

## FRENCH WORKERS ARE RESTIVE AS GAINS OF STRIKES ARE WIPED OUT

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explode. Even the petty functionaries in the trade unions, as their standard of living declines, are ready for strike action. Naturally, the official "Communist", "Socialist" and CGT press speaks of "other methods besides strike action", "we must respect the law", "order", "dignity", but the anti-working class nature of every arbitration decision leaves the worker with very little confidence in such methods.

In addition, the criminal policy of the leadership in most of the recent strikes is sinking deeply into the consciousness of the workers. One example will suffice: In the recent hotel, restaurant and cafe strike in Paris, where the spirit of the workers was excellent, not only did the trade union bureaucracy refuse to provide the strike any sort of national solidarity in the way of funds, etc., not only did the bureaucrats negotiate a shameful contract at the very height of the strike (providing for "the reemployment of not more than 10 per cent of the strike leaders"), but L'Humanite and Le Populaire (official organs of the C.P. and S.P.) also proclaimed it as a victory, thus adding insult to injury. Since the workers weren't very convinced of it, the CP sent Thorez to speak to them and to assure them that they had won a tremendous victory, and it must be all right because the C.P. is in favor of the settlement!

### Capitalists Profit

Big industry is showing an increase in profits of about 10 per cent and more over last year, and there is a duel between the Peoples Front press and the reactionary press as to whether Blum or Chautemps should receive the credit for increasing the profits of the capitalists! The explanation of the recovery (which is no more than a temporary stabilization of the crisis, as is readily seen from any sort of careful examination of French economy), however is not hard to find. None other than Vincent Auriol, the "Socialist" Minister of Finance in the Blum cabinet, gives away the entire game when, in his speech at the Marseilles Congress of the SP (Le Populaire, July 12, 1937), he says: "Yesterday's war, the preparation of national defense—the broken-down arms, the new arms—absorbs 72 per cent of the budget." (My italics). What more sinister comment could there be on the nature of capitalist profits! What surer indication can there be of the imminence and catastrophic character of the next depression! The entire economic fabric depends for its very life on war preparations.

The bourgeoisie refused to give decree powers to Blum. That Bonapartist weapon must be entrusted to one of their very own—and so, Blum was succeeded by Chautemps, some parliamentary juggling took place. Bonnet emerged as the miracle man of the financial world. Another devaluation was put through, again lowering the standard of living of the French masses. Every effort is being made to repatriate French capital and attract foreign capital. Blum's "pause" is not only extended, but 10 billions of francs are pared off the existing reforms in an effort to balance the budget. In little more than two months, the first Bonapartist Peoples Front government has shown the workers and masses very clearly what is in store for them.

### Prices Soar

Prices are moving up with such astonishing rapidity that

hardly one price sign is reliable. If one goes to buy cigarettes and leaves 2 fr., for that is what is marked on the box (of 10), "Pardon, monsieur, it is 2.25 fr. now." Prices are rising so rapidly that it is almost impossible to estimate the extent of the rise. But it is clear that the whole burden of the rationalization of economy and the preparation for imperialist war is being placed on the workers. Recently, the price of metro (subway) tickets was raised 25 per cent, bus tickets 33 per cent. It is estimated that these price increases, together with increase in taxes and tariffs, which cover every conceivable commodity and service, will result in a 50 per cent rise in the cost of living for the French worker during the coming year.

This increase in the price of necessities, in the basic cost of living, will find a very cold reception amongst the workers. That is why almost every political tendency, from extreme right to extreme left, is agreed that this fall and early winter will be very critical and is almost certain to witness another strike wave and the fall of the Chautemps cabinet.

(In succeeding articles Comrade Demby, who has just returned from France, will deal with the political forces in the French crisis).

## AKRON AND ST. LOUIS BRANCHES RALLY TO SUPPORT OF LEFT WING

By unanimous decision, the Akron, Ohio, branch of the S.P. on September 5 denounced the New York expulsions as "a further dismemberment of the body of the party upon the altar of the capitalist politician, La Guardia."

"To such acts of political vandalism", declared Akron, "revolutionary socialists can have but one answer: unqualified condemnation of the Altman-Thomas-Valenti right-wing clique and its Clarityite allies, and solidarization with the expelled left wing comrades. Let every revolutionary state organization, branch and comrade repudiate with scorn the policies and acts of the right wing. Forward to revolutionary Socialism!"

The Local St. Louis membership meeting of September 7 condemned "the action of Ward Rodgers in bringing criminal charges in the capitalist courts against Glen Trimble.... The use of the capitalist courts as a weapon against party opponents is a vicious and unprincipled practice hitherto unknown in the Socialist movement in America."

## Austrian Trotskyists Jailed, Sentenced By Fascist Courts

After being kept in jail for periods of six to eight months awaiting trial, six Austrian Trotskyists were brought before the Court of Assizes in Vienna on August 13.

Their names, as given by the reactionary press, are: the engineer, Johann Schoffman; Berthold Grad; the silversmith, Ludwig Auinger; the bank employee, Karl Fischer; the worker, Hans Mayer; and the unemployed worker, Georg Scheuer.

They were charged with publishing and distributing the journals of the Austrian Trotskyists, Der Bolshewik, Der Einzige Weg (The Only Way), and Arbeitmacht (Workers Power), as well as Unser Wort (Our Word), organ of the German Trotskyists.

While thousands of Austrian Nazis were being authorized to participate in a "song-fest" at Breslau, while Hitler's Mein Kampf was being circulated by the Vienna libraries, the fascist dictatorship of Schuschnigg decreed the imprisonment of our comrades.

### Tribunes of the Masses

Comