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Paris Masses Shake Corrupt French Regime

Latest Developments in the N.Y. Hotel Strike

Latest developments in the strike of the New York hotel and restaurant workers, as we go to press, include the following:

On Monday, 4,000 strikers, their wives and children, surrounded the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in an imposing mass picket demonstration. After a short time, police suddenly attacked the pickets with brutal violence, knocking down organizer Costas whose seizure was prevented by the workers. Many workers were cruelly beaten, and one woman was arrested. Tony Tarcentino was badly beaten over the head.

On the same night, a mass demonstration around the Casino de Paree came into conflict with hired gangsters and city police. In the ensuing fight, doors and windows of the establishment were badly damaged by the enraged workers.

On Tuesday, union representatives met with Mrs. Herrick of the local Labor Board of the NRA, who

insolently rebuffed the men and revealed that her institution had their sympathies definitely with the hotel bosses.

A scandal was caused in the dining room of the aristocratic Waldorf-Astoria when a number of patrons rose to appeal for solidarity with the strikers. Hired thugs of the management beat them up and threw them out of the hotel.

Thursday's press reports that officials of two A. F. L. locals, 1 and 2, have instructed their members not to take scab jobs in houses struck by the Amalgamated. In striking contrast to the scab tactics of officials of Local 16, this action reflects the demands of rank and file A. F. L. members for solidarity with their Amalgamated brothers.

A number of organizations have announced their refusal to hold planned dinners in hotels on the union's strike list.

Reaction in Power with Dumergue

France, whose bourgeois statesmen and philosophers have latterly enjoyed feelings of superiority to the country which submits to Hitler, trembles on the brink of epoch-making changes. Rising to a higher pitch than on any occasion since the glorious days of the Commune, the resentment of the exploited French masses has broken out into openly anti-governmental, anti-state demonstrations. To halt the determined ranks of embittered workers and middle class demonstrators from invading the Chamber of Deputies, the Daladier government ordered its police and militia to fire upon unarmed men, women and children. Immediately thereafter, having been in office eleven days, the Daladier government resigned.

While Dumergue tries to build a new union sacree, a holy alliance of reactionaries to suppress the indignant masses of France, rioting continues in the streets of every important French city. France "the most bourgeois country in the world", despite the hopes of its bankers, was unable to escape the world economic crisis which has mobilized class against class in bitter conflict in every capitalist country. Similarly, it has been unable to escape the transformation of this economic crisis into a deep governmental crisis.

The events of the last few days, sensational though they are, should not obscure the meaning of the general political crisis affecting the country. Through the depression, the capitalists of France have steadily cut down the real income and standard of living of the masses of the French population. The patriotic French peasant has seen prices for farm products tumble. The middle class has been squeezed by French monopoly capital, while civil servants and workers on government-owned or controlled industries have suffered severe cuts in wages. The working class as a whole has shared the miseries which the capitalists of the world have forced upon all proletarians.

Essentially the same outlook should animate the attitude of the union to the NRA and its Labor Board. Nobody is so stupid, it goes without saying, as to think that this powerful governmental institution can be ignored in present-day labor struggles. Far from it. Precisely because of its pretenses, precisely because many workers still believe that this capitalist instrument is impartial, it is necessary to make use of every means at our disposal to strip it to its real essentials. It must be pressed to the wall, it must be left no loophole to crawl out of with its shabby pretenses unbarred.

But at the very same time it would be fatal to create any illusions whatsoever as to the nature of the NRA. Every day brings new evidence to prove just what it is. The latest Johnson statement throwing the doors wide open to company unionism; the brutally insolent attitude taken by the local Labor Board head, Mrs. Herrick, when interviewed by the union representatives, can leave little doubt in the minds of any worker as to which side NRA really stands by.

NRA will not decide this strike for the workers! The outcome of every strike is decided by the relationship of forces in the struggle. Victory or defeat—that is decided by the strength and militancy or the weakness and passivity of the workers, and by nothing else.

