Nicaragua is this kind of an affectionate embrace; merely to relieve the monotony, it is somewhat assisted by bayonets, like in 1913. What is new now as compared with the situation then is that this time questions of strategy, which spring from the imperialist policy of the United States, constitute an essential element.

Modern Monroe Doctrine

Another cause for the intervention of the United States in Nicaragua is to be sought in the policy of the United States throughout Latin-America. The modern interpretation of the Monroe doctrine is: "America for the United States." The question of Nicaragua is a question of political domination over Central and South America. Here the interests of the United States conflict with the interests of Great Britain, particularly in Argentine and Brazil. It is for this reason that the British are interested in the conflict in Nicaragua, which is likely to lead to an intensification of the antagonisms between the United States and Latin-America.

The policy of dominating Latin-America has been carried on by the United States for a long time quietly and with very little noise. During the Spanish-American War (1898) the United States acquired the islands of Cuba and Porto Rica. Thus they obtained important military bases from which to dominate the Gulf of Mexico. This was followed by "peaceful penetration" in Panama; this Republic, although it is formally independent, is actually a vassal of the United States. This is shown very clearly by the "Treaty" concluded last year between the United States and Panama, which gives the United States the right to "take account of the progress in modern warfare" in Panama.

This treaty covers the administration of the Panama Canal. By previous treaties the United State formally holds the land on both sides of the Canal; by the new treaty, Panama, in case of war, will become an "ally" of the United States. But even in peace-time the United States has the right to have military manœuvres in Panama and to control all communications. It is quite obvious that this "military alliance" between a country with a little over 400,000 inhabitants and the most power-

ful imperialist country in the world is nothing less than the surrender of Panama to the United States.

When this treaty was published the British press of course lost no opportunity of pointing out that such a treaty cannot be brought into harmony with the statutes of the League of Nations. Of all countries, Great Britain, which holds Gibraltar and the Suez Canal!

The "peaceful" penetration of the United States throughout the Western hemisphere went further. During the world war the Republic of Haiti was occupied by American troops; and in Hawaii and Guam, acquired earlier, the United States strengthened its fortifications. Since then, the United States have made it perfectly clear to imperialist Europe that where American interests are concerned (and there seems to be no limit to these interests) it would brook no interference.

Mexico—the Key Question

This was particularly clearly stated when the question arose as to whether the United States should enter the Hague Court of Arbitration. The Europeans called a joint conference. But Coolidge declared that preliminary conversation could only be held if the American conditions were accepted. The most important condition was that the Court should have nothing to say or to decide in cases where the interests of the United States were in jeopardy. This attitude smashed the entire bluff about world peace and peaceful understanding, and nothing remained but the right of might.

In the domination of all Latin America the Mexican question plays an important role; in comparison with the question of dominating the whole of Latin America, the question of controlling the Mexican oil wells is of secondary importance. During the world war the position of the United States in Mexico was jeopardised.

From 1876 until 1910, Mexico had been chiefly under British influence. In 1910 a revolution was made by Madero, with the assistance of American capital. With Madero's victory the imperialists of the United States gained the upper hand in Mexico. Subsequently continual trouble was created in the country with the assistance of the United States, in order that the population of Mexico should not become a danger for the United States. Finally, there came the revolution of 1917; it abolished the power of the clerical Creole aristocracy, which was supported by American finance; the influence of the United States diminished. Engaged in the world war, the United States could not at this time intervene with sufficient force. As a result the movement for independence in Mexico was strengthened, not only formally—Mexico has always been formally independent—but actually. From this time there dates the renewed and stubborn struggle of every American government against Mexico in order to bring it once more under the control of the United States. It is only by keeping this in view that it is possible to understand the present relations between the United States and Mexico correctly.

If now the United States point to the new oil laws of Mexico as the cause of the conflict it is once more only a veil for the real causes. They are already writing about Bolshevism, which is supposed to be spreading in Mexico. The entire American press is to be mobilised for an adroit campaign against Mexico. For this purpose the government of the United States has called secret press conferences which have already developed

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into a press scandal. All the statements turned out to be untrue, but the government has repudiated all responsibility. Here it is possible to see once more that the "peaceful" United States is not too fastidious in its choice of means for provoking a war and making itself popular.

That the new laws of Mexico are only quoted as an excuse is shown by the fact that British interests have recognised these laws. It is only necessary to glance at these laws in order to show that we are right. The laws declare that the control of all minerals, petroleum, etc., belongs to the Mexican nation. They provide for control, but not for State ownership. They further lay down that natural resources will be given out to concessionaires for exploitation. Thus foreigners who recognise the law of the country receive equal rights. For the time being then, oil investors are only required to accept the laws of the country, the recognition of which they also demand in the United States.

A Question of Imperialism

Thus in the Mexican question it is a matter of the imperialist domination of the country and not of "the

destruction of Bolshevism." But developments in Mexico have been an obstacle to this in the past two years. Of late Mexico has attempted to carry on an independent policy. The United States is attempting to smash this policy. Thus we come to the last cause—which also explains the conflict in Nicaragua. The United States fears the danger that Mexico will become the centre of a movement of the whole of Latin America against the United States. A Latin-America bloc, with Mexico at its head, would greatly check the lust for power of the United States and threaten its might.

The victory of the Liberals in Nicaragua would weaken the position of the United States; in this connection the military facts must also be taken into consideration. The construction of the new canal in Nicaragua would be threatened and at the same time, the United States would be perturbed regarding the domination of the Panama Canal because of the existence of a too independent Mexico. Secretary Kellogg has already said that the Mexican spectre cannot be tolerated in the vicinity of the Panama Canal.

Thus, the intervention in Nicaragua and the conflict with Mexico is a link in the chain of the imperialist policy of the United States, the central point of which is imperialist domination of the Western hemisphere.

