

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

GERMANY

The Latest Decree Against the Workers

The Brüning government has issued a new emergency decree. Every emergency decree of this government leads to a further worsening of the position of the toiling masses. The disbursements of unemployment insurance and crisis provision are cut down further. The youth under 21 is henceforth robbed of any support. The duration of support of seasonal workers is cut down, the insurance provisions are reduced. The voluntary obligation to labor, which means nothing but forced labor is raised to the level of a law. The agrarian tax usurers remain untouched, sugar is made increasingly dear. The salaries of the small and middle class officials are cut down, but the high pensions, on the contrary, remain unchanged. The war invalids, the poorest of the toilers, again have their support reduced. The Emergency decree contains still other provisions which signify new burdens for the exploited. An end is made to the already feeble remnants of communal self-administration.

Policy of German Bourgeoisie

The policy of the Germany bourgeoisie is unceasing. Without any democratic hindrances, it continues its robber policy towards the proletariat. The deficit of the country is to be born exclusively by the toilers, but the bourgeoisie must at the same time increase its profits. What is the genuine meaning of this decree?

The German bourgeoisie is striving to destroy with all the means at its command, the positions still remaining to the working class and to suppress it completely. The realization of this aim is given over to Fascism. But aside from Fascism, the possibility is still left to the bourgeoisie to realize its plans with the aid of the Brüning government which is supported by the social democracy. This road cannot be accompanied by such dangerous convulsions as would be the case with a Fascist uprising. Brüning's road is still the surest one. It does not take from the working class all its political, economic, cultural and social rights at one blow. By this tactic of the bourgeoisie, the social democratic leaders gain the possibility to continue their betrayal not only of the historical interests of the working class but also of their daily interests, without any great obstacles in their path. On this road, it is easier to talk the masses into the notion that the decree must be issued for emergency reasons. With the announcement of each emergency decree, the workers only protest, but for the moment they do not yet rebel.

In every emergency decree the main point is directed against unemployment support. Is this done out of reasons of emergency, of economy? Is this really the main reason? The bourgeoisie knows clearly that thanks to the organization of the working class, its policy of exploitation is subject to certain limits. The experiences of the former and the recent economic struggles have showed that while the betrayal of the reformist bureaucracy is incessant, at the same time, however, regardless of the generally bad economic situation and the enormous unemployment, no or almost no strike-breakers appear. In order to achieve wage reductions of from thirty to forty percent, however, the bourgeoisie needs the support of a strike-breakers' guard. The industrialists know that the reformist bureaucracy, which will betray strikes in the future too, will then have still better arguments for keeping the workers back from struggle. Through the reduction of unemployment support, the bourgeoisie hopes to demoralize and to disorganize a part of the working class, to make them a reservoir of strike-breaking for the future.

The Aims of the Decree

Since the young workers under 21 have not yet had the possibility to gain a firm class consciousness through political and trade union training, since they still have few traditions of struggle, the bourgeoisie believes that it can sooner yoke them to its policy. The young will follow the old. The next emergency decree will reduce the support of additional categories. The bourgeoisie wants to abolish the wage scale system. The present emergency opens a free road. The bourgeoisie calls it: "Re-establishment of the freedom of motion of private rule." In reality, the introduction of coöperative wages is to be attained in this manner. The working class need have no illusions on a change of this policy without struggle. The policy of the bourgeoisie in this question is systematic and conscious of purpose. The aim of all the emergency decrees is to destroy the still existing ability of the working class to struggle, to create the conditions for an enormous exploitation policy of finance capital.

To hold back their own adherents, who are being radicalized under the lash of the crisis, from the struggle against the present system, the Welles, Severings, and similifers paint for them a picture of the danger of a Fascist overturn. Therefore, better the Brüning government, "the lesser evil"! And the slogan has up till now still kept back the S. P. workers. In the days of the crisis in Berlin.