The militancy which makes or breaks a movement, is not determined by any miracles which are promised. Nor does the union or its leadership promise any. The demands which the workers can gain are determined by what the situation makes it possible to attain. It is not out of the question that the situation may call, for the time being, for a compromise settlement, which it will not be

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Significance of Taxi Drivers' Strike Analyzed

The signal for working class struggle sounded by the general strike of New York hotel workers has found a stirring response in the strike of the New York taxi drivers. Already in the first week of its stormy career it has given the working class of New York and the country an inspiring demonstration of working class militancy. In its staccato language of speed, action, and solidarity can be heard the authentic voice of the proletariat. Consider it! Here were men horribly exploited, unorganized, a prey of politicians, racketeers and crooks, without traditions of trade union struggle or even the most elementary understanding of the class struggle. Notwithstanding, within a week, in the fire of struggle, they forged a union which embraces almost half the drivers in the industry.

The basis for the strike is to be found in the miserable conditions of the taxi drivers: a weekly aver-

age wage of ten to twelve dollars; twelve hour shifts and more; some men worked the "Coolie" shift—twenty-four hours a day, sleeping at the wheel; failure to bring in a minimum resulting in discharge; the black list; and, finally, the five cent tax cutting into their tips.

The strike received a certain stimulus from La Guardia, when he offered not to appeal the decision of the Supreme Court of New York declaring the five-cent tax on all rides illegal, if the cab company owners would turn over to the men all the tax money collected up to the time of the court's decision and held in escrow pending the decision. The companies refused La Guardia's offer and made a substitute offer of only forty percent. The men felt that all of the money belonged to them as the tax really came out of their tips. In their view La Guardia was with

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Lewis Triumphs at Mine Convention

Seventeen hundred delegates attended the thirty-third convention of the United Mine Workers held recently at Indianapolis. The majority gave the John L. Lewis administration a vote of confidence, cheered his pompous convention verbiage and bestowed a goodly portion of the acclaim upon his retinue of mediocre horn-blowing lackeys who constitute the pillars of his high-handed regime.

A whole coterie of officials had come direct from the anthracite coal fields where they had been instrumental in breaking the backbone of the strike conducted by the "insurgent" union. That suited the hand-picked delegates who constituted the majority in the convention. Strike-breaking has become their trade. Lewis ruled supreme at the convention. Opposition was squelched. Progressive proposals were defeated hands down, shelved in committees, or so garbled in formulation that after their adoption they will remain dead letters.

An "Industrial Statesman" Since the recent revival of the U. M. W., John L. Lewis has been hailed far and wide by the press—which is always on the side of the enemies of the miners—as the outstanding example of labor-industrial statesmanship. But this praise did not refer to the union revival, but to such instances as the strike-breaking in the anthracite and elsewhere. The revival was due to the indomitable spirit of the rank and file miners and their fight for union organization. Lewis enters to collect the check-off.

His career of "industrial statesmanship" began many years ago as a petty official systematically looting the treasury of the Panama, Illinois' local union. Through that he learned the first lessons in the shady art of buying henchmen. In the highest office of the union he made it into a system. He reinforced this with the methods of deliberate vote stealing, frame-ups, and slugging of opponents. Martin Ryan who led the powerful strikes for union organization in the Pennsylvania coke region sat in jail during the convention, framed up on a charge of assault and battery. Removing regular elected officials in the various union districts or sub-districts who in any way came recalcitrant to the Lewis regime, and the institution of what is called provisional government, became a celebrated method. Today most of the union districts are under such provisional government. The appointive power enabled Lewis to make general organizers out of all his decrepit henchmen who were defeated in regular union elections. Today there is a host of such appointed organizers throughout the coal fields who were at hand to "manage" the convention elections. There was rich opportunity to secure the hand-picked majority of the delegation which claimed to represent a total membership of 360,000.