The Economic Situation in France

J. Chavaroche

A HASTY and superficial analysis would seem to show that the main characteristics of the economic situation in France arise from outstanding phenomena already foreseen, inevitable corollaries of the policy of deflation practised during the last three months.

This is the case even when the policy is taken only to aim at the stabilisation of the franc and not at its integral revalorisation. Hence the tendency throughout the entire French press to seek an explanation for the present situation in the financial policy now being applied. Hence also the attempt to attribute to Poincaré, and to the government of "National Union" over which he presides, the "moral and political responsibility" for the rise of the franc. With but few exceptions all the serious French bourgeois economists and with them the press, the ministers and parliamentarians are at one in regarding the present industrial crisis—the existence of which is not denied—as nothing but an episode of short duration. They refuse to believe that this episode, "painful" though it may be, can leave any profound economic traces or have any serious social or political results.

It is partly for this reason that the French bourgeois press, in spite of the facts, endeavours to accept and spread the optimism of the "official communiqués" concerning the development of the crisis in general and of unemployment in particular.

But despite this tendentious campaign aimed at sustaining the "morale" of the population, the progressive accumulation of striking facts is beginning to produce such an impression that already papers like "L'Usine"

and the "Bulletin Quotidien" (of the Comité des Forges) find themselves forced to consider the "official communiqués" as false and inexact. It remains none the less true that the French bourgeoisie considers the present economic situation to be of a specific nature arising from the financial policy. Hence, the belief that it is sufficient to apply a "correct policy" in order to overcome the crisis.

A Very Serious Crisis

In our opinion the present industrial crisis in France is not just a simple corollary of the policy of "cleansing the State finances" and of "stabilising the franc." To consider it only as a consequence of "currency pre-stabilisation" or to believe, as many papers assert, that it will disappear from the body of French capitalism as soon as "currency stabilisation" is fully realised, is to believe in the existence of evil spirits and of the purifying supernatural power of the sign of the cross or of holy water. No, matters are much more complicated. The present crisis, in spite of its still relatively undeveloped dimensions, shows that French capitalism is not suffering merely from some sort of constipation which a suitable purgative can rapidly remedy, but that it is suffering from a serious hereditary illness complicated by other maladies contracted during and after the war.

Expressed in less medical terms, this means that French capitalism is suffering from chronic restriction of markets.

It is the question of markets then, that is so grave. Naturally, this problem does not confront French capitalism only. It is causing a great deal of worry just now

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to other capitalist imperialist states. But French imperialism has been confronted with this problem more or less suddenly, abruptly, as a vital question of the day, interrupting a period of easy expansionist development at a time when this development had reached its culminating point.

That is not all. It is not sufficient to invoke the general phenomenon of restriction of markets. It is necessary to show why French capitalism is going to feel this very painfully. It is because it has taken too many artificial stimulants; because it has developed too rapidly. During and after the war enormous amounts were invested in the apparatus of industrial production, and above all in rebuilding the factories in the devastated regions. Enormous sums were invested in acquiring enterprises in Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, in the Saar and in Germany itself. Large amounts of capital were engaged in the monopolisation of important industries in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and Roumania, not to mention the investments in other countries.

Soaking up Savings

These investments could not have taken place had not the banks, and the financial policy of the governments which have succeeded one another during the last twelve years, found out how to soak up the "savings" and the capital of the peasant and petty-bourgeois population. Six or seven million peasants, traders, rentiers and officials, and isolated small and medium capitalists, have allowed their property to be extorted from them in money or other values by a few hundred individuals. The policy of inflation continued the work of despoiling the broad masses of workers and of financing various branches of the export trade.

Sheltered by the money and credit facilities at the time of the inflation, a considerable number of small enterprises and shops sprang up. Side by side with the creation of tremendous centralised enterprises, these small undertakings continued to thrive, and at times increased in number. Finally, speculation filtered through all the pores of the economic life of the country.

Owing to the change in the conditions of competition on the world market, the time has now come to draw up the balance sheet and begin a "new life." A "life" which will be all the more difficult for French industry because in addition to the restriction of foreign markets and the decreased capacity for absorption of the home market, there is to be added a shortage of circulating capital. To find circulating capital and credits—this is the most pressing need of to-day for French industry.

This seems to us to be the correct explanation of the causes and nature of the present crisis.

From what we have stated it follows incontestably that a very serious industrial crisis of long duration is to be expected in France. What we see to-day only represents the incubation of the real crisis.

Slowing Down of Production

How does the crisis show itself in its present-day phase, or so to speak in its initial phase?

In the first place by the slowing down of production in the manufacturing industries (textiles and metals), in

the luxury industries, in the building trades, in the furnishing trades, the leather industry, the food industry, and so on. Thus from the beginning it affects the export industries as well as those which produce for the home market. The slowing down process is unequal in intensity in the various regions and industries. And it tends to spread.

Parallel with this slowing down there is also apparent a decrease in "commercial transactions" which in the middle of December had reached 15 to 20 per cent.

Business transactions are difficult. A number of enterprises are on the verge of bankruptcy. Credit is becoming difficult and is strictly combed. There are cases of banks demanding 20 per cent. interest for insignificant credits against very good security.

The diminution of railway transport is extensive and very rapid. According to the "Usine" of January 1, 1927, in the Paris district, the agents report that they have never witnessed such a slump in traffic even during the war, and they are above all astonished at the rapidity with which this decrease of traffic has taken place. The "Usine" adds to this that the statistics of weekly railway receipts show an equally rapid progressive decrease of about 40 to 50 million francs per week.

In the field of foreign trade the months of November and December show new decreases in the weight of imports of raw material for industry and of exports of manufactured goods. Of course, it must be borne in mind that the monthly foreign trade statistics only reflect the movements of the exchanges, and this with a certain amount of delay, often being two months late. For example, the records for October reflect the insecurity due to the exchange fluctuations and other events of last July.