Clearing Away the Petty Bourgeois Fog

On the Road to the Proletarian Revolution in Spain

With the falling of the monarchy, there begins in Spain the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist state. Spain is one of the nations which, like the Russia of the czars, preserved the monarchic form of the state until the epoch of the final crisis of the bourgeois system of property. Passing through the historical period of the bourgeois revolutions, capitalism, indifferent to the form of government, was introduced and developed in Spain in a parasitic manner, living by the graces of the despotism of a ruling bureaucracy which the monarchist autocracy had maintained until then with the last resources of a colonial empire and with the drawn blood of a brutalized and hungry peasant mass. Spanish capitalism was at no time the natural product of the development of the native petty bourgeoisie. Hence the possibility for the monarchy to succeed in prolonging its life to the present day, due to the fact that capitalism, from its first steps onward, made the monarchist state its own. If today we see the destruction of the monarchy, it is not just because of the impulsion of the "ideological forces" of the petty bourgeois intellectual, but rather of the irresistible pressure of the exploited masses of town and country for whom, on the clock of history, the hour of their revolution has finally struck. It signifies nothing that for the moment it is the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, the republican-socialist (!) bloc which is apparently on its high horse. These poor illusionists, reactionary utopians will not have long to wait in order to receive for themselves the sad lesson of the events.

The petty bourgeois intellectual is profoundly deceived thanks to his gross error in perspective and appreciation of historical forces. Nothing is more stupid and futile than the ignorant and charlatanist abuse that Marcelino Domingo and others of those who make up the present provisional government practise by comparing historical situations in order to establish a system of foolish analogies, devoid of any content. Contrary to the belief and to the "theory" of the petty bourgeoisie which "rules" today, the revolutionary duel in Spain is being engaged in not between the feudal state and democracy, but rather between the capitalist state and the industrial proletariat allied with the exploited peasant masses. The petty bourgeoisie, the social foundation of the ideology of the gov-

The fact that the Spanish state, until April 14 last, retained the form of a despotic monarchy, is enough for the cowardly coterie of intellectuals who "rule" today to conclude that it is a question of a feudal state. Naturally, this "small" manifestation of a historical

mirage leads straight to a consideration of the rest of the population as a mass of slaves and future "citizens" engaged in overthrowing the tyranny in order, at the next stage, to polish up the sacred "rights of man and the free citizen". Alfonso XIII is Louis XVI; Zamora is Necker; Prieto is Danton; Marcelino Domingo is Robespierre . . . and so on down the line. Alcalá Zamora and Miguel Maura represent the Girondist faction. A bit ungraceful is the end of the first act of this "tragedy", seeing that these operetta Jacobins so gallantly assisted the "despot" to flee across the frontier, carrying with him the people's millions. And lastly, we have still to hear the sound of "The Girondins have betrayed us! To the lantern with them!"

In this false historical analogy, the product of a complete ignorance of the real content of the revolution is rooted the multitude of democratic illusions of the petty bourgeois intellectuals who, like a thick mantle of fog, veil the social reality and prevent the clear examination of the genuine character of the struggle and the forces at hand. The narcotic effects of this kind of ideological opium is felt not only in the sector of the petty bourgeoisie but also influences the attitude of the working masses, lacking in critical judgment and wanting a political leadership of its own in tune with the state of historical evolution. All this contributes heavily to the insolent vanity of the intellectual nucleus of the petty bourgeoisie which

FOR THE SPANISH OPPOSITION PRESS

The events in Spain follow in rapid succession. Each day brings news of the proletariat awakening to a realization of its strength. Every struggle, every strike of the workers brings them into sharper conflict with the bourgeoisie whom they helped to power against the monarchy. The process of disillusionment with the ruling power and of enlightenment as to their own historic mission is sinking its roots deeply in the consciousness of the masses. Only the Communists can hasten this process and place themselves at the head of the proletariat for their final victory. In this magnificent work, the Left Opposition in Spain has taken its place at the very head of the movement. Reviled, slandered, persecuted, it is yet forging ahead to the best of its power. It needs the aid of every militant throughout the world. Its press, the organ through which it speaks to the class conscious workers, must be strengthened immediately. The Militant appeals to all its readers to give the most generous aid to our Spanish comrades. Funds are urgently needed. Send all you can to this great cause of the revolution. All contributions will be receipted and announced in these columns. Send all moneys to comrade A. Gonzales, care of the Militant, 84 East 10th St., N. Y. C.

