

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD
UNITE!

THE MILITANT



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The Revolver at the Head of France The Hoover Reparations-Debts Scheme

The multi-millionaire representative of the American government, Mellon, has arrived in Paris and is holding the revolver to the head of the French bourgeoisie: Swallow the Hoover plan for a war debt-reparations holiday or—prepare to engage in combat with us, your superiors in every field! As these notes are being written, no final accord has yet been reached between France and the United States. Driven by the pressure of the trans-Atlantic colossus the Frenchmen have already yielded to the point of discussing only whether the suspended reparations payments are to be made up by Germany in five years or, as Hoover proposes, in twenty-five years. Whether the compromise is reached on a ten or a twelve year period will not radically effect the essence of the whole scheme.

What is the nature of this proposal which has been acclaimed almost universally by the bourgeoisie of most countries, hailed by the social democrats of Germany, England and Belgium, and given the accolade of approval by such lesser socialist and liberal "statesmen" as Morris Hillquit and Oswald Garrison Villard? In two words: Germany is allowed to suspend all reparations payments for a year; the European debtors are allowed to suspend all war debts to the United States for the same period.

What has necessitated this proposal, made so suddenly by Hoover, pressed with such impatience and intolerance of discussion or revision?

Germany is being wracked by one of its severest crises, acutely accentuated by crushing burdens of the imperialist treaty of Versailles. Its individual life, which must be maintained in order to make possible the payment of reparations to the Allies, is being stifled because the same Allies cannot afford to yield to Germany a greater share of the world market. Taxation rises to tremendous heights. The army of the unemployed increase without abatement. The wage level reduced to a miserably tenuous existence. The financial condition of the country is just short of catastrophic. Its gold reserves diminish at an alarming rate. The last Reichsbank report shows a decline of 750,000,000 gold marks, or one-fifth of the reserve. Ever-increasing sums of money are being exchanged for foreign currency. A marked flight of capital to other countries is observable. So ominous has the situation become that the Reichsbank—in the face of the crisis in which discount rates have dropped universally—was compelled to announce, effective from June 13, a sensational rise in the discount rate from 2 percent to 7 percent—with America's rate at 15 percent, France's at 10 percent and Switzerland's at 2.

The Crisis in the Young Plan

The world decline in commodity prices has had a unique effect on Germany. German industry must now produce 40 percent more in order to pay the charges under the Young plan, fixed in marks. Chancellor Brüning reports that instead of alleviating the Dawes burden by an annual 700,000,000 marks, the Young plan—under the conditions of the crisis and of price falls—has caused an additional payment of 200,000,000 marks annually.

The way out? Union with Austria perhaps? Hardly! Even were the French buccaneers to countenance its effectiveness is "Zukunftsmusik"—music of the future. The open road to the Danubian grain-producing countries is traveled only one way, by their exports of grain to Germany, but not by their imports of industrial goods. Higher taxes? The measures already taken have only multiplied the general misery and advanced the question of social revolution to the top of the social agenda. The vicious system of Versailles is wreaking havoc throughout Europe. The only way but for the masses is the proletarian victory.

But the tenacious bourgeoisie have one final resource: the assistance of the powerful, fabulously wealthy master across the sea who saved them once before. Suspend the reparations payments ere we perish under their pressure! Do not bleed to the death Germania, the bulwark against Bolshevism! With these cries on their lips, Brüning and Curtius pled their case before MacDonald at Chequers. His Majesty's Most Loyal Socialist Footmen, no less the foe of revolution than the Germans, were only too willing to accede to the latter's demands—if only the United States would let up on the war debts. That is why the London Observer warned the grasping Americans to this effect: Do not be shortsighted. Consider your own interests. The bankruptcy of Germany, a revolutionary wave flooding Central Europe, mean the end to the annual interest payments on your huge German investments!