Unemployment Growing

But the most sinister illustration of the industrial crisis in France is the appearance of unemployment. Denied at first, and intentionally presented as insignificant later on, it none the less continues to grow. At the beginning of January, 1927, the "official communiqués" admitted the existence of about 20,000 unemployed receiving relief; while for the same period the C.G.T. declared that there are 8,000 unemployed in Paris alone in the boot and shoe industry, 1,200 in the morocco leather industry, 800 in the canning industry, and 20 to 50 per cent. of unemployment in the furnishing industry. This does not include the numerous partially unemployed. At the same time the C.G.T.U. pointed out that there were 20,000 completely unemployed and a 100,000 partly unemployed alone in the Paris metal industry. The "Bulletin Quotidien" of 10-1-27 observes the following in regard to these figures. "If these figures are exaggerated the official figures on the other hand underestimate the real state of affairs."

The accredited expert economists of big French capital, such as Emile Mireaux, Romier, Pierre Lyautey and Louis Pommery—to name but a few—are content to seek consolation by comparing the present crisis with that of 1920-21. Lyautey has even tried to make a comparison with the crises of 1900 and 1907. His conception is that the pre-war crises, as well as that of 1920-21, were crises of over-production, while the present crisis is purely of monetary origin.

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They contend that in previous crises there was considerable unemployment and a bad international economic situation, whilst to-day there is nothing of the sort. We do not know whether they find the present economic state of affairs over-tempting, or too rosy, in Germany for example, Great Britain or Italy. But as to the present unemployment, this is only the beginning. The restriction of markets, and the existence of two million more industrial workers in France in 1926 than in 1920, acquires capital importance. We will wait till the Spring before comparing figures.

The "Illustration Economique et Financiere" of December 18th, was quite correct in writing: "The crisis that is looming ahead will perhaps be long in having its effect and, perhaps also long in being solved."

Government Financial Policy

The financial and economic policy of the Poincaré government as conducted up to the present is evidently inspired by the instructions formulated by the Committee of Financial Experts in their famous report of July 3, 1926. The Committee of Experts is a homogeneous group representing the interests of big capital, of the financial oligarchy itself. In formulating instructions, it also stipulated rapid, energetic and unhesitating execution. But the Poincaré government, being a coalition government, was bound to take into account the social and political repercussions that would arise if it were to fulfil these instructions to the letter and with the brutal rapidity demanded.

Poincaré has manoeuvred too much, shilly-shalied too much with the settlement of the debt to the United States, taken too long to prepare the "currency stabilisation." The experts contemplated "the shortest possible 'pre-stabilisation' period." Actually this period has already lasted several months and still continues. The experts foresaw the outbreak of "a serious economic crisis, necessary and inevitable," only after the realisation of the "currency stabilisation." Actually the crisis is breaking out "prematurely." The experts foresaw a lull in the fall of the franc and a "discreet re-adjustment" of the rate of exchange, and of wholesale and retail prices. Actually the government hastened to bring about deflation and from the beginning of these attempts national and international "speculation" overwhelmed the government.

The rapid rise of the franc, sharply modifying the positions of export industries on the world market, has provoked a violent campaign on the part of the big industrialists. The bourgeoisie suddenly found themselves separated into two hostile camps: for the "integral re-valuation" of the franc, or for its "stabilisation" at some appointed level of the exchanges.

In the camp of the "stabilisers" there is a whole gamut of sub-tendencies in respect to the rate to be fixed. Controversies are raging around the budget, the public debt and the future of industry: The adversaries of complete re-valorisation and in general of all serious deflation put forward the following arguments: At the present rate of exchange (the pound at 120), they say, the burden of taxes would represent 9 billion gold francs. If the exchange reaches the rate of 75 francs to the pound, the tax burden would amount to 14 to 15 billion

gold francs; this is apart from the internal public debt, which amounts to about 300 billion francs. Loucheur, expresses this state of mind as follows: "It would mean the stoppage of business, permanent instability, accumulated ruin—and all for what? For an annual budget of 22-23 billion gold francs more than four-fifths of which would be ear-marked for the national debt alone."

Indeed, the 1927 budget voted on December 19, estimated 39,541 million francs for expenditure and 39,728 millions revenue (an excess revenue of 187 millions).

The budget estimate has not taken into account a prolonged crisis and its consequences. The crisis will cause a decrease of revenue, above all of the indirect taxes which go to swell the revenue. The official statistics already show a falling off in the receipt of indirect taxes for the month of November. The month of December will probably not make much change in this decrease. But from January 27 the fall will be more apparent, and will follow closely the developments of an economic crisis.

Is it not characteristic that hardly 10 days after the budget vote, the government withdrew the export tax under the imperative pressure of the industrialists? This withdrawal at once decreased the budget receipts by the 460 millions revenue which had been estimated as available from the tax. This indeed was an ill omen for the "super-equilibrium"! And it is with this "super-equilibrium" that they pretend they will be able to employ "powerful financial means" to set going "immense enterprises of public works," for the "electrification of the countryside," for the "digging of canals," for the "exploitation of colonial riches," etc., etc.

The Social and Political Aspect

Sharp struggles are already occurring around the manifestations of this economic crisis and around the financial policy of the government. The entanglement of so many interests of various groups complicates the analysis of these struggles for it conceals their real class substance. We do not think it is difficult to see that certain characteristic elements of these struggles are becoming clearly defined.