has begun to take seriously its role as champion in the "struggle for the liberation of the people from the yoke of despotism". Notwithstanding, this false situation is purely transitory. It will not take long for the democratic intoxication to be dissipated. Revolutionary situations are the strongest antidote to all varieties of poison and ambiguous ideals. The coming events in the Spanish revolution will make manifest, without much delay what the democratic bloc really is: a conglomeration of illusions which simulate independent political action is nothing but one of the masks (the smiling one) of the counter-revolution. If, in the period of a relative equilibrium of the social antagonisms it is possible for ideas, born out of a reality of the past, to appear as the proper norms of social life, the special virtue of revolutions rests precisely on the fact that they draw to the surface, place in the first rank and accentuate to the highest point the antagonisms which had been veiled by the deceptive ideological mist. This is what will happen immediately in Spain, making obvious to the blind the profoundly reactionary and utopian character of the so-called democratic bloc.

Against the view of petty bourgeois ideology, theoretically represented in the provisional government — theoretically and no more, since it has been proved in practice to the hilt that there is no place in contemporary society for a directing function of the petty bourgeoisie; every government that is not the direct embodiment of the historical interests of the proletariat, is an instrument of the capitalist dictatorship—we, Marxian critics, the theorists of the revolutionary proletariat, assert roundly that the Spanish monarchy is not at all a feudal state. This is the political lie of the "revolutionary" democracy which, in order to counterfeit a struggle for an emancipation which does not exist creates a fantasy with which to divert the popular masses from the real road of the revolution. It is a question of a maneuver through which the ruling bloc tries to hide its reactionism in the service of big capital. They believe, these ignoramus, that it is possible to scoff at historical intentions, juggling the tremendous social truth by means of exercises in lyrical sleigh-of-hand. (To be continued.)

Bilbao — ESTEBAN BILBAO.

ARGENTINE

Uriburu Dictatorship Strangles Labor

The political and social situation of Argentina is at a standstill just now. The rule of General Uriburu is a failure so far as the well-being of the country is concerned. Even at the time of the last war there was not so much unemployment as there is at the present time; the farming population this year got the biggest knock it ever had, with millions of tons of grain unsold. The big bugs try to put the blame on "Russia's dumping"—but nobody seriously believes it.

Mum is the word in the labor and social movement. The biggest crime anybody can commit now is to criticize this government, so the socialist Vanguardia is the only one that comes out as usual. Of Communist and Anarchist papers there is no sign, since all their leaders are dispersed.

Of course, the advanced labor movement is supposed to be ready in face of the reaction, such as the closing of the labor halls and unions, suppression of the newspapers, denial of permits for meetings and conferences, etc. But the revival of the procedure of czarist Russia is something new in South America. For the social and labor movements there is now no law but the military law—that is, the secret law of some generals and officers. A man is taken from his home or on the street and is invited to go over to the police station or to the barracks. From there he is sent to the jail or to the military tribunal. Then he disappears—perhaps exiled, deported sent to jail or to Ushuaia (convict settlement in Tierra del Fuego). All this without a word to anybody. His friends and relations don't know where the man has gone to; the newspapers are silent. We don't know the number of men so dealt with, but it must run into the hundreds by this time.

That is why there is a dead calm in the labor and social movements in Argentina. Everything is paralyzed—but men are thinking and resentment is growing.

The Conservatives are uneasy; the general elections have been put back to November 8; the probabilities are that by that time this military government will tie itself into a knot.

—R. G. Buenos Aires.

The British Scene

MacDonald and Rationalization

Has the MacDonald government any "solution" for England's crisis? Oh yes! But in reality its proposed "solution" is identical in content with that of the British financial interests, although quite different in form and in the phrasing of its presentation.

Its proposals are the overhauling of the industrial machinery—rationalization—which means closing of "unprofitable" mines, mills and factories; more labor saving machinery; more speed-up; greater output, and thus more goods at lower costs of production for the already overstocked world markets. These proposals are already being carried out and from them flow the inevitable conclusion—increased unemployment and wage cuts. The royal cabinet similarly proposes further mergers of establishments within industry and finance. This also has its sinister significance in greater monopoly, and larger and more powerful combines to dictate more effectively working conditions.