The Convention Hoax The convention had as its outstanding feature a note of conciliation peace and harmony to be extended to the operators. But when delegate Sloan from Westville, Illinois dared to make a fight for freedom of political opinions within the union, for the right of union members to choose their own political affiliation, including Communist affiliation, he was threatened with ejection from the convention hall. To afix the seal of "honest" and peaceful intentions upon the proceedings, the secretary of the National Coal Association, the op-

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EDITORIAL

At the end of the second week of the general strike of New York's hotel and restaurant industry, the strikers stand firm in unbroken ranks. The strike remains as effective as before, and the service in the hotels is still crippled, particularly in the kitchens.

The bosses have been dealt a powerful blow. A magnificent union of the workers is in the making, and the militancy of the strikers, especially of the rank and file workers, is a sound assurance of its future. The well organized mass parades around the struck hotels, bespeak a readiness on the part of the workers to fight vigorously against the bosses, the strike-breakers and all their portectors.

The strike has become a test of endurance, with the backbone of the workers as stiff as ever. Here again, as we have emphasized before, the question of maintaining the morale of the strikers is of paramount importance. The disorganizing activities of the Stalinists in control of the "18th St. Union" are unmistakably one of the danger spots in the struggle. Placing their own private interests above the interests of the workers, constantly implanting demoralization and division into the ranks, these wrecking crews take upon themselves an ever weightier responsibility.

The most effective prosecution of the strike requires that we point out here some extremely serious weaknesses in the conduct of the movement. If the looseness in the organization of the strike could be excused in its first stage there is no justifying it at present. Quite the contrary, the failure to tighten up all around, to improve the functioning of the directing committees, to organize on a far better scale than hitherto the all-important mass meetings at which the strikers are fused into a solid and informed fighting group—can easily prove to be of the deepest seriousness. The responsibility both for the present state of affairs and for its remedying, rests, naturally, upon the leadership of the strike.

"A tightening up in the functioning of the union is essential to the morale of the strikers," we wrote last week. "The committees must be properly coordinated, the shop committees must become living bodies drawing the workers closer and closer to the union as a whole. Organizational efficiency, on the one side, and a morale-building leadership on the other, can make the Amalgamated a force that will smash through all the barriers standing on the road to victory."

To our regret, the condition for which we urged a necessary correction, has not yet been given the attention it commands. It becomes increasingly clear that unless it is rectified, and with the greatest speed, it can greatly endanger the prospects of the strike.

Another question which assumes ever greater significance as the strike progresses was touched upon by us when we wrote in our last issue: "This strike cannot be won by 'respectability'. The attempts to make the Amalgamated 'respectable' in the eyes of the bosses and the government is an admission on the part of those who make them that they have

no belief that the workers can win by fighting. The attempts are reactionary and defeatist through and through...."

There is as yet no indication that this pernicious tendency against which we warned, has been checked. Here again the country is the case. Some of the publicity issued by the union is little less than scandalous. Such is the press release that the union counts among its members such a large American citizenry that.... It cannot possibly be considered a "red union". Nor can we regard it as anything but the greatest mistake when Secretary B. J. Field of the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union falls to repudiate some of the statements which the capitalist press has attributed to him or to the union whose most prominent official he is. We have nothing in common with such statements, and we feel confident that in this we share the sentiments of every class conscious militant. A fight such as the hotel workers are engaged in, cannot be won by such methods. We cannot cease to underline the need of the union and its leadership concerning itself exclusively with the public opinion—not of the bourgeoisie, the hotel owners, and their kept press—but of the rank and file, and of the fighting labor movement in general.

Essentially the same outlook should animate the attitude of the union to the NRA and its Labor Board. Nobody is so stupid, it goes without saying, as to think that this powerful governmental institution can be ignored in present-day labor struggles. Far from it. Precisely because of its pretenses, precisely because many workers still believe that this capitalist instrument is impartial, it is necessary to make use of every means at our disposal to strip it to its real essentials. It must be pressed to the wall, it must be left no loophole to crawl out of with its shabby pretenses unbarred.