It is unemployment, which most clearly indicates the specific nature of this situation. The appearance of unemployment in France (where there has been a shortage of labour for the last five years in spite of the introduction of masses of foreign workers) is a new phenomenon. For the first time since the war the French working masses are really going to feel poverty. The contrast between "yesterday" and "to-day" can scarcely be imagined. It is not difficult to foretell what will be the political line of the working masses under the pressure of poverty, of deterioration of working and living conditions, and of uncertainty with regard to to-morrow.

The big bourgeoisie will teach the workers the irreconcilability of the opposing classes. It is to their interest that unemployment should be more or less permanent. At a time when the reformists and petty bourgeois nationalists propose the dismissal of foreign workers as a measure against unemployment, the big farmers, the middlemen, entrepreneurs and the big industrialists regard this problem from another point of view. Their views on this subject have been expounded by the "Journée Industrielle." This journal writes:

"But one can do still better by endeavouring to bring back to the land at least a section of the

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two or three hundred thousand foreign agricultural labourers who left it, attracted by the town and its distractions, industry and its high wages. . . .”

“Thus before resorting to costly readjustments, we consider it is possible to withdraw from industry several tens and perhaps several hundreds of thousands of foreign workers. . . .”

“Above all it should not be forgotten that after the crisis we shall again find ourselves with our perennial acute shortage of labour, because during the next few years there will only be a very restricted number of young adults entering the labour market, due to the fewness of children born during the war.

“Then we shall perhaps regret having too hastily ‘evacuated’ labour power which will be needed, and having compromised the position of our employment missions abroad.”

As against this view the secretary of the C.G.T., Marcel Laurent, pleads for the expulsion of the foreign workers: “We have no interest,” he writes (“Quotidien,” 1-1-27), in “depriving France of her substance, nor in making three million foreign workers live on our soil (20 per cent. of our army of labour) who, being for the most part unassimilated export their wages in the form of savings which they send back to their own homes.”

The bourgeois press is conducting the same sort of campaign, though solely in order to incite the French workers against the foreign workers in order to be able better to exploit them both.

Ruthless Credit Restriction

The second characteristic social and political factor consists in the increased antagonism between the petty bourgeoisie and big capital. We do not think it would be in accordance with the facts merely to explain this antagonism by the contradictory aspirations of the rentier classes and the industrial bourgeoisie. It is clear that the sharpest conflicts take place around the problem of relations between wholesale and retail prices, between wholesale and retail traders; around the problem of “the carrying out of contracts”; around “commercial and banking credits” in particular, and around financial policy in general. On the subject of prices the big industrial bourgeoisie is conducting a violent campaign for the reduction of retail prices in order to be able to justify the campaign to lower wages with a view to decreasing the cost price of production.

With regard to the “credits” to be granted to industry and trade, the big industrialists are contemplating severe and ruthless measures against small enterprises. “A good credit policy,” is to refuse ruthlessly, just as previously, a useless and illusory aid to enterprises which can only thrive on inflation. But at the same time more favourable conditions of interest should be provided, in the present state of the money market, to businesses which constitute the economic body of the country, but which are to-day placed temporarily in a precarious position by the defective financial policy pursued by the State during the last few years.

Similar demands are formulated in all the papers controlled by the big bourgeoisie, as also in the report of the Committee of Experts. Such demands clearly show that in France we are in the phase of a “ruthless” class struggle, on the eve of a new “transference of riches.” The petty bourgeoisie, which bore the greatest share of the expenses of inflation is now threatened with being made to bear the burden (this time to a less extent than the proletariat) both of the cost of “monetary stabilisation” and of the economic crisis.

Discontent of the Peasants

The present economic situation is evoking discontent, and will evoke still more, in the countryside among the various rural strata. Owing to lack of space we can only deal with the essential features of this discontent.

It is common knowledge that the harvest of 1926 was bad. About two million tons of foreign agricultural products had to be imported. Nevertheless the prices of agricultural products showed a tendency to decrease, while the prices of the industrial goods purchased by the agriculturalists still remained very high. The losses to agriculture owing to these circumstances were estimated in the Senate at 10 thousand million. Furthermore, the policy of currency stabilisation evokes conflicts between proprietors, farmers, and cottars concerning the terms of lease. These conflicts are already becoming serious and promise to continue for a long time. The landed proprietors are in favour of the revalorisation of the franc and want the tenancy agreements to stand “untouched.” “We suffered during the inflation,” they say, “and now we are being recompensed.” However, both the landed proprietors and the farmers agree in demanding a protective tariff. Under pressure from them the government has already, since January 1st, 1927, established a tax of 9.30 francs per hundredweight on imported grain.

The situation of the small peasants is difficult. Many of them are again in debt (through purchasing on credit a few patches of ground and agricultural implements). When the time comes to pay these debts in stabilised francs, they will have some difficult moments.

Finally, the automatic increase of taxes as a result of the economic crisis and in consequence of the fiscal policy, is rousing all classes of the rural population. It is doubtful whether the rural masses will accept the new conditions with resignation and whether they will not make determined resistance.

Storms Ahead

The present government is endeavouring to pursue a “financial policy of respite” on the basis of “political and parliamentary equilibrium.” By its superficial formal concessions, the Poincaré Ministry thinks it can bring about a “union sacrée” in order to conduct the “financial war.” However the outbreak of a real battle between the material interests of groups and classes threatens to smash the political, parliamentary or ministerial combinations.

The big industrialists, traders and bankers, no longer hesitate to express their discontent and presenting the government with frequent ultimatums. Towards the end of November, in his speech at Tarbes, and also

(Continued on page 39.)

