

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

The Spanish Masses in Motion -- Where Is the Communist Party?

The Strikes

In our notes of the preceding week, we said, in speaking of the failure of the Pasajes (Guipuzcoa) strike that the movement failed, due to the Civil Guard and the massacre brought about by the government troops, but that the Pasajes strike was the point of departure for a strike movement around economic demands, involving the entire Spanish working class.

A week has passed, and the strike movement has taken on genuinely broad and deep proportions. In Coruña, the match workers are on strike. At Gijón, there is a strike of the street car workers. At Lugo, the painters are striking. In Morocco (at Mellilla) there is an electricians' strike, and small economic strikes are spreading everywhere. Yesterday, however, the biggest and the most serious strike since the coming of the Republic, broke out. The mine workers of the Asturias have gone on strike with the demand of a two peseta wage increase and a seven hour day. The Republican government, refusing to grant the seven-hour day, has taken the side of the mine operators. The reformist and social democratic leaders also ordered the workers not to go out on strike, at the same time organizing groups of strike breakers. On the very first day, the miners were already confronted by the reformist scabs. The first day of the strike brought about a bloody conflict, in which several workers fell, badly wounded.

At the time this is being written, the strike is still solid. More than 60 per cent of the Asturian miners are out, although the reformist leaders claim that only 20 per cent of the workers responded to the strike call. But even Maura, the minister of the Interior, is forced to admit that more than nine thousand of the twenty-five thousand workers are on strike. And at that, the figures of the minister are far from accurate. The strikers are determined to hold out against the aggression of the mine owners' agents. It is a very difficult situation for the social democrats, and the workers are beginning to distrust the promises of the socialist ministers.

The Partial Election of May 31

Sunday, May 31, was the day set for the election of the municipal councilors, still contested after the elections of April 12. As was predicted, the elections were a success for the socialist-republican coalition. The monarchists were victorious only in a few smaller villages. Only one candidate of the C. P. was elected, at Seville.

But it must be established that in the more strictly working class centers, it was the radical-socialists that were victorious, while the socialists were successful mainly in the villages with a petty bourgeois population. This is further evidence of the decline in the influence of the socialist party. The workers are more for the radicals, who, in the question of the reprisals against the Communists, are developing a more demagogic and seemingly more radical activity than the socialist strike breakers and butchers of the revolutionary workers.

Suprises are expected from the elections for the Constituent Assembly. A change of sentiment in the electorate is bound to benefit greatly the radical-socialists, who are the most radical wing of the bourgeoisie. It would mean a break in the hold of the socialist party as a workers' party, as it still styles itself.

It is regrettable that the C. P. has not yet been born. But for the leaders of the official C. P. without a following, "the party exists and works".

Financial Panic

Yesterday, the peseta fell in a most alarming fashion. Several banks and financial concerns ceased functioning. At Madrid, the panic is enormous. There is talk of the resignation of Indalcio Prieto, the minister of finance. The population is very restless because, due to the depreciation of the peseta, there is an increase in the cost of living and the most frightful starvation and misery for the working class. Due to the suspension of financial operations, a few industries, particularly in the building trades, working on a credit basis have been forced to foreclose. Thereby, the fall of the peseta has caused a direct increase in unemployment. We shall deal more thoroughly with this question in our notes for the coming weeks.

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In the Communist Party

At Madrid, the Autonomus Communist Organization has met. It was decided to propose to the E. C. of the official party the formation of a united front of the Communists for the approaching electoral struggle. Contrary to the good will of the comrades of the Madrid organization, we witness the provocation of the partisans of the irresponsible and adventurist E. C. Some of their followers came to provoke the meeting but the two hundred workers assembled energetically repudiated them.

We must note the almost childish faith that the comrades of the organization still have, in their hope to make a united front with the E. C. and their belief in a reaction against the bureaucrats of the E. C. C. I. Fortunately many of the comrades are beginning to realize that the crisis in the C. P. of Spain is only one manifestation of the crisis in the Comintern and that in order to bring about the unity of the Spanish Communist movement it is necessary to bring about Communist unity internationally and at the same time to change the political course of the C. I.

But the comrades must be convinced by their own experiences that the Left Opposition alone has a genuine Communist line. That is what the Spanish Communist Opposition and its monthly, *Comunismo* which was acclaimed by the comrades in Madrid, Bilbao, the Asturias etc., are actually doing.

—HENRY LACROIX.

