

# Throughout the World of Labor

## EXIT MONDE! EXIT HENRI BARBUSSE!

We have not hurried to give our opinion on the journal of Henri Barbusse, *Monde*, the darling of PHumanite in France as well as the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses* in the United States. We wanted to wait serenely to see this journal adopt a fairly clear line of conduct. Now it seems that we have waited in vain, and that *Monde* continues to be what it always was, that is, a literary publication of the democratic, whining phrase-mongering petty bourgeois who are so well personified by Barbusse. There is no doubt that *Monde* is not a journal of the Communist Party, neither is it a social democratic publication; it is something worse and more inoffensive at the same time, that is, a miscellany of the swamfiest, the most confused, in short, the most anti-proletarian slops produced by the politico-literary circles of the petty bourgeoisie.

The quality of the principal editors already tells a good deal. Of course, the Directing Committee which appears under the head is only a pure front. The director, Barbusse, is already known as a notorious anti-Marxist. For some time his lucrative literary activity has been divided between works of a Christian mysticism (novels, criticisms, plays on Jesus) and crude plagiarisms from the official Soviet economic press in praise of Stalin. The politics of the journal are directed by Paul Louis a veritable living statue to the glory of "democracy", a scribbler at the service of every political sheet which offers a trough, be they republican, radical, socialist or Communist, from Soir to *Monde*, traversing a multitude of sheets of every species. This venerable leader of the Socialist-Communist Party spins out a vaguely radicalizing and pacifist prose every week in *Monde* on international politics.

The economic questions are dealt with in the pedantic manner by Delaisi and Laurat. The first of these two authors is notoriously ignorant of the A B C of Marxist economic science. In his recent works, like "The Two Europes", amiably commented upon by *Monde*, he shows himself a complacent critic of some "imperfections" of imperialism, which according to him, the trusts and alliances between the capitalists can remedy. *Monde* publishes from time to time comic, economic controversies between Delaisi and Laurat, the one explaining himself in the liberal and free-trader's tone, and the other replying with extracts from "Das Kapital" purged of any catastrophic consequences. If we add that the other collaborators are people like Habarau, Berl, Alraud Bernard, etc., etc., the question arises as to how how, why, in what respect and in what manner *Monde* can really be a journal which speaks, if not to the revolutionary proletariat, at least simply to the proletariat.

The real face of *Monde*, its pseudo-theoretical countenance, appeared at the time it undertook a so-called inquiry "On the Doctrinal Crisis of Socialism". The manner in which this inquiry was presented and the replies that were made to it, put *Monde* in its precise place. In the introduction, one could read: "In speaking of the doctrinal crisis of socialism, we understand the term in its vastest conception, detaching it from the daily struggles to which the various proletarian organizations devote themselves in the name of their respective doctrine". This phrase has only one meaning: The doctrinal crisis of socialism is above the class struggle. We are therefore not wrong in saying that *Monde* placed itself outside of revolutionary Marxism, outside of the proletarian struggle, in order to take refuge in the nebulous world of literary discussions. This does not prevent the editor of the introduction to the inquiry, who is no longer a Marxist—if he ever was one—from writing: "The doctrine (socialist) is passing through a crisis because it is in fact or in appearance—our inquiry will enable us to judge—in conflict with reality on a goodly number of points." What reality? We ask because it is not a question of the reality of political parties, nor consequently of classes, nor, finally, of the principal elements of

capitalist society in which we are now living. That is to say that we, the Marxists and Communists, who ask it, for evidently the editor of *Monde*, lost in his abstractions, does not. Doesn't he write further that he intended to submit to his readers "the opinions of the most qualified representatives of the tendencies confronting each other in contemporary socialism, right as well as left, in the second and third international"?

For *Monde*, then, the only difference between social democracy and Communism is that of being the right and left wings of "socialism". This statement would be quite in place from the pen of an editor of *Temps*. But one wonders what it is doing in the pages of a journal which speaks in the name of Communism and the teachings of the Russian revolution. Moreover *Monde* has not been able up to now to publish anything but propaganda texts from Vanderveide, De Man, Renner, Deat and a few others, that is, of the theoretical screens for the bankruptcy of the second international and its irrevocable passage to the side of the democratic bourgeoisie. The opinions of the theoreticians of the Communist movement are still forthcoming. This could only be the consequence of the fact that the best leaders and theoreticians of the Communist movement are today expelled from the International by the Stalinist apparatus, in which M. Barbusse participates directly, while only the perverters of Marxist thought have the right to speak there today. But such is not the case, for no Communist belonging to the Left Opposition movement would want to soil himself in the Barbussean pot.