It is this warning that Hoover has needed in the new plan. In 1924, the U. S. saved Germany from the effects of a revolutionary crisis which the revolutionists had fumbled. In 1931, it hopes to prop up decadent German capitalism from the impending revolutionists. The Hoover plan is designed to be as direct a blow to the revolution as was the stab in

the back delivered by Hoover's agent, Captain Gregory, to the Hungarian revolution in 1919. But American imperialism is not merely interested in the maintenance of the German bourgeoisie for their own sake; its interests are less "generous".

Why is Hoover so ready to forego "for a year" the millions due the U. S. in war debts, providing reparations payments are suspended? Because there is more than that involved if Germany is forced to go into bankruptcy and perhaps yield to the victory of a proletarian revolution. The United States according to the Department of Commerce, has more money invested in Germany (end of 1930) than in Great Britain, France and Belgium put together. Some sources put the figure of the total American investments in Germany (government loans, municipal loans, industrial enterprises, securities, etc.) at about 4 billion dollars! With a return on these investments of from 7 to 8 percent, "our" investors stand to lose the lucrative annual income of almost a third of a billion dollars. American bankers have more involved in their loans and investments in the municipality of Berlin and the Berlin City Electric than in the original Dawes loan (\$200,000,000) or the Young loan (\$100,000,000). Why not forego—for the moment—the war debt payments in face of the bankruptcy or revolutionary threat to the bankers' interests?

There is yet another point. Under pressure from the ruthless Americans, England has lost considerably in influence, power and prestige on the Continent. The U. S. has gained, but so has France, the best armed power in Europe, the most lavish spender of money for armaments. After England—comes France. Through its delegate McKelvie the United States has already spiked the French plan at the London Grain Conference to organize a Danubian grain-producers' entente under its hegemony. McKelvie simply made the hardly veiled threat to dump the tremendous American surplus. Now the United States is laying the ground for cutting into France's military strength by financial blackmail. Of the important countries involved, only France stands to lose substantially by the Hoover plan. Unlike England, even after it pays the U. S. war debt, France

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«Permanent Revolution» Barred in Canada

"The Permanent Revolution", the book by Leon Trotsky just published by the Pioneer Publishers has been barred from entry into Canada by the government customs division. The authorities apparently regard comrade Trotsky's work, for which there is a considerable demand in Canadian revolutionary circles, as "too seditions" for consumption by Canadian workers. The barring of the book was announced in a letter sent by the authorities to a Toronto worker. We reproduce the letter in full:

NATIONAL REVENUE CANADA
(Customs and Excise Divisions)
Port of Toronto, June 17, 1931

Mr.
Toronto, Ont. Re: Parcel No.
Dear Sir:

In connection with the above numbered parcel we wish to advise you that the Commissioner of Customs has refused entry of the contents, a book entitled, "The Permanent Revolution"

It may however, be returned to the sender by payment of postage in the amount of six cents, by you.

Failure to do this within ten days from the date thereof a seizure will be made in accordance with the regulations of the Customs Tariff.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) S. Taylor
Supt. Customs Postal Branch.

In the particular case under review, the authorities do not seem to have heard of the official Stalinist theory that Trotsky's work is "counter-revolutionary" and that he is an agent . . . of British imperialism. Or if they have heard of the theory, it appears that they do not agree with it.

A PICNIC

To Celebrate the Appearance of the Weekly Militant

The New York branch of the Communist League invites all militants to join with it at the Picnic to celebrate the appearance of the Weekly Militant. The affair will take place on

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1931

at TIBBETTSBROOK PARK
Games — Races — Rowing — Baseball

Directions: Jerome Ave.—Woodlawn subway to the end of the line. Hike or take street car to Park: Plot 8.

Miners Strike Against Wage Cuts and Starvation Conditions

During the last two weeks the striking miners in Western Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, and the Eastern part of Ohio have gained thousands of new recruits. More mines were shut down, picketing activities and mass demonstrations increased. With it increase also the murderous brutality of the coal and iron police, and the state Cossacks, in combination with the dastardly strike-breaking efforts of the official remnants of the United Mine Workers of America. This is their desperate way of attempting to prevent further expansion of the strike.