The British Scene

England's Economic Plight

The decline of the British empire has almost become proverbial. The last part of the nineteenth century already witnessed the rise of the threat to its domination. Germany, then the most active competitor, began crowding England in the world market. But it is since the world war, and the establishment of the United States as a world dominant creditor nation, that the decline has become more accelerated. This is perhaps not so much demonstrated in actual figures of lost ground as in the import of their comparison with general world market conditions, and above all in the political import of this factor.

England did not experience since the war, an intervening "prosperity" period as did the United States from 1924 to 1929, as did France, not even such a temporary upward swing as took place in Germany. Since the world war she has been saddled with an enormous indebtedness to the United States. It would be difficult to calculate the total amount, but payments of the purely governmental debts to U. S. for the proposed moratorium year alone would amount to \$159,520,000 according to the New York Times estimate. After a desperate struggle, England did succeed in re-establishing her gold standard but is now quite alarmed at the protracted heavy flow of gold to the U. S. and France.

The decline has become reflected within the country, that is, aside from the differentiation of interests within the dominion empire, in a steadily mounting unemployment; in a marked uncertainty within the upper class; in decline of the decadent Liberal party and new divisions within the political parties in general, both capitalist and labor; in a diminution of the formerly powerful aristocracy of labor as well as in sharpened class antagonisms.

"Gradualness" some time ago became the sacred gospel of Baldwin and MacDonald alike. As far as its object is concerned there have been no fundamental differences discernible, all possible pious protestations by MacDonald to the contrary notwithstanding. And surely England is now experiencing a gradualness of decline, with—as in all past history, so also in the future—prospects of some violent interruptions, both of war and of revolutionary upheavals.

Today the export of British goods is declining more rapidly than is international trade. Figures are very tiresome but to cite a few in demonstration will nevertheless prove illuminating. The net favorable balance, or credit to British trade and services of all kinds for the year 1930 amounted to \$189,000,000. Before the war, with its lower price level, the net balance was nevertheless much higher. For example, in 1913 a total of \$878,000,000 and in 1907 a total of \$670,000,000. How seriously England has been hit by the present world crisis is illustrated by the Board of Trade index number of industrial production. With 1924 as its base line it shows a drop from 114 in the fourth quarter of 1929 to 110.7 in the first quarter of 1930; to 103.1 in the second quarter; to 99.5 in the third quarter. The yet more recent figures of the Board of Trade for the first quarter of 1931 shows a fall of imports of \$368,467,665 and of exports of \$330,692,555 below the corresponding period of 1930.

Growing Conflict in World Market

The competition and preparations for the conflict with the United States pro-

ceeds everywhere. In China it cannot be said that England has been most successful. It alternately backed the various reactionary militarist oppositions to the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek which of course, was equally as reactionary but so far more successful. The "open door" policy of the American imperialists—because of their having less important concessions—won favor with the bourgeoisie of the Chinese Nationalist government. The success to date of its present degree of stabilization is in no small measure due to the defeat of the revolution of the Chinese workers and peasants because of the Menshevik policy by which it was conducted by the Stalin Comintern regime. However, the perspectives for political superiority of American imperialism in China are by no means secured. The Chinese revolution is still smoldering.

In South America, British imperialism is striving desperately to maintain its foothold against the American aggressor. But the immense preponderance of credits available in Wall Street presses continually for new fields of investments. Recently the air has been astir with newspaper rumors of some sort of extension of the Hoover moratorium action for "relief" of South America. However, as is admitted, it is in this sphere not a question of governmental debts and hence the purpose could possibly better be accomplished without official governmental action. And no doubt Wall Street itself will know how to make the broadest possible application of the Monroe Doctrine with its government ready to back it up in due time. British investments in South America are still far greater than those of the American imperialism. According to "Revista de Economía Argentina" the figures in 1928 were \$4,103,000,000 for England and \$2,167,000,000 for the United States.

It is in the control of electricity and mineral properties that the greatest duel is being waged in the South American republics. When the New York Stock Exchange boom was on, many securities went from London to New York. After the slump set in some have traveled the way back. In the little revolution in Brazil, Wall Street prematurely "backed a loser" and since then the successful "revolutionists" have called to their assistance an expert of the Bank of England and not of the Federal Reserve. But such an instance can hardly yet be considered typical.