It will be recalled that more than a year ago, when British financial interests, following in the footsteps of its two most powerful competitors, their kin of the United States and Germany, went in for rationalization, the Bank of England employed at a royal salary a rationalization dictator. His specific duty was to lay down terms for rationalization, when applications for loans were made by industrial enterprises. The "labor" government became an effective handmaiden in these schemes. The results are, as already stated, mounting unemployment and drastic wage cutting.

A Campaign of Wage Slashing

To lend emphasis to the extent of present wage cutting just a few examples will prove illuminating: During the month of April, about a million and a half British workers in some of the biggest and most vital industries accepted a reduced standard, cajoled into acceptance by their reactionary leaders who held the whip over their heads of threats to break any resistance. The railway unions, embracing some 450,000 men, received a cut, decreed by the National Wages Board, of two and a half percent for those earning less than \$8.00 weekly and five percent for those earning more than \$8.00 weekly. Of the clerical grades, those earning more than \$500.00 yearly received a seven and a half percent wage cut. This is how the semi-governmental agencies—of the "labor" government—function to help overcome the crisis.

In the building trades the employers demanded wage cuts and changed gradings involving further reductions for 800,000 workers. Because of a threatening strike situation, the union leaders induced them to accept a six months truce, hoping meanwhile to more effectively prepare the actual cuts. In South Wales an "independent" arbitrator finally rendered an award calling for a reduction of \$1.75 a week for 162,000 coal miners. Here also, when a strike became threatening, the union leaders again succeeded in cajoling them into acceptance on the promise of asking the government for the passage of a new minimum wage law—whatever that will mean.

In the pottery trade, on the main steamship lines, and in the ship building yards, wage cuts are demanded by the employers. About 1,000,000 men in the engineering trades (machinists and metal workers) have accepted a new agreement involving reductions of standards and working conditions. These examples are sufficient to present a picture as to how the British workers fare under the rationalization of industry by the "labor" government.

It should now be clear also why these pious christian gentlemen of the MacDonald government, in service to their capitalist masters, demand and promulgate mergers of industrial establishments. Their Coal Miners Act of last year established a state supervising organization based upon a regional division of the industry; and, since the proof of the pudding is in the eating, in this instance it was presented in the arbitration wage cut decree to the Wales miners. Now the union leaders of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation propose to ask the government to bring the industry within the control of a public utility corporation. Their efforts will likely not prove unavailing, the same as can possibly be said for the efforts and loud clamors of Jimmie Thomas in the negotiations for the wage cuts to the railroad workers for mergers of the existing roads.

With an overhauling of industrial machinery, accomplished primarily at the cost of a lower working class level British capitalism nourishes its hopes of still maintaining a leading position in the world market. Although compelled to proceed from a greatly contracted basis it will undoubtedly fight desperately for its diminishing ration. One section is focussing its attention upon the growing market in the U. S. S. R. While these upper circles are torn with

the conflict between further extension of trade relations with the Soviet Republic or prosecution of its hypocritical fight against "dumping" what they really want is to change the present adverse balance, which has obtained ever since the re-establishment of trade relations. According to the figures of the British Customs House, during the first quarter of 1931, the Soviet Union sold goods to England to the value of \$31,206,635; while goods sold by England to the Soviet Union amounted to only \$6,921,189. The conflict was quite clearly expressed by Sir Geoffrey Clark a director of shipping and other companies, when he proposed the two alternatives. "One," he said, "is united action to restrict the import of Russian goods, which is not easy to effect, especially as certain great countries are now reaping a harvest from Russian orders. The other method is to adopt a system of barter whereby Russian goods would be paid for in the goods of importing countries on the principle of balanced exchange." Yes, not only balanced exchange but if possible to get in on that harvest. In this respect, the British capitalists are not the least sentimental.