The Heavy Strike Toll

Several miners have already been killed, fallen victims to this brutality many have been wounded, and scores are held in the jails under almost prohibitive bail. Such is the heavy toll of this strike. Yet its powerful proportions testify eloquently not only to the terrible starvation conditions existing in these mine fields but also to what has become proverbial—the militancy of the miners. "Strike against starvation" has become a powerful slogan, effectively rallying

the coal miners.

It is worthy of note that it is particularly in this section of the bituminous coal fields that the mechanization of coal mining has reached its highest point and most extensive practice. It naturally resulted in immensely increased speed-up and in the most heavy imaginable pressure of exploitation. It is also precisely in this section that union organization during recent years has been fought most determinedly by the coal operators. It is natural that with a combination of these factors the working class power of resistance should demonstrate itself in such a splendid manner.

The National Miners Union is in the leadership in this strike. It is furnishing a fighting program. The sympathy of the striking miners in its overwhelming majority embraces the National Miners Union. It has good prospects for growth. These factors are also the practical evidence of the valuable lessons learned by the coal miners from the role played by the type of union officialdom of John L. Lewis and his henchmen of the U. M. W. While the striking miners now

demonstrate in reality that this is not their kind of union, they just as concretely demonstrate their understanding of the need of organization—of militant organization. It is interesting to note that in this strike the Pittsburgh Terminal Company was the first company to sign an agreement with the U. M. W. officials. Not that any of its striking workers were members, not that it had the slightest love for the U. M. W.; as a matter of fact, this company three years ago, was the most unscrupulous contender in the onslaught upon the United Mine Workers. It signed this agreement in an attempt to drive the miners back to the shafts, to utilize the state police and the U. M. W. gunmen, to accomplish this, and thus drive a wedge into the solid ranks of the strikers. If further lessons should be necessary we may add that the miners have now had one more serious experience in the role played by the forces of the state government on the side of the bosses. Likewise they are learning a good lesson about the role of the so-called "progressives" in the capitalist parties like Gov.

Pinchot who helped negotiate this agreement to break the strikers' ranks.

In face of these conditions the miners' strike in Western Pennsylvania, Northern West Virginia, and the Eastern part of Ohio, assumes greater importance even than the numbers involved would imply, imposing though they are. It shows definite working class advance; it proves the great reserve power of resistance of the American workers. Unquestionably it is only a beginning of working class resistance against the wage-cutting onslaught on a far more extended scale. In this sense it is a harbinger of the future prospects for growth of militancy, for building of unionism in the basic industries.

In this strike situation the Communist leadership faces two important problems. The one is caused by the brutal attacks of the combined capitalist forces upon the miners. It necessitates an energetic fight on a correct basis for the full establishment of the democratic rights of the workers, the right to strike, picket to assemble, to select their own representatives, the elimination of injunctions, of the state cossacks, etc. The second problem which is of still more importance is the one of continuous and tenacious building of organization, not merely the organization for the strike but union organization. It means the building of the National Miners Union not so as to disappear when the dramatic aspect of the strike is over but to build on a lasting basis. Organize!—Organize to be able to extend the struggle and actually secure victory to the miners. Organize to hold the key to the future.

Relief Urgent

For the working class in general this strike also brings to the fore a problem of vital importance. Relief must be forthcoming to feed and clothe the fighting miners. It should be sent to the Miners Relief Committee 611 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. Defense must be furnished. Assist the I. L. D. to defend all those strikers thrown into jails. This is a battle of the working class as a whole.