The Party on the Trade Union Front in the United States

Robert Minor

AMERICA is not Europe. Here, where capitalist imperialism still continues to move upwards, we are not yet in the period of general strikes. This is not (for America) the period of vast millions of organised workers moving rapidly to the left, with scores and hundreds of pot-bellied bureaucrats waddling anxiously after the leftward-moving millions, crying, "We too are revolutionists." In the first place, four-fifths of the workers in the United States are not yet organised in trade unions, and the political separation of the working class from the capitalist political parties has not yet occurred. In the second place the organised portion of the working class is moving in general and momentarily not to the left, but to the right. Especially and overwhelmingly the official trade union bureaucracy is moving far to the right—so far to the right that it is breaking new trails in the rightward march, trails that are marked with "labour banks" controlled by fat, well-groomed trade union officials who in some cases draw salaries of \$25,000 a year, call themselves Labour business men and consider it unrespectable to utter the word "union" in the luxurious quarters of these banks.

In the present season of rank growth of American finance-capitalist prosperity, the most astonishing refinements of class-collaboration are invented. Most of the middle stratum of the bureaucracy is in feverish competition for the favour of the joint councils of Wall Street and the executors of the estate of the late Samuel Gompers, which is called the American Federation of Labour. On the whole, the official position of the American Federation of Labour (and with it can be included the various non-affiliated unions of skilled trades) is more reactionary to-day than ever before in its history, and is rapidly moving still further to the right. In its official position, the A.F. of L. is the most blatant supporter of United States imperialism, whose "Kulturträger" it is throughout Latin-America, Canada and the Orient.

It must not be imagined, however, that the present crescendo of American imperialism has brought a uni-

versal and even elevation of the entire line of American industry. On the contrary, while in general the American bourgeoisie plays, as the British bourgeoisie did a few years ago, with the silly analogy of "Roman Empire" to which all the world shall pay tribute—at the same time certain branches of American economy are in a crisis. The chronic agricultural crisis for which Coolidge offers the solution of expropriation of the small farmers by the bankers is not our subject here. We turn first to the crisis in the coal industry.

This is, of course, not an American but a world crisis. As it drove the declining Great Britain into the general strike, it drives the ascending American imperialism into a sharp attack upon the greatest of all American trade unions, the United Mine Workers. Then we turn to the textile industry in its several branches which is sharply affected by several contradictions of the period; and this has brought fiery outbursts of conflict with the workers in the older textile districts who have received blow after blow during the past three years in the form of wage reductions and more intense exploitation systems. To these two features we may add certain conditions of the clothing and other needle industries which cause a disturbance of class peace in the big cities where these industries centre, and which we will discuss later.

Class-Collaboration Schemes

Wherever we do find disturbing influences, there we shall find that the national trade union bureaucracy, feverishly occupied with class-collaboration schemes, Labour banks, capitalistic insurance corporations, etc., clings to these flesh-pots and strives either to conciliate the dissatisfied workers, or openly to break the strikes, or else to desert entirely the particular field in which a struggle is inevitable, thus narrowing still further the already narrow field of organised labour. (The American Federation of Labour is decreasing in membership and wilfully avoiding the organisation of the unorganised.)

This condition tends, first, in some cases to place the struggles of the workers outside the framework of the existing unions. And, second, in other cases, it tends sharply to emphasise the struggle as a struggle simultaneously against the employers and against the highest officials of the unions. In the first of these categories the strikes of unorganised workers for economic demands against employers, simultaneously become highly dramatised demonstrations against the trade union bureaucracy with the demand for admittance to the trade unions. In the second of these categories (strikes of unions whose higher officials try to help the employers to break the strikes), the bureaucracy rapidly goes over to the policy of mass expulsions of those workers.

In both categories, therefore, the common feature is that the workers fight for the right of membership in the

(Continued from page 38.)

in the Chamber on December 7th, Poincaré endeavoured to call for a lasting peace amongst parties, not merely a truce. He expressed the conviction that the activity and struggles of parties should disappear for a long period, because they were incompatible with financial rehabilitation. But in reality the struggle of parties is being accelerated and corresponds with the clash of so many interests affected by the deflation crisis.

The coming spring promises to be a very stormy one in the social and political life of France. There will be still bigger fights than those of to-day. The French Communist Party is confronted with hard tests and almost unprecedented responsibility.

The Party and the T.U. Front in U.S.—continued

unions as well as for economic gains, and the trade union bureaucracy and the employers become merged in a single front both against the economic demands and against the right of membership of the militant workers in trade unions.

Thus, the employers seek to de-unionise the coal industry, generally by fighting the union directly, while introducing labour-saving machinery, by using the unemployed against the employed, and particularly by closing the mines in the strongly unionised territory and increasing the production of the mines in unorganised fields. The result has already gone so far as to lower the membership of the United Mine Workers to little more than 300,000 (it had been at its peak about 600,000) and to bring about a condition where now 70 per cent. of the coal produced is dug by non-union miners, where as in the past only 30 per cent. was dug by non-union men. But the higher bureaucracy of the union stands as adamant against every attempt at struggle and against every proposal to organise the non-union fields.

The textile industry has for several years been in a chronic condition of crisis. The manufacturers, who wallowed in fabulous profits during the war and post-war boom, have since then been shifting to a system of higher organic composition of capital—the installation of complicated machinery which in the course of a few months eliminates in some cases one-half of the labour, and at the same time shifting production into small agricultural towns where new, enormous factories are built and hemmed in with precautions against trade union influences. During this very process the A.F. of L. union of the industry persistently narrows its base, trying to assist every effort to “deflate” Labour in the older districts, collaboration with the employers, refusing to organise the unorganised in the new districts, and systematically striving to fix its base almost entirely among the skilled crafts although it is an industrial union in its formal structure. During recent years nearly every

effort at struggle in the textile industry has resulted either in the breaking of the strike by the union bureaucracy or else in the formation of a new union—so that there are now 16 unions of textile workers.

