

IN THE INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR

Reviews and News of the Working Class and Revolutionary Movements

In Spain

Day by Day

A lecture tour on the Russian revolution and the situation in Spain has just been held by comrade Nin in the Asturias. The Asturias are an outstandingly miners' district, where about 30,000 miners work. Nin arrived on the day when the strike broke out. The movement was launched by the revolutionary trade union, led by the Communists and the syndicalists. The strikers demanded especially the seven-hour day, established before the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and abolished by the latter. The movement thus had a very acute political character and put to the wall the Provisional Government and above all the socialists. Those who a few years ago exercised hegemony among the miners, openly sabotaged the strike, declaring that the strikers were "enemies of the republic" and directly collaborated with the Guardia Civil in order to guarantee the "freedom to work". The socialists themselves opened fire upon the strikers and wounded three women. This contributed enormously to undermining the influence of the reformists who can no longer claim to represent the workers. The strike was effectively followed by more than seventy percent of the miners and was concluded upon the promise of the government to find a solution. In reality, the strike was lost, but it dealt a very serious blow to the reformists and strengthened the prestige of the Communists who led the movement.

The secretary of the trade union is an excellent Communist, enjoying a great prestige among the miners and who does not conceal his sympathies for the Left Opposition. The Stalinists have been unable to do a thing against him for they would have encountered the most energetic resistance on the part of the miners. The same also holds true in the case of the secretary of the Youth, who is an avowed Oppositionist and an excellent young militant, working in the arms factory of Oviedo.

Influence of Left Opposition

The Communists have the dominating influence in the district, except for Gijon, where the anarcho-syndicalists prevail. Their state of mind is that of a determined opposition to the party leadership and entirely favorable to unity. But the prestige of the International and of "Moscow" still exercises a great influence upon them, which prevents them from taking the decisive steps. They have a very pronounced sympathy for us and comrade Loredo is achieving a work in favor of the Opposition the fruits of which we shall soon see.

The lectures of Nin had an enormous success and everywhere a great number of party members came to speak with him at length. At Gijon, for instance, they came in group at the end of the second lecture and one of them said to Nin, with the obvious approval of the others: "Even though you are expelled from the party, we consider you as a comrade and as a revolutionist." "Trotzky must be reinstated into the party so that we may work together." But they still believe naively that the Committee of the Spanish Party and the Comintern will finish by understanding their error and will stretch out their hands to us. These comrades have undertaken to enter into a regular correspondence with us.

On June 7, the first conference of the Opposition took place at Madrid, where the collaboration of all our comrades was fortunately assured on the basis of the resolutions adopted. The results of the conference are excellent. We are now working with great hopes in the future.

The Opposition and Maurin

Profiting by his stay in Madrid for our conference, comrade Nin delivered a lecture at the "Ateneo" on the "present second stage of the Spanish revolution". The "Ateneo" today plays a great role in the republication throughout Spain. The first Communist lecture delivered from this tribune, from which the Communists had not yet spoken, was by Maurin, leader of the Catalan Communist Federation. It was a real disaster. It was the speech of radical petty bourgeois. He made a very harsh criticism of the Provisional Government, but he completely forgot the proletariat and the party. As a perspective, he only indicated a . . . convention in which the leading role would be played by . . . the Left elements of the "Ateneo". We were all very much disappointed. Maurin is theoretically very inconsistent, but his lecture was even beneath him.

Nin delivered a lecture the following day. The interest it aroused was immense. The police held back the workers who wanted to enter when the hall was already filled. The comrades were enthused by Nin's lecture and considered it a great victory. Nin replied to Maurin, who had said some absolutely inadmissible things, of which these are the most important:

1. The Spanish revolution must be national and not servilely copy the Russian experience; the Comintern has failed in China, in Germany, in Bulgaria and in Estonia because it . . . wanted to apply the Russian experience there (!)
2. In Spain, there are four revolu-

tions to be made: the economic revolution, the political revolution, the national revolution and the religious revolution.

3. The Catalan Communists declare themselves to be separatists.

4. The Catalan Federation is accused of being "Trotzkyist" by the Stalinists and of being "Stalinist" by the Trotzkyists; the Federation is in disagreement with the policy of the C. I. in Spain and cannot declare its solidarity with the "Trotzkyists" because they . . . believe that the Five Year Plan is the victory of the revolution. . . ." (!)

Nin then showed that the revolution had failed in China, in Germany, etc. Just because the Russian experience has been forgotten, that in Spain there were not four revolutions to be made, but only one; that the Communists cannot declare themselves to be separatists, but that they must confine themselves to recognizing the right of the peoples to dispose of themselves to the point of separation; and finally, that if the Federation was accused of being "Trotzkyist" by the Stalinists and of being Stalinist by the Trotzkyists, it was because it had no precise political line.