It is in reality the result of another fact whose developments we shall soon see: it is that the bureaucracy of the International is beginning to tire of the lucubrations of M. Barbusse, of the hotch-potch of slops of the revolutionary movement which he has made of *Monde*, and that it has begun the rupture with this journal. We are not afraid of any denial. The Soviet bureaucracy of the C. I. has despised Barbusse for a long time. This contempt reared at the time when Lenin was astounded because the French Communist Party distributed so idiotic a pamphlet as "The Knife between the Teeth". But now this contempt for the man it utilized has taken on a new form.

In the *Vestnik Inostranoy Literatury* (No. 5, December, 1929), Bruno Jazhinsky administers a superb bureaucratic reproof to the director of *Monde*. This reproof is naturally accompanied by organizational measures: The sale of *Monde* is prohibited on the news-stands and the book-stores in Russia and the journal no longer comes to the subscribers in the U. S. S. R. Mezhrupom has even offered to reimburse the subscribers for their money. This time it is clear: Molotov has had enough of the journal of Paul Louis and Delaisi. With the same gracefulness he exercised in supporting *Monde* when it was first established he is preparing today to issue a bull against it.

It is likely that our new Christ Barbusse will suddenly cry out at dictatorship, bureaucracy, dogmatism. After having held his tongue till 1930, he will denounce the sectarian spirit of the leaders of the Communist Party, etc. Under such conditions, it is also likely that Monatte will be astounded that we are repulsing an eventual ally, an "Opposition to the Party". But for us the matter stands differently. We are not with everyone who is against the Party or against the International and the Soviet Union. We are not with those who desert the sinking ship, with those who abandon a freely embraced cause when it no longer profits them. We repulse and fight against those who, after having wholly approved up till now the methods and the action of the C. I., turn sharply upon it without seriously founded political reason. For we know that this type of capers always conceals a retreat fixed long ago, and a more or less bashful return into the petty bourgeois democratic ring. We know that the whole evolution in this sense of Barbusse

and his journal will not signify an evolution beyond the domain of the C. I. apparatus towards a more consistent revolutionary activity, but quite simply the removal of a veil which concealed from the eyes of a pretty numerous public the essentially retrogressive, petty bourgeois and confusionist nature of Barbusse and his enterprises. Today only one mask gives them a proletarian revolutionary aspect and that is the Stalinist bureaucracy which itself is about to undertake the unmasking.

Unfortunately, a certain working class public lets itself be taken in by the phrases and the literary jargon of *Monde*. Doubtless this corresponds to their very comprehensible need to read something besides their ordinary political press, to educate themselves while being amused. A journal with such a goal cannot be a bad thing. But it must be realized seriously and with sincerity. It is these two qualities that are lacking in *Monde*. At present it is necessary that the revolutionary workers know that *Monde* is an organ of petty bourgeois literature and education and that, if it can sometimes divert them, it can aid and support them in no wise in their struggle. The bureaucrats of the Party who supported and encouraged *Monde* know this as well as we. And perhaps they are now preparing to say so. For they must certainly answer this question: Why is *Monde*, prohibited in the U. S. S. R. and therefore poor reading for the Soviet citizenry, recommended in France by the same bureaucracy which leads the Russian and French Communist Parties?

—PIERRE F. NAVILLE  
Paris, April 10, 1930.