In the biggest cities the “needle trades”—the industries of garment manufacture and such industries—have felt disturbing influence of various sorts. Thirty years ago the needle industries in the large cities, especially in New York, were fields of the most terribly beast-like exploitation of whole families of immigrants, men, women and small children. Conditions compelled a struggle of such intensity as to create in these industries practically the first conscious revolutionary culture. This struggle built the metropolitan foundation of the Socialist Party in the years preceding the war. At the same time it raised the conditions of labour at a very rapid rate, creating in the women’s clothing industry the classic trade union, the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, which became the stronghold of the Socialist Party, although this union is in the A.F. of L., which abjures even the phraseology of Socialism.

The garment industries in America are upon the highest plane of machine production that has been attained by that industry anywhere in the world. During the past two years the women’s clothing manufacturers have been trying to make adjustments at the cost of the workers. Critical periods of the market with the employers trying to throw the burden of them upon the workers, have caused the unusually conscious workers to demand concessions looking to the protection against unemployment and against evasion of union regulations. But just at this time the bureaucracy of the union was moving rapidly to the right and consolidating itself with the Gompers bureaucracy of the A.F. of L. in general, seeking at every turn to prevent struggle. So it is that the fighting tendencies of the unions of the needle trades have more and more in the last four or five years been resisted or evaded or sabotaged by the bureaucracy.

The Socialist Party, which had long ago lost its best proletarian base, and whose second rank of leadership in the large cities was more or less identical with

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The Party and the T.U. Front in U.S.—continued

bureaucracy of the needle trade unions, was also solidarising itself with the A.F. of L. bureaucracy.

The present situation of the American Labour movement, therefore, although the tendency is in general toward class collaboration, carries within itself a sharp contradiction. The general fact of the upward movement of American capitalist economy has the almost universal effect of a feverish stimulation of the labour aristocracy. The fact that the existing trade unions include only about one-fifth or one-sixth of the workers, and that the decisive unions (with one exception) are those of the highly skilled labour aristocracy, makes the trade union movement a hothouse for the growth of the most fantastic class-collaboration schemes and the most incredibly reactionary policies that have ever been known in all of the history of the Labour movement of the world. But at the same time this very condition—coupled with the crisis in particular industries—creates precisely the opposite condition in these special fields. The efforts of employers to throw the burden upon the workers in particular industries, drive certain sections of the workers into struggle. These are often the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and frequently the unorganised.

Leaders and Rank and File

But every question of struggle forces also to the front the question of leadership. Immediately a struggle begins, a gulf is opened up between the rank and file of workers and the trade union bureaucracy which is transforming itself into bank-directors, into arbitration boards as between employers and workers and even openly into strike-breaker recruiting agencies. When the necessity of struggle passes beyond the possibility of pacification, then the struggle passes beyond the reach of a trade union bureaucracy such as we find generally in the United States at this particular moment. This is a time when strikes are not led—unless they are led by new elements of leadership arising among the workers in opposition to the bureaucracy. It is notable that during the past year and a half, almost every struggle in the Labour movement has forced to the front the question of new leadership.

Where do the new elements of leadership come from? Obviously it is a time which produces a certain opportunity for the building of the left wing of the trade union movement. It is unquestionable that the Trade Union Educational League, which gathers together the militants of the trade union movement, has here the opportunity to hammer together a solid organisation of the workers who are conscious and willing to fight.

The situation is certainly not the same as it would be if the whole Labour movement and the working class were moving leftward, were being radicalised. The opportunity is not of the same sort, but the opportunity nevertheless exists for the building of a broad left wing in the trade unions.

What is the policy of the Workers' Communist Party of America in this situation? The policy is to bring such movement into consciousness; to come up within them; to enter into the struggles and to offer leadership to them.

It is exactly in this period that the Workers' Communist Party has made the greatest advances in its his-

tory in the penetration of the trade unions, in the development of trade union fractions of the party, in the building of the left wing, in the actual conquest of the leadership of trade unions, in the organisation of the unorganised, and in the open leadership of trade unions in sharp combats on the strike front. It is a remarkable fact, though not a difficult one to understand, that during the past year and a half, during which the trade union movement in general has been wallowing backward into reaction as never before, the Communist Party has for the first time in its life become the openly acknowledged leading force in strikes of mass significance. Just now, as never before, the Communist Party becomes a formidable force in the unions of the American Federation of Labour.

The Passaic Strike

Of course, it is not accidental that the fields in which the Workers' Communist Party has first become a recognised force are sections of industry where the general capitalist boom is disturbed by irregularities or where the prosperity is at least intermittent—the three fields which we have used as examples above.

Sixteen thousands textile workers at Passaic, New Jersey, and several neighbouring towns, who had hitherto been entirely unorganised and whose every effort to organise themselves had been ignored or resisted by the A.F. of L. textile union, suddenly came out on strike under the openly known leadership of Communists. For nearly a year this strike continued in the most spirited manner, with methods which aroused the imaginations of the workers of the entire country. Against armed forces, tanks, poison gas, charges of mounted police, mass arrests, clubbings and rifle-fire, the pickets continued to keep the mills closed. Simultaneously with the strike, the workers made the public demand for admission to the American Federation of Labour as a local of the United Textile Workers.

The bureaucracy of the A.F. of L. from the beginning attempted to break the strike by every known device. While the strike was on, the union not only refused to admit the strikers, but openly accepted highly-paid advertising from the millowners for the trade union journal. The strikers were publicly denounced by the A.F. of L. bureaucracy in the most violent terms. The strikers replied with a skilfully directed public campaign to compel the opening of the doors of the union, and a half-million dollars was given mostly by A.F. of L. trade unionists to support the strike. After many months had gone by the millowners made the statement that they were not opposed to making terms with the strikers, provided they could do so with the regular A.F. of L. union. Finally the strike was settled by the admission of the strikers into the A.F. of L. union, and by the recognition of the union and the restoration of the workers with some concessions.