The Relation of Forces

The Madrid Opposition is doing good work and has a pretty substantial influence in the local autonomous Communist section. We have organized a second lecture tour (at Madrid and in the Asturias). The monthly review has been well received. A few words on the party and on the Catalan Federation. The relationship of forces has not changed radically during recent weeks. The fortress of the official party is still Seville. They have not the strength they claim, but it is more than they have in the rest of the country. At Madrid, the local independent section should have from 500 to 600 members and publishes a weekly, *La Antorcha*. The party group should have about from 70 to 80 members. In Catalonia, the official party has made no essential gains, except for a few dozen unemployed, drawn over by the demagogic agitation of the Stalinists. The Catalan Federation progresses. Three months ago it had almost 1,000 dues paying members. Now it has 2,700. The circulation of *La Batalla* is more than 20,000. Its orientation remains irresolute, undefined. At the Unity Congress, which will be held in August, there will inevitably come forward a new party. The idea of unification is very popular throughout the country.

On the Road to the Proletarian Revolution in Spain

(Continued from last issue)

No, the Spanish monarchy does not constitute a feudal state. The foundation of the Spanish monarchic state, beginning with September 1923, is not the property of the aristocracy considered as such, but rather the property of the capitalist bourgeoisie. It is of little import that the aristocracy, old or new, has preserved itself in the warp and woof of the state. In the dominant spheres of the state machinery the semi-feudal remains are effective only by the fact that they are in the hands of the bourgeoisie, and not of the aristocrats. The Spanish monarchic state functioned as a capitalist apparatus, and not for aristocratic caste privileges.

Alfonso was nothing but a functionary in the service of the exploitation of monopolistic capital, for which "work" Primo de Rivera was the broom which swept away the remnants of the unclean aristocracy, putting the whole state machinery into the hands of industrial and financial capitalism. It is true that the Spanish countryside requires very urgently a revolution to liquidate large landed property. The peasants will have to repartition the land, violently depriving its owners of all their privileges and

of their present semi-feudal possessions.

The "Democratic Revolution"

In this problem due to the backwardness of the Spanish land, there is something of the "democratic revolution". But a democratic revolution—led by whom? By the petty bourgeois intellectuals? We are not today, in spite of the "doctrine" of Marcelino Domingo and company, in the epoch of the Tennis Court meeting. What we have in Spain today is quite different from what we had in France in '89. At that time, the bourgeoisie was the revolutionary vanguard which had behind it the whole peasant mass submitted to the cruel yoke of the feudal state, constituted out of the aristocracy, the church, and crowned by the absolute monarchy by divine right. At that time, the bourgeois ideology was indeed the living and dynamic theory of the revolutionary needs of a class rising to power. Therefore the peasant, led by the bourgeoisie could carry through his democratic tasks and destroy the feudal state. This happened in France a century and a half ago. Since then, things have changed "just a little bit", even for Spain. The bourgeoisie is no longer the champion of the "national" revolution. Jealous of its privileges, it lives entrenched in the fortresses of the state, devoting all its energy not to the liberation of the peasantry but to their exploitation. From this exploitation, it draws not a few resources for the sustaining of its domination. The formula for the destruction of the bourgeois state, but rather: **With the proletariat for the destruction of the bourgeois state.** How can the bourgeoisie, big or small, be the initiator of the peasant democratic revolution?

There is an identity with the Spanish revolution except for differences of a secondary order, in the Russian revolution of October. The destruction of the state is begun with a feeble capitalism in power. This capitalism, without energy of its own, product of an anaemic bourgeoisie which never had either revolutionary ability or courage, finds itself attacked by a double revolution: the proletarian revolution in the cities; the democratic revolution in the country. In the fact that these two revolu-

Clearing Away the Petty Bourgeois Fog

But this is not enough. The proletariat, in order to win, requires an energetic, gifted and disciplined leading party; a party that knows seriously how to calculate the greatness of its mission; a party capable of appreciating at every given moment its own forces and those of the enemy; a party that knows how to throw out of its midst mercilessly, all the demagogic fanfarrouse of ignorance; a party which is not amenable to the adulation of incompetents or to the intrigues of arrivists or the struggle among the militants for degenerate and contemptible motives; a party, finally which appreciates the merit of each of its men for the intrinsic value which he holds for the revolution and not for the degree of servile obedience which he pretends to have. There is no doubt that this party can only be the Communist party. Unfortunately, everything still remains to be done. We must dispel dangerous illusion if disaster is to be avoided. The Communist party must be an iron weapon, but the truth is that right now it is nothing more than a wooden sword. To the proletariat which, its all, we must expound the naked in the future struggles, will have to risk truth. The responsibility of the people that find themselves today at the head of the Communist party is truly enormous. They think that the revolution can be a game of chance.