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Cab Drivers In Huge Meet At Garden

15,000 taxicab strikers jammed the basement of the Madison Square Garden at 11:00 P. M., Saturday, February 3, in a monster demonstration of solidarity and determination to fight for the unionization of the entire field. In spite of the attempts of the speakers to dampen the strikers' militancy by demanding over and over again that no violence be permitted or tolerated during the strike, the tone of the men was for a determined and bitter struggle to win their demands for complete and thorough unionization of the taxicab drivers, recognition of the union, full protection of employees on the job, the entire five-cent on all rides and the tax money already collected to go to the strikers, a minimum wage scale and maximum work week.

Ross, the chairman, had difficulty in obtaining order, so high was the enthusiasm and spirit of the strikers.

Ex-Judge Panken, Socialist politician, spoke, "It is high time that the taxicab workers organize themselves" (Wild applause). "You cannot buy them by nickels now, what they want is union conditions!" (Wild applause, cheering and whistling....) throwing hats into the air and commotion and enthusiasm for several minutes. However, when Panken said—"the machinery for the protection (of the workers) in the hands of the workers is not protest, not resentment, not violence" the fighting mood of the strikers was reflected in the omniscient silence on the part of most of the workers, and the clearly heard "Oh yeah's!" and "We know how to handle this!" from various sections of the hall.

Leon Seifer, attorney for the United Taxi Drivers Union, spoke, emphasizing the program and demands:

1. Every man in the industry gets a job, gets a cab.... and nobody horns in. (Men out of work in other industries driving cabs because of lack of regular employment to be kept out).
2. Representation in the City Hack Department.
3. Recognition of the union.
4. \$12.00 minimum wage scale and 40 per cent of the bookings over the minimum. During the course of Seifer's speech, his remark that "the police force of New York is a mighty fine outfit" was met by catcalls and boos, much to the embarrassment of the representatives of the P. D. who were plentiful in the hall.

Morris L. Ernst, appointed by La Guardia to "mediate" the strike sent word to the men to return to work, pending arbitration. This report, brought in by one of the taxi drivers in the organization was met by loud and emphatic protest on the part of the strikers present. The strikers shouted, "We want a union, we won't be kidded into breaking our ranks. We want union conditions and union wages. We got the power, we'll make them recognize us and give us what we want. Not a single cab on the streets of New York unless we win our demands." Gandall, who spoke briefly, emphasized the demand for "peaceful methods" and was not

Militant Action In Cab Walkout

About 8,000 enthusiastic, cheering hackmen, gathered in the Auditorium of P. S. 27 on 42nd St., between Second and Third Avenues, on February 3. The meeting called by the United Taxi Drivers Union, a merger of the Fusion Taxi Committee, N. Y. Taxi Drivers Union, and the Taxi Drivers Non-Parliamentarian Ass'n. They cheered and applauded all of their speakers. When their attorney Leon Seifer, suggested that the hackmen wanted only 40 percent of the tax money now held by the cab companies, cries of "No! No!" came from the back of the hall. The taxi-men knew what they want, and what they are out for.

Especially great was the cheering, whistling and applause for their own hackman-speaker, when he told of the miserable conditions under which the hackmen have slaved for years and said that the strikers would never go back until the union was recognized 100 percent, until there would be a shop steward in every garage in the city, and until the union received representation at the City Hack Bureau.