Recently the Royal Salesman made a tour of the South American republics—it will be remembered that Hoover also made a similar "good will" tour just before his inauguration. The Royal Salesman returned and had a nice little speech written up for him which he delivered to a gathering of fellow capitalists at Manchester. It laid great stress on the problem of England's recapture of these parts of the world markets lost to the United States.

Growing Conflict at Home

British capitalism, however, is now violently torn between the two problems of struggle to maintain its world market position or turning the major attention more inwardly upon the dominion and colonial empire. Although this turn is pretty much forced by necessity, in either field its difficulties are mounting, not diminishing. With this is connected also the growing conflict of protective tariff walls as against free trade. Many have been the voices recently favoring

more than an hour, arrested a large number of our comrades, later condemned to several months of imprisonment.) In order not to give them any excuse, we decided to demonstrate with the party at the places designated by them, although we were certain that these demonstrations would be attended only by members and sympathizers of the two organizations. In the Pull No. 21 we published an appeal to the entire organization and its sympathizers to participate in the united front and to demonstrate with the party. At the same time, we took all the necessary preparatory measures to assure its success.

All our members and sympathizers responded to the appeal in a body. This threw the party people into a fit, marked by shameless sabotage. **Demonstration Disrupted** At Athens seeing the concentration of our forces, they started the demonstration prematurely and without any results. They gave the police an opportunity to intervene and to proceed with mass arrests. Seeing this situation, our comrades followed in rapid succession, but their march was quickly stopped by swinging black-jacks and countless arrests. After the dispersal of the demonstrators at the Omnia Place the demonstration reassembled in front of the public offices of Venizelos. Before a sufficient number of the demonstrators, 90 per cent of them our comrades, had gathered there, about twenty Y. C. L. members began to shout; and, after a few minutes took to their heels and went over to acclaim the Soviet Embassy, leaving our comrades alone to battle the police with stones and to draw fire on themselves. In this manner, the formation of a new manifestation to compensate for the meeting broken up at the Omnia places was obstructed.

At Salonica, they refused to announce the meeting place, to cause us confusion. All that was achieved at Salonica, was brought about against the will of the party leadership. At Volo, two of our comrades who shouted our slogans of united front with the party at the party demonstration, were seized by party members and handed over to the police, who promptly gave them "the works". We proposed a Commission of Inquiry, composed of members of both organizations, but to this day we have not yet received a reply.

At Cavalla, the police arrested the comrade who bore the letter proposing the united front to the party. The party leaders disappeared and consequently, due to the lack of united action, little was accomplished, outside of a meeting of two hundred workers called by our comrades in front of the Tribunal.

empire economic unity. Especially noteworthy the empire crusade conducted by Lord Rothermere and Beaverbrook and the break within the Conservative party on this issue. Even the General Council of the British trade unions joined with the Federation of British Industries in issuing a statement for empire economic unity at the time of the last T. U. Congress at Nottingham.

At the last imperial conference the dominion premiers came and apparently fell right into line with the economic unity idea. As a matter of fact it was hailed like their own proposals, to be connected with the most favored nations clause; but as the discussions developed further it was soon found that the dominions, having developed capitalist economic interests of their own came into even sharper collision with those of the mother country and thus the idea does not stand so well. Multiplications of capitalist contradictions record some classic examples in England. Its age-long dominance in the world market, with a steady flow of import of raw materials and export of manufactured goods and a foundation of a colonial empire, free trade became elevated to a sacred principle. Way back, during the hard times of the Elizabethan days steps were earnestly taken for colonial expansion. The manufacture of those days was prohibited in the colonies, great tariff walls were erected with a free interchange within the empire of staple products to England and finished goods to the colonies. Came the industrial revolution in England; the world market lay at its feet and the tariff walls could be eliminated.

History is now repeating itself—and we might add—while it was the first time as a tragedy, it is the second time as a farce. A section of the capitalist class, and indeed the most powerful section, is reverting to the clamor for protection for England's decadent industry. For the development of a young capitalist industry facing an open world market, protective tariff walls can easily become an important incentive. But matters stand entirely different in England today. For a declining empire facing a definitely divided world market, for a bankrupt system, neither the reactionaries of protectionism nor the reactionaries of free trade can furnish the solution. That can be furnished only by the program of the social revolution.

—ARNE SWABECK.

THE ARCHIO-MARXISTS IN ACTION

Left Opposition Leads the May Day Struggles in Greece

Our Archio-Marxist comrades of the Greek Left Opposition have transmitted the following report concerning the events of the First of May and their part in them. It is sufficient merely to publish it to refute all the calumnies circulated against these valiant comrades.—Ed.