The Strike Won

It had been necessary for Weisbord, the Communist leader, to withdraw as a compromise with the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, which declared that it would admit the workers to the union only on that condition; but this withdrawal was conducted in connection with a demonstration in which 12,000 textile workers paid tribute to Weisbord's leadership and the leadership of the party.

The Party and the T.U. Front in U.S.—continued

It was a defeat of the A.F. of L. bureaucracy. The leadership of this new local union, although Weisbord has withdrawn, has not passed into the hands of the reaction.

During the same time the situation in the needle trades in New York came to the point of combat. The Fur Workers' local of New York had come into the leadership of the Communists, as a result of the struggle of the bureaucrats against the rank and file's demands, and now it came to a strike under the Communist leadership. Every effort was made by the International union to break the strike: hired thugs, assaulting strikers with deadly weapons, public appeals by the higher officials against the local officials and against the strike, Socialist Party members joining with the police to effect arrests—it was a perfect example of the situation in which the trade union bureaucracy has entirely gone over to the function of strike-breaking. In one instance the International bureaucracy and the A.F. of L., stepped over the heads of the officials of the striking union, made an agreement in a secret conference with the employers in the name of the strikers, and then called a mass meeting of the strikers to vote the acceptance of the agreement. Social-democrats and police detectives stood at the doors of the hall to prevent the entry of any known Communist—of any official of the striking local union. Yet, in carrying out the policy of the Communist leadership, the 10,000 fur strikers who entered the hall drove the bureaucrats from the platform, preventing any meeting being held unless Ben Gold, the Communist leader of the strike, should first take charge.

Other Strikes

This was only one of many bitter clashes. Finally, by mobilising the rank and file of trade unions, the fur workers compelled the official endorsement of the strike by the A.F. of L. The strike was won with concessions which included the establishment of the basic "40-hour week" (a week's work of 5 days, 8 hours each), which has become already a rallying demand in many quarters of the trade union movement.

This was closely followed by the outbreak of a strike of 40,000 cloak makers in New York. This also is a union (International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union) in which, as we have said above, the conflict of the rank and file with the bureaucracy had resulted in the ousting of the reactionaries and the coming into power of the Left Wing, which was soon obliged to lead a struggle against the efforts of employers to encroach upon the workers, and to take the offensive for concessions including the 40-hour week. The fight has raged from August until the present time. Again every effort has been made by the bureaucracy of the A.F. of L. and of the International union to break the strike. The 40,000 cloak makers of New York are the heart and centre of the union, and thus this sector becomes the most important strategic stronghold in the biggest American city. The entire force and fury of the reaction was aroused for the retaking of this fortress, and all the more so because the local of this union in the second largest city, Chicago, has also fallen into the hands of the left wing.

On December 9, a national conference was assembled, in which the most important reactionaries of the A.F. of L. and of various independent unions participated for the

purpose of organising a nation-wide campaign to crush every centre of left leadership and to expel every Communist and every left wing worker from the trade unions. At this notable conference, the officials of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union were specially prominent; and after the conference, the first gun of the national struggle was fired in the form of a suspension order against the Joint Board of the Cloakmakers of New York. The attempt at suspension is at once an effort to recapture the union and to break the strike, while at the same time striving to put the onus of a lost strike upon the left wing. This is explained by the fact that the prestige of winning the strike would be an irresistible weapon in the hands of the left wing.

Sabotage by Bureaucracy

The strike was already won to a large extent, several employers having surrendered; but to prevent the permanent loss of control to a victorious left wing strike leadership, the bureaucracy has stepped in, suspended the Joint Board, remobilised the weaker employers against the workers, and re-opened the warfare. Yet at the present writing, the membership of the union stands apparently 95 per cent. in support of the Joint Board against the suspension order. A meeting of 15,000 members of the union, just held in the biggest hall in New York, has voted almost unanimously in support of the Joint Board. Thus the fight for the metropolis of American capitalism shows the same characteristics as the other struggles.

The policy of the Workers' Communist Party must necessarily centre to the greatest extent upon the basic industries. In some of the basic industries the conditions have brought about a leftward movement. The example of the struggle of the coalminers against the employers and the union bureaucracy has been given above. In the United Mine Workers of America, which I repeat is the most important of American trade unions, the struggle is now flung over the width of the continent. It is a struggle to save the union from complete destruction by the combined bureaucracy and employers. The immediate occasion for the struggle is the election for the offices of the union. The left wing slate is composed of elements representing a broad oppositional wing of all those willing to fight against the dishonest, treacherous bureaucracy for the saving and the rebuilding of the union. The winning of this fight by the left wing would do more than any other one thing toward shaking the foundations of the old-established Gompers hierarchy whose titular head is William Green, himself a member of the United Mine Workers. I have not yet at my disposal the results of this conflict, but in any event this struggle at least is laying the corner-stone for the new mass movement which will win the decisive majority of the working class for the working class cause.

The present period is shown to be one in which the Communist Party can make substantial strides forward in mass influence.

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The End of Loriot

J. Duret

THE "Revolution Proletarienne" for December may justly be considered a sensational number, and it is for this reason alone that we wish to draw the attention of our readers to this insignificant review, which generally speaking is not worth any attention whatever.

This number in fact contains:

1. The disowning of Souvarine by the actual readers of this review.

2. Loriot's transition to pure syndicalism.

Let us examine these two news items.

Wanting to do a bit too much, Souvarine exaggerated. Honest people were disgusted, seeing this insignificant fellow trying to besmirch the Russian Revolution. Letters of protest came in shoals to the editorial offices of the "Revolution Proletarienne," and the latter was obliged to dissociate itself from Souvarine; that is why the December number contains nothing from Souvarine's pen. Rosmer is forced to take his place in explaining the Russian crisis to the readers of the "R.P."