If all the objective conditions are splendid for a future triumph of the proletarian revolution in Spain, one cannot say the same about the capacity and organization of the revolutionary party, the Communist party. And the evil is not the present incompetence. The Spanish Communist Party can and must organize in such a way that in the relatively proximate future it will acquire the strength and effectiveness that is lacking today. What is to be done? Change radically all the measures of procedure. Depose this false doctrine artificially imposed upon the party, eliminate the sectarian policy which is ordered from above. It must be stated that the anti-Marxist muse of the political philosophy of Stalin is not the most appropriate to inspire the proletariat with the dialectic of triumph. Bilbao, April 1931

The Need for a Party

It is a very arduous task to get the proletariat to judge the social struggle from a strictly class standpoint, a condition without which the working masses cannot get to the bottom of all the consequences. It is true that the proletariat has its best political school in this very revolution. The steps of the great struggle will be made progressively, clarifying the atmosphere of the revolution and eliminating all the falsehoods that stand in the way of the fighters.

In France

Economic Crisis and the Strikes

(Continued from last issue)

The compulsory contributions of the workers to social insurance marked the first wage decrease. The party and the C. G. T. U. finally issued the correct slogan "against the workers' contribution", after a series of vacillations, during which they sometimes demanded the struggle against the whole social insurance law, or else the creation of insurance treasuries by the trade unions for the purpose of carrying out the law. These vacillations, together with the policy of the "third period" hurt the revolutionary organizations tremendously, and when they finally issued the slogan "Against the workers' contribution", they no longer found any strong echo in the masses. In the North, the influence exercised by the reformists through the communal administrations, cooperatives, sport leagues, workers' singing societies, etc., is very extensive. They came forward as the most zealous agitators for the law which they had themselves demanded with a great vocal display. In order to put an end to the dissatisfaction which arose as a result of the withholding of five percent of the wage by the bosses for the compulsory insurance contribution, the reformist organizations of the North raised the demand for a wage increase of one-fourth of a franc per hour (about 1 cent), that is, they accepted basically the payment of contributions by the workers. The great majority of the workers took up the struggle for one-fourth of a franc "wage increase". The C. P. F. and the C. G. T. U., in spite of the relatively favorable conditions, did not understand how to establish the united front, and instead they issued the slogan of "one-half of a franc wage increase. Without any hindrance from the revolutionary trade unions, the reformists had a free hand for their parliamentary horse trade with the bosses and were able after a few weeks of struggle to strangle the strike with impunity. They abandoned the one-fourth of a franc wage increase and accepted a sort of "bonus for steady work"; the workers who have worked in the factory regularly for more than six months, receive the insurance contribution as compensation from the boss each week.

Failure of the Communist Party

Among the workers there were splendid moods for struggle. In sharp contrast to the conduct of the reformist leaders, who constantly pushed for negotiations, they repeatedly effected an energetic resistance in conflicts with the armed forces. At no stage in the struggle did the C. P. F. and the C. G. T. U. succeed, through the realization of the united front, to draw closer to the

masses of the fighters and in this manner to win over broad sections of the working class to the Communist slogans. The result was a new ebull of their influence; the revolutionary trade unions lost heavily in membership. A municipal council election in Tourcoing, fourteen days after the end of the strike, showed a substantial decline in the votes given to the party.

During the course of this, the capitalist offensive against the miners in the Northern department, that is, against two-thirds of the union membership, opened up in all fury. The announcement of an impending wage reduction evoked a strong dissatisfaction among the miners. Extremely favorable opportunities for an action were at hand. Here too the reformist influence was appreciable: out of a total of 200,000 miners about 6,000 members fell to the revolutionary and about 50,000 members to the reformist union, the latter being the strongest trade union in France. From the very first day, it should have been the task of the Communists on the basis of the generally raised demand "against any wage reductions" to set up the united front. To propose to the reformist organizations a joint action, a joint struggle—that should have been the first step that the revolutionary union should have taken. The Centrists vacillated back and forth so that the reformist trade union leaders were able to carry out their shameless treachery and consent to a wage reduction without a serious revolt of the workers replying to their crime. The miners had no confidence in the revolutionary union. Finally, the C. G. T. U. found itself compelled—as not to discredit itself forever in the eyes of its members and sympathizers—to call the strike itself. Only a minority of 25,000 miners followed its call, a vanguard whose struggle was followed with sympathy by a whole proletariat, but which was unable to convert this sympathy into deeds. After a week, the workers had to return to the mines with a smaller wage. As to the relationship of forces between the reformist and revolutionary unions, the strike only contributed unessential changes. Yet there has rarely been a more favorable opportunity to extend the influence of the revolutionary organizations over tens of thousands of workers who had seen the betrayal of the reformists. The impotence of the C. G. T. U., however, did not permit to separate these workers from their old organizations.