On the occasion of the First of May, our organization, in an open letter published in the Pull ton Takeoon No. 20 proposed a united front to the party in the demonstrations at the different places where the workers have been accustomed to assemble each year (since 1918), at Renti, between Athens and Piraeus. We motivated our proposals on the fact that although our proletariat is very militant in its economic struggles, it has not yet reached the point of fighting for political aims and of rising against the state, which prohibited all meetings in our city. In our opinion, it was our duty to go where the workers are to be found at present, in order to lead them much further.

In their paper, they called us social democrats and splitters, who with this action want to pull the workers out of the town and thereby play the game of the bourgeoisie. (We must not forget last year: while the party dissipated itself in militant demonstrations of 5 and 10 people, our organization organized a meeting at Renti, which was attacked by the police, who after a battle lasting

more than an hour, arrested a large number of our comrades, later condemned to several months of imprisonment.)

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At Salonica: one Archio-Marxist was seriously wounded. A number of comrades have been arrested but not yet brought to trial. The charges against them are seditious murder and violation of the Extra-ordinary Law.

At Cavalla, 5 Archio-Marxists were condemned to 15 years imprisonment and deportation and one party member to 5 years. Our comrades were, besides, tortured for ten consecutive hours, to make them reveal the names of the authors of the leaflets we distributed. They lost consciousness but revealed nothing; and gained the admiration of the party comrades arrested with them.

We had hoped to gather around us a few thousand workers, if Renti had been accepted as the meeting place. As it was, the manifestation at Athens comprised only the members and sympathizers of the two organizations. However we could not adopt a different attitude from the one we did, because that would only have brought grist to the mill of the party leaders.

Polish Social Democrats Capitalize on the Blunders of Stalinism

At the end of May, the annual congress of the Polish Socialist Party (P. P. S.), Polish section of the Second International, met at Cracow. The debates at the congress, like the atmosphere in which it took place, were entirely different than during the previous sessions of the social democracy, marking above all the influence of the world economic crisis and the role of the U. S. S. R. on the Polish proletariat. Never since the war have words so "filled with revolutionary ardor" been pronounced, never has a more severe condemnation of the capitalist regime fallen from the lips of the P. P. S. leaders. For the first time since the resurrection of independent Poland has a congress of the Socialist Party expressed itself resolutely against a war with the U. S. S. R. and even for the defense of the U. S. S. R. (!).

Reasons for "Radicalization"

One asks what it is that could "radicalize" the P. P. S. in this manner during the congress. Besides the world crisis, two unexpected and at first sight contradictory things have operated. In the form of the degeneration of the Polish Communist Party and the economic development of the U. S. S. R. Moreover, examples where the social democracy, knowing the weakness of the C. P., permits itself to make game with Left phrases of the workers who are deeply affected by the crisis, are not limited to Poland. One can make a general observation that with the development of the crisis and the ever growing decay of the C. I., the social democracy which, at the beginning of the crisis tended to want to calm down the spirits of the workers to diminish the importance of the crisis, no longer conduct themselves in this manner. On the contrary, the leaders of the Left social democracy and even those of the Center speak openly about the crisis of the regime and advance as the sole way out of the crisis—socialism. To be sure, they take good care not to point out the concrete roads for attaining it, but the mere fact that the social democracy which has remained the most loyal servitor of the bourgeoisie, permits itself to pronounce a verdict against the bourgeois regime at a congress, is quite significant for the present epoch.

With the absence of a leading force, these demonstrations, which frequently cost the proletariat fatalities, lead to nothing. A few weeks ago, four mine workers were killed in a strike and a

At Agrin, the police made preventive arrests. Seventy workers, members of our organization, struck.

We did all in our power to assure the success of the demonstrations. The party did everything to sabotage common action. If our united front proposals had been accepted and special joint commissions of the two organizations formed, the First of May would have been a success. Without our participation, their First of May demonstrations turned out to be a fiasco.

Our action made such an impression on the party, that for two days its paper did not breathe a word and tried hard to screen them. Then it proceeded with its habitual slanders and finally, of late, it has prohibited its members even to go near our comrades. On the other hand, the party members who are really sincere, salute us as comrades wherever we meet. They are beginning to come to our offices and to our unions. All the comrades of our organization have understood through their own experience what a powerful arm the united front is in the struggle against Stalinism.