We quote some extracts from a letter sent by Postgate (of whom Monatte has a particularly high opinion) to protest against Souvarine's articles. He declares that Souvarine is blinded by anger. . . "He (Souvarine) suggests that the leaders of the Russian Communist Party are psycho-pathological phenomena and that they behave as they do because they are victims of alcoholism. . . . This is an extraordinary accusation . . . when all is said and done, the majority of the old guard put up a fight during the revolution, it does not constitute a group of degenerate alcoholics or even of adepts at bantitism."

"And who are the Opposition? Trotsky we know, and Radek, but unfortunately we also know Zinoviev. This selfish and stupid bureaucrat has destroyed half the Communist Parties of the world. He is the worst enemy of Labour democracy, and when he pretends to be its advocate, he is lying for his own ends. If the choice is between Stalin, the rough bureaucrat, fighter and revolutionist, and Zinoviev, the cowardly and tyrannical bureaucrat who ratted in 1917, every Communist will choose Stalin." (Translated from the French.)

In another passage Postgate is indignant at the idea that Souvarine seems to be sorry that there was no split in the Russian Party.

Finally, dealing with violation of women for which Souvarine makes the Communist Party responsible, he comes to the following conclusion:

"Really, all this is so very much like what well informed correspondents write in the 'Morning Post,' that I cannot help asking myself if comrade Souvarine has not exaggerated or drawn his information from suspect sources. . . ."

"Comrade Souvarine proves too much. If the Russian leaders are degenerate alcoholics and Leningrad workmen brutes who violate young girls, then they are

not the men who have made the Russian Revolution." (Translated from the French.)

Monatte adds a few comments to Postgate's letter, he tries to excuse Boris Souvarine, he says that his tone "does not alarm him," but nevertheless reproaches Souvarine with having explained nothing in his three articles, neither the arguments of the Opposition nor the reasons of its defeat.

This is merely a polite form of saying that in his three articles, Souvarine has not brought forward any serious arguments and has confined himself to a base polemic composed of lies and insinuations. The reception given to Souvarine's articles is extremely significant. This reception shows that Western revolutionary proletarians, even those grouped around "leaders" such as Monatte and Rosmer, do not tolerate besmirching of the Russian Revolution.

Boris Souvarine, traitor to his Party, renegade from Communism, condemned by his last friends in France, is nothing but a political bankrupt on whom only bankrupts could stake.

Loriot Goes Syndicalist

The same number of the review informs us of a fact which cannot help causing a certain amount of surprise: F. Loriot, one of the first converts to Communism in France, one of the founders of the Committee of the Third International, leader of the internationalist fraction in the united Socialist Party prior to the Tours split, has just definitely severed connection with the Communist Party.

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The End of Loriot—continued

In fact, we learn that at the session of November 18 of the Teachers' Union, he proposed against the Communist majority a resolution which has nothing in common with Communist ideas and bears the clear imprint of the "pure trade unionism" which Loriot himself fought for so long.

We quote from it a few characteristic parts:

"The Teachers' Union makes a clear distinction between political and philosophic groupings, that is to say, when in the struggle of the organised proletariat for freedom, the latter can get, in its trade unions, profitable support from outside, its revolution and its victory depend on its own ability to secure control over production, over the wealth of the country. No Party—even if it be in power and had at its disposal the means of action which the support of the workers can provide—could take the place of the trade unions in carrying out the tasks of the unions.

"A political body, whatever its composition, its methods and its aim, is always strictly limited in its development, its social role, in its very life.

"Its changing ideology can for a moment or for a more or less prolonged period correspond with the interests of the working class, but it is the task of the proletariat itself—that is to say, its economic organisations—to express and represent its interests in a permanent manner.

"The instability of political groupings, their ephemeral character even when they make their mark in history would rapidly paralyse the efforts of a proletariat which linked its destiny with that of a party.

"It is only by a full and uninterrupted independence of all Parties or sects, even in power, that the trade union movement, the only representative of the permanent interests of the working class, can triumph over capitalist oppression and will establish the Communist regime."

We think that the passages which we have just quoted leave no doubt whatever as to the "purely trade unionist" character of the motion introduced by Loriot. We do not intend here to refute Loriot's theses, as pure

trade unionism has been refuted over and over again (among others by Loriot himself). The point at issue is the strange evolution of a man, who in spite of his social democratic tradition (Loriot is an old member of the Socialist Party, of which he was for a long time treasurer) has arrived at "pure trade unionism," and at denying the role of the Party.

Where Fractions Lead

This strange evolution can only be explained by the logic of fractional struggle.

For a long time past, Loriot has been in opposition within the French Communist Party.

Divergence of opinion on the Russian question—Loriot siding with Trotskyism—divergence of opinion in French questions, where certain slogans issued by the Communist Party were not understood and assimilated by Loriot because of his old Social Democratic traditions. Thus for instance, Loriot never gave his whole-hearted approval to the attitude of the Communist Party in the colonial question in general, and especially in respect of the Moroccan war.

Beaten within the Party, Loriot had necessarily to seek the support of opposition elements outside the Party—the support of trade union elements grouped around Monatte and Rosmer. Loriot went from concession to concession towards these people, raging against the Party in which he managed to be always defeated, realising the impossibility of forming another Party side by side with the Communist Party; he has come to deny the role of a political Party in the revolutionary struggle.

This is extremely significant. Even Frossard, who is a consummate politician, who had at his disposal an Executive and even a certain number of Party officials, was unable to create an autonomous Party between Social Democracy and Communism.

Where Frossard failed, neither Loriot nor Souvarine could hope to succeed. So it is on the trade union field that the opposition elements are trying to give battle to the Communists, and whilst they begin by protesting against the encroachment of the Communist Party on the trade union movement they end by denying the role of a Party in general.