Extension of trade relations with the Soviet Union in successful competition with the other capitalist powers, however, involves the granting of large-scale, long-term credits of which the workers' republic is in need. And just a couple of days ago, Thomas Johnson, with the exalted title of Lord Privy Seal, announced the intention of granting long-term credits for an expected order of up toward \$50,000,000 for heavy machinery material. The gigantic strides of the youthful Soviet industry will yet for some time to come require a growing trade with the capitalist world, a growing import of machinery to build the industry toward a socialist level. With long-term credits from the capitalist nations this task could undoubtedly be immensely facilitated. Unemployment is steadily mounting in England and there would seem to be a special opportunity to set the British workers into motion around the slogan of "granting large scale credits to the Soviet Union." To demand from the capitalist rulers to furnish such credits and to increase production in England of machinery to the Soviet Union. This special opportunity belongs to the British Communist Party. It would afford the means of creating a powerful movement around a specific demand upon capitalism at home. It would afford the means of making the British workers real participants in the building of Soviet industry.

Alas, this slogan, proposed by the International Left Opposition, has been declared counter-revolutionary by the Stalin Comintern regime. Thus by another paradox growing in the wake of

In France

Economic Crisis and the Strikes

France is one of the last of the European countries to be gripped by the economic crisis. In possession of an absorptive internal market and at the same time a cheaply producing refining industry which opened the foreign markets to it, capitalist France looks back upon a prosperity period, which lasted into the second half of 1930. Only in the autumn of 1930 and the winter of 1931 did the crisis make itself felt heavily in France too. The development of the agrarian crisis and the price fall of finished goods threw French industry into a difficult position, whose after-effects the working class felt quickly and for a long time. Unemployment assumed a great scope, relative to French conditions: instead of the up to then prevalent shortage of labor, which led to the immigration of foreign-born workers, hundreds of thousands of workers now found themselves either thrown out of a job completely or put upon part time. At the same time, a stubborn offensive of capital set in to diminish the wages and the general standard of living of the workers.

How did the French proletariat reply to this attack? In general, the proletariat has not yet taken up the defense energetically. Because the policy of the revolutionary organizations, the Communist party and the C. G. T. U. (red trade union center), as a result of the

Centrism, MacDonald can today appear almost unchallenged as the defender of recognition to Soviet Republic; as the defender of trade relations with it and as the sponsor of extension of these relations. The Stalin regime prefers to go the road of back-door dealings to obtain credits rather than boldly to proclaim the slogan. This method lends its assistance to bolster up the shaky government of liberal labor politicians. It strengthens the social reformism of the despicable Fabian brand of MacDonald in the face of the inevitable British working class revolt. The alternative would undoubtedly strike an immense sympathetic chord among the British working masses who have before proved their readiness to support the Soviet Union. It would help to make them real defenders of the Soviet Union and become a source of strength to the British Communist Party. But the leaders of the party true prototypes of Stalinism, self-contented bureaucrats who have gradually decimated the party, are using their powers to prevent this possibility.

—ARNE SWABECK.

policy of the "third period", caught it in an exhausted state, the influence of bourgeois propaganda could make itself felt very strongly in broad sections of the working class. The steadily growing reformist organizations, on the other hand, endeavored to maintain the calm among the workers. The influence of bourgeois propaganda was above all expressed in strong anti-foreigner currents against the three million foreign born workers laboring in France and the half million colonial workers exploited to the bone by French capitalism. These anti-foreigner currents, abetted by the reformists, penetrated right into the circles of the revolutionary organizations. They frequently made their appearance not only in the unemployment councils formed by the C. G. T. U. and in the revolutionary trade unions, but also in the Communist party itself.

The first big struggles broke out in August and September 1930, in the period of transition between the waning prosperity and the incoming crisis. For years the French bourgeoisie was accustomed to see a meek proletariat before it. A strike of 4,000 to 5,000 workers was looked upon as very important; most of the labor conflicts were limited to a few hundred participants and slight rises in wages sufficed to send them back again. The bourgeoisie carried through the rationalization of the factories without encountering any noteworthy resistance. To consolidate the apparatus of power it introduced—under the pretext of protecting the workers against certain evils—social insurance which burdened them with a tax on wages in the form of compulsory contributions and chained them to capitalism under Draconic conditions. On July 1, 1930' the law came into force: at the same moment, a ferment set in throughout the country which finally broke out openly in August in the North of France in a movement which embraced close to 200,000 textile and metal workers. Some smaller movements in other parts of the country (for example, in the Lower Seine department) flared up only to be extinguished again. The labor struggles in the North lasted for weeks.

(To Be Continued)

Paris PIERRE FRANK

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