In the C. P. F. as well as in the C. G. T. U., the discussion on these strike movements was prevented. (To be continued) Paris

PIERRE FRAN

ON THE WORKERS' FRONT

After the Pocketbook Makers' Strike

It is over a month since the S. P. fakers in the Pocketbook Workers Union put over the treacherous agreement in Cooper Union, in spite of the fact that the majority of the workers were against it. The tellers, who were a part of the machine, could not count upon more than a small majority vote cast for the agreement. When the administration saw that they had only a small majority of 45 votes, they added 350 votes from New Jersey locals.

The administration was victorious over the workers due to the fact that the "third period" politicians allowed a vote to be taken by hands, instead of putting up a fight for a referendum vote. This mistake cannot be overlooked. The workers are paying the price already and they will continue to pay if such mistakes are not corrected in the future.

The Agreement

Now let us review in brief the terms of the agreement signed between the leather goods manufacturers and the union. The chief demands of the union were: (1) a 40 hour, 5 day week; (2) unemployment insurance paid by the bosses and administered by the unions; (3) to regulate the scale of wages in order to raise the underpaid workers. The employers made counter-demands, such as a 25 percent wage reduction, a 20 percent reorganization during the year, and a joint employment bureau.

The new agreement gave the employers more than they wanted! They got a reduction in wages of from 10 to 15 percent, 10 percent reorganization, which goes to arbitration, a joint employment bureau to go to the impartial chairman within two months for a decision. The employers will have extra demands they never asked for at the first conferences. These are: an extra helper, which means that a pocketbook mechanic who worked with only one helper under the old agree-

ment will now have to work with two, which will undermine the conditions of the pocketbook makers. A board of standards means to speed up the workers and to adjust prices to meet the needs of the bosses.

The workers, on the other hand, get under the new agreement, about which the administration raves so much, unemployment insurance for which he or she will have to pay two and a half percent of the wages and the employers will pay the same amount. Dues and taxes will be taken off this fund, so you can imagine how much the workers will get from the unemployment insurance!

This fake agreement could not be made by the bartender, Harnet Wolff, and his gang. They needed a wizard to bring such a wonderful agreement. They found him. This genius and renegade from Communism, Dr. L. Hendin, is an expert lately among the S. P. Forward gang, investigating one group of crooks against another, in order to rob and fake the workers more and more.

Do you think that this faker made the job because he is a philanthropist? Oh no! There will be the administration of the unemployment insurance fund which will pay a nice salary. So you can see why this Dr. Hendin was so much interested in the Pocketbook Workers Union.

Do you think the bosses are satisfied with the agreement? No! They are demanding more and more and the union

are giving them . . . more and more.

Something new has developed in the industry since the agreement were signed. Employers in business for years open their shops again by changing their first or second name and thus become new employers. When the workers go to the union office, they are told by the salesman-manager that they are not entitled to the jobs because it is a new firm. This is done by the union officers to help the bosses bring wages down to the scale provided in the new agreement. This is done because there are workers who still earn \$50 to \$55 a week. When their shops open again as new firms, and the boss has a right to take on new workers, he will not pay more than the scale, which is at present \$44 for mechanics, especially now, when there is so much unemployment in the trade. This shows how the union misleaders help the employers on destroy the union.

What is to be done in order to oust these misleaders? (1) The workers must demand from the officials that membership meetings should be called (2) At these meetings, to demand a reckoning on the sellout. (3) To oust them as our representatives. This can be achieved when the Stalinists unite the rank and file committee with other revolutionary and sincere progressive groups in the union. I am sure that with united action, the workers can get rid of these officials who betrayed them. Then, through the rank and file, the workers will be in a position to build a union for the workers and not for misleaders.

—N. DAVIS.

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THE MILITANT

Vol. IV 16, July 25, 1931

Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th Street, N. Y.

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Subscription rate: \$2.00 per year; foreign \$2.50. Five cents per copy. Bundle rates, 3 cents per copy