Ferment among the miners is also growing elsewhere. The Kentucky strikers are standing solid. In the Illinois fields some progress can be recorded toward breaking with the remnants of the treasonable U. M. W. But there are still the inherent weaknesses of the Musteite "progressive" leadership which to an extent has come into the direction of affairs in Illinois. At a conference held in Staunton the early part of the month in June, 500 delegates, representing 150 local unions, took part, and decided to call a convention on July 6th to "declare the offices of the district union vacant, proceed with the election of new officers, to change the constitution and to devise ways and means for a national policy." The greatest weakness is in the pussy-footing about the building of a new union and in the danger that the John L. Lewis forces may still maintain their foothold. To militant workers these weaknesses are no surprise when one understands the inherently reformist position of the Musteite type of "progressive". However there can be no real guarantee of success until these weaknesses are eliminated.

Today the relationship of the various coal fields presents itself somewhat as follows: In the anthracite region where production and with it employment has remained more "normal", the United Mine Workers is still the union in control. There the task of the Communists and the militant miners is certainly the one of building a Left wing within the union. In the soft coal fields the United Mine Workers as a union, with its reactionary leadership, is utterly discredited and practically out of existence. There the only alternative is the building of a new union. With the present sweep of possibilities of the National Miners Union as represented by the strike; with the developments toward a new union in other territories, one might ask again what would become of the miserable Lovestone Right wing policy of abandoning the new union movement and returning to the U. M. W. That would spell defeat for the miners' struggles. One may also ask what would it mean to continue this boycott practised by the official party leadership toward the new union movements not under their mechanical control. A continuation of such a policy would similarly be disastrous to the future prospects of the miners' movement.

There should be no question of a doubt that the only correct policy growing out of this strike must be one of further intensive organization, of building the new union movement, of amalgamating the various separate and sectional unions with the National Miners Union as a prelude to the building of one militant union firmly lodged on a class basis embracing all the coal miners. With such a policy the future can be faced with the confidence that within the perspective for coming sharpened struggles lay the possibility of victory for the w

An Appeal for Communist Unity in Spain

A Letter to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)

THE FURTHER FATE of the Spanish revolution depends entirely and completely upon whether an authoritative Communist party, capable of struggle, will be constituted in Spain in the coming months. Under the system of artificial splits imposed upon the movement from without, this is not realizable. In 1917, the Bolshevik party consolidated around itself all the currents kindred and close it. Carefully guarding the unity of its ranks and the discipline of action, the party at the same time opened up the possibility of a broad and all-sided consideration of the basic problems of the revolution (the March council, the April conference, the pre-October period). Can the proletarian vanguard of Spain elaborate its views and be imbued with that indomitable conviction in their correctness which alone will permit it to lead the masses of the people towards the decisive storm, through any other ways and methods? The mere fact—I adduce it as an example—that the official Communist party is compelled in the present situation to characterize Andres Nin as a counter-revolutionist, cannot but lead to a monstrous confusion, primarily in the Communist ranks themselves. Upon ideological confusion, the party cannot rise. The defeat of the Spanish revolution rendered inevitable by the further dismemberment and weakness of the Communists, will lead almost automatically to the establishment in Spain of genuine Fascism on the style of Mussolini.

*The letter published above was sent by comrade Leon Trotsky on April 24, 1931 to the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). Because no reply was received to the letter and the policy of the Comintern in Spain is still moving in the same rut, the author considers it necessary to make his letter public.

It is needless to speak of what consequences this would have for the whole of Europe and for the U. S. S. R. On the other hand, a successful development of the Spanish revolution, under the conditions of the far from terminated world crisis, would open up tremendous possibilities.

The profound differences on a series of questions pertaining to the U. S. S. R. and the world labor movement, should not stand in the way of making an honest attempt at a united front in the arena of the Spanish revolution. It is not yet too late! The policy of artificial splits must be stopped immediately in Spain, advising—not ordering, but just that, advising—the Spanish Communist organizations to convene in the briefest possible period a unity conference which should assure all shadings, under the necessary discipline of action, at least that degree of freedom of criticism which in 1917 was enjoyed by the various currents of Russian Bolshevism, which was in possession of incomparably higher experience and temper. There can be no doubt that if the official Spanish party understands the disproportion between its weakness and the tremendous tasks, and makes a serious attempt at the unification of the Communist ranks, it will meet the fullest support on the part of those revolutionary Communists who at present have their own separate organizations for reasons you are aware of and nine-tenths of which lie outside of the conditions of the Spanish revolution.