When the speaker said that, of course, they had given Mayor La Guardia their promise against the use of all violence, but they must realize the mayor was a reasonable human being, and couldn't expect the union to be responsible for the actions of 70,000 men and 20,000

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Nab Khaki Shirt In Cab Driver Murder

Art J. Smith, "commander-in-chief" of the Khaki Shirts (U. S. Fascists) and gangster, was arrested Thursday in Shamokin, Pa., as a result of the reported confession of his ex-aid, Frank Moffer, concerning the murder of Anthony Fierro. Fierro, a taxi-driver and anti-Fascist, was killed during a "shirt" rally in Astoria, N. Y., last summer.

Athos Terzani, another anti-Fascist, was framed by the police and prosecuted for the murder. Terzani was defended by a united front committee, in whose work the Communist League cooperated. He was recently acquitted when the State's witness confessed that the charge was frame-up and accused Moffer. Moffer was arrested yesterday in a South Philadelphia rooming house, and is said to have identified as his own the gun found near Fierro's body.

Informed that the Terzani Defense Committee was considering terminating its activities, the Communist League recently wrote the Committee endorsing its work on behalf of Terzani and proposing that it continue to function in anti-Fascist work. The Communist League also applied for formal affiliation to the Committee. Should the proposal be accepted, it is hoped that a new stimulus can be given to militant anti-Fascist work in New York.

greeted with enthusiasm. His appeal for solidarity with the "City Executive" was met by silence. The meeting adjourned with enthusiastic cheering for solidarity, and the determination by the workers not to allow a single taxicab on the streets of New York. —S. A.

Scab Cars Run Off Streets Of N.Y.

The auditorium of P. S. 27 was jammed, men sitting on the steps and stage and filling the back aisles and the entrances: a conservative estimate would place the number at 2,500.

The meeting was electric with enthusiasm. Every call for action from the speakers evoked an instant response. The business consisted of:

1. A report of the conference with the "mediator" at City Hall the previous day at 12 noon. The conference was unsatisfactory.
 2. An announcement of the final strike demands as drawn up by the Committee of 13, the leading committee of the strike which includes all four involved.
 3. A discussion on plans for amalgamation of the unions.
- Seifer stressed the necessity of a union, and pointed out that if he cabbies get nothing else, they must get a union. The response to this was overwhelming.
- At this point the chairman announced that the 5th Avenue bus drivers had voted to strike at 8 A. M. the next morning. The strikers cheered madly, the ovation lasting a good five minutes. The bus drivers and conductors have failed to come out thus far, however.
- On top of this the chairman reported that the Parmelee owners had wired some hacks to start work the next day at 11 A. M. Chairman: "What's your answer?"

Strikers: N-N-N-N-NO !!!

Jacques Bultenkant, an I. L. D. lawyer spoke in favor of the unity of all cabbies. He stressed the need for approaching the independents as fellow workers who have to be won over and make an integral part of the general strike. The attitude of the taxi drivers was clear; they are absolutely opposed to any cab operating; and they are even more opposed to the independents who are interfering with their fight with the big fleet owners. Their attitude to the independents is definitely hostile.

The last two speakers were two Negro organizers—cabbies who laid a good base for the feeling that the white and colored cabbies should stick together "like glue". The response to this, and to the announcement that not a colored chauffeur would drive through Harlem or Brooklyn, was instant and terrific. The meeting ended on a high note of militancy. One of the cabbies noticed the pencil and paper of the reporter and said: "You can put me down as saying that I'm going to strike until I drop dead. And put the name down, too, Jack Shaley."

The strikers surged out into the street and broke into groups to picket in Brooklyn, the lower East Side, and elsewhere. They marched west along 42nd Street, shouting and cheering on the way. In spite of the three mounted police and half dozen radio cars, the strikers hooted and dashed toward the very rare independent cabs on the streets. One cab swung into the Grand Central arcade. Another put on speed and crossed a red light. But one cab was caught and dismantled. —S. G. B.

Swabeck

National Secretary
Communist League of America

Does the Dictatorship of the Proletariat Still Exist?
Is the Soviet Union still a Workers State?

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11—8 P. M.
International Workers School
126 East 16th Street, New York.