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## The «Red Peasants» Meet

The Peasant Congress would have passed unnoticed if the Berlin police had not interfered on the last day, so as to give it some notice. Incapable of creating a genuine mass movement, the bureaucracy which is installed in all the leading international bodies (I.R.A., W.I.R., Profintern, Krestintern, etc.) has specialized in calling Congresses to create the illusion of capturing the working masses and their allies. Not long ago, a very costly Congress was held in Berlin, the juridical congress, at which no one spoke, and whose chief accomplishment—aside from the squandering of a great deal of money—was to enable those belonging to the International League for the Rights of Men to protest against the application of the dah penalty in the U.S.S.R. The bankruptcy of this juridical congress in no way hindered the calling of an international Peasants Congress in Berlin at the end of March. A hundred delegates participated. Old man Martel represented France (a new crisis has broken out between the Peasants confederation and the Party). The delegates from the other countries were in a class with Martel. In concluding the work, the creation of an International Peasants Committee was decided upon.

For what purpose? To maintain an office. That's all. Another problem immediately arose: did the creation of an International Peasants Committee mean in substance the liquidation of the Krestintern? Or would this Peasants Committee be a substitute for the Krestintern, or would it come out against it or would it relegate itself to inactivity?

In this respect also, an alarm must be sounded. The country, the peasants are separated from the workers; in the country it is the forces of reaction that speak to the peasants. It is an immediate and urgent duty of the Communist Parties to penetrate into the country; this is the sole guarantee of success in all the revolutionary struggles of the working class. The bloc of the workers and peasants must not be empty talk. If the peasants are not united with the working class, the latter will find them in the enemies' lines, enrolled in the forces of reaction.

Berlin, April 13, 1930

A.B.

## Reactionary Maneuvers in Spain

A rumor has been recently current that a crisis within the Berenguer government was provoked by the resignation of three of his ministers. The head general of Catalonia, general Barrera, made a trip to Madrid where he conferred with several important personages and then returned to Barcelona. They discussed against Berenguer, led by Barrera and Martinez Anido, Berenguer issued a denial but the conspiracy was nevertheless an actuality.

General Barrera filled the post of head generalship of the formest military region of Spain (Catalonia), during the entire dictatorship. He was one of the principal supporters of the policy of Primo Anido. After the fall of the dictatorship he did not for a moment, together with Anido, cease maneuvering among the former ministers of the dictatorship and the leading elements of the Patriotic Union; but their maneuvers came to naught because of the unpopularity of all remnants of the dictatorship.

Berenguer was frightened for a moment fearing that the garrison of Catalonia might solidarize with Barrera. The latter was forced to present his resignation in order to take over other duties.

His post was taken over by the Prince Don Carlos of Bourbon. This appointment was well received by the Catalonian plutocracy and by all the monarchist elements. The new head captain of Catalonia will attempt to save the monarchy of his cousin, Alfonso XIII. Berenguer was wise enough to win over the good will of Cambó and the Catalonian plutocracy.

Barrera attempted to organize several demonstrations: the Berenguer government forbade them. Despite that he issued two appeals to the garrison of Catalonia and to the Province defense corps, which showed his narrow ties with the former dictatorship and his desire, together with Martinez Anido and Sanjurjo, of reinstating the dictatorial regime, even more brutal and violent than that under Primo de Rivera.

It is quite evident that the initial Republican enthusiasm has greatly diminished. This movement deceived many. Two months slipped away in complete confusion and disorganization, no one being able to lead this movement towards realization. Many naively believe today that the Republic will be peacefully achieved through elections. The Berenguer government sustains this illusion. In opposing the dictatorial maneuvers of Barrera and Martinez Anido, he wished to attempt the recapture in part of the confidence of the people which he had lost completely.

We have never had any great illusions concerning the Republican movements which followed the fall of Primo de Rivera. The petty bourgeois republicans are not and cannot be genuine revolutionists. They are afraid of the Revolution and of the proletariat and hope that the Republic will fall from the sky. That is why from the first moment we have set ourselves the task of fighting against the monarchy and at the same time unmasking the false republicans.

We have confidence only—is it necessary to mention this?—in the exploited worker and peasant classes. We must be at their sides in order to enlighten and direct them. The Communist Party must above all fix upon its proper characteristics, its slogan of the proletarian vanguard, and must energetically fight in the defense of the interests of the working class and for a Spanish Workers and Peasants Republic.

—HENRI LACROIX

## THE MAY DAY MEETINGS

The Militant goes to press just before the May Day demonstrations are being held, and can therefore publish no details in this issue. The next issue will print adequate reports of the meetings and an analysis of the results.