In order not to create even external difficulties, I made this proposal of mine not in the press but in the present letter. The course of events in Spain—there can be no doubt of this—will every day confirm the necessity of uniting the Communist ranks. The responsibility for a split, in the given instance will be a tremendous historical responsibility.

April 24, 1931

L. TROTSKY

Philadelphia Oppositionists Convicted of Sedition

Bernard Morgenstern and Leon Goodman, two members of the Communist League of America (Opposition), were found guilty of sedition under the notorious Flynn Act in a trial before Judge Reed on June 24. Sentence has not yet been rendered in the case. Steps are being taken for a new trial.

The case was tried before Judge Reed, a reactionary-minded jurist of Cambria County, sitting specially in the Philadelphia court. The state simply offered in evidence the leaflet issued by the Communist League on unemployment, which was in the form of appeal for a united front with the Communist party.

The section which was the basis for the sedition charge read: "Agitation slogans and immediate demands can present no

solution in themselves and should not be so assigned. They are, by the very nature of the class struggle strictly limited in their character. That is, they can offer means of temporary amelioration. And they must be a help to unite the workers on the basis of their common interests and to set them into motion against their class enemy. They cannot solve the problem. Only the proletarian revolution can do that." The distribution of the leaflet was, of course, admitted.

In arguing with the Judge, Defense Attorney David Wallerstein, of the Civil Liberties Union, was told that Reed had never seen a leaflet of this kind before, and that this was his first experience with the Sedition Act; that upon the question of fact as to whether there was an intent in the leaflet to overthrow the government by force and violence; and that he personally thought there was.

Attorney Wallerstein explained to him that the circular was almost in exactly the language of that in *Fiske vs. Kansas* in which case the Supreme Court of the United States reversed a conviction under the Kansas Syndicalism Act. Reed replied that he knew nothing about that case or any of the other cases on sedition. Nevertheless, he presided over the case and refused the defense request for a charge to the jury to dismiss the case.

The bill was again fixed at \$1,000, the same as before. In addition to the motion for a new trial to be made by the defense, there will also be a motion in arrest of judgment. The defense is prepared to go to the United States Supreme Court on the case if necessary.

The report of the trial would be incomplete without a reference to a most disgraceful action on the part of the Stalinist commanders of the International

al Labor Defense, the party, and the Daily Worker. From the very inception of the case, the I. L. D. officialdom has deliberately and criminally sabotaged the case. The need for a campaign in behalf of these victims of the Flynn Act was ended and rejected. The I. L. D. would not even furnish the defendants with a lawyer! The defense had to be conducted by the Civil Liberties Union attorney. The entire party press has not written one single word about the case. The Daily Worker and Freiheit have not even mentioned the conviction. The whole Stalinist conspiracy of silence and treachery is based solely upon the fact that besides the "crime" of sedition, the defendants have committed the "greater crimes" of being Left Oppositionists. The I. L. D. has defended anarchists, socialists, syndicalists, A. F. of L. men and others in the past. For Left Oppositionists, however, the I. L. D. officials find no better manner of acting than to give aid and comfort to the capitalist prosecution! Protests that have come from various I. L. D. and members have not yet changed the official attitude. These protests must multiply and pile up to such an extent that the I. L. D. and party bureaucrats are compelled to stop disgracing and discrediting the revolutionary movement by their sabotage.

The Philadelphia defense committee for Morgenstern and Goodman needs the assistance of every militant worker in the country. Financial aid, agitation, the development of a united movement against the Flynn Act and for its victims—these are urgent needs. Let those who stand in the way of such work, who undermine the defense of workers caught in the net of capitalist justice, be branded by their proper name!