In so far as we ourselves are concerned, we have noted a great number of mistakes, which hindered a success corresponding to the preparations taken. Although the mobilization of our forces at Athens was almost complete, lack of initiative and of experience were the cause for the non-realization of our aim.

We have suffered the following casualties: At Athens, of the thirty comrades convicted (eight to two months and 22 to one month's imprisonment respectively), 7 Archio-Marxists received two months' imprisonment each and 8 more, one month each; all in all, 15 Archio-Marxists were convicted.

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general protest strike embracing the whole mining section broke out after the killing. In all these movements, the Communist Party of Poland was without any influence. The First of May, 1931, already emphasized this weakness of the Communist movement, resulting from the party too a bureaucratic appendage to the Stalinist regime, which has made of this party the Centrist International. The P. C. P. in the past had virile cadres, a well-rooted influence among the mine workers, the metal workers, etc.—today there is nothing or almost nothing left of it. One of the last strongholds, where the influence of German Communism moreover, should play a positive role, was lost in the last elections to the benefit of the P. P. S. Only the degeneration and the decline in influence of Communism permits the P. P. S. to consolidate itself and to play at "radicalization".

The Opposition at the Congress had almost half the votes, and yet no split took place, which proves once more that Communism is far from being a menace to the P. P. S. In Lenin's time, so profound a discussion in the ranks of the social democracy would have led to the passage of whole organizations to Communism.

Results of "Social Fascism" Theory

Today there is nothing of the kind—the masses disillusioned by the policy of the bloc of the social democracy with the bourgeois and peasant Left demand action against Fascism but at the same time retain their confidence in the P. P. S. and let themselves be lulled by the Left leaders. Can more disastrous examples be found of the Stalinist tactic toward "social Fascism", a tactic which admirably serves the social democracy at the time when the crisis is undermining all its foundations?

The question of the U. S. S. R. was raised a number of times at the congress. The deputy Czaplinski, who delivered the report on the world situation, made the following demagogic proposals in connection with the dangers of war: "Manuilsky said at the last Plenum of the C. I. that the P. P. S. is in the front ranks of the reparations for an anti-Soviet war. A representative of the Soviet Telegraphic Agency is present. Let him write to Moscow that the P. P. S. is not only not preparing a war, but that it will oppose with all its strength an aggression against the U. S. S. R." These words were warmly applauded by the delegates and those present on the platform.

It must be avowed that the change is profound. The P. P. S. which, as recently as the First of May, condemned the U. S. S. R. in its appeal has made an abrupt turn in this question following the new orientation of the Polish bourgeoisie itself—an orientation inaugurated at Geneva by the notorious speech of Litvinov on the "peaceful co-existence of the two systems".

The increasing need of machines and credits in the U. S. S. R., occurring parallel to the development of the economic crisis, makes it one of the best clients of the world bourgeoisie, and provokes among the capitalists a veritable race for Soviet orders. The Polish bourgeoisie has not remained indifferent; and in the turn it has sent to the U. S. S. R. a delegation which concluded some good business and received important orders for its industry. This fact cannot remain unknown to the Polish workers and unemployed, among whom is being manifested a strong current of sympathy for the U. S. S. R.

The leaders of the P. P. S., who know very well the currents agitating the working class, did not hesitate to make a turn and to proclaim themselves defenders of the U. S. S. R., which will hardly prevent them tomorrow, in a different situation, from being the most aggressive enemies of the U. S. S. R.

Where is the Communist Party?

But where is the Polish C. P. in all this? Here again is a consequence of Centrist which by its policy of adventurism or else of opportunism, lets go by the best opportunities for winning the proletariat and weakening the social democracy.

When the Left Opposition, two years ago, advanced the slogan of "economic collaboration with the U. S. S. R." with the aim of strengthening Communism and unmasking the social democracy, the Centrists of the whole world and the leaders of the P. P. C. shouted about opportunism and did everything to sabotage the realization of this slogan. Today, economic collaboration is being realized between the U. S. S. R. and the capitalist states, but Communism is incapable of drawing any profit from it for its propaganda and of unmasking the social democracy.

The congress of the P. P. S. threw a light upon two things: (1) the working class is in a state of effervescence and on the lookout for new roads; (2) the economic development of the U. S. S. R., which can bring about deep changes in the social democratic mass. Only the mistakes of Centrist, only the incapacity to which the Stalinist leadership has reduced Communism prevents the Polish proletariat from turning away from the social democracy and regaining the revolutionary road.

—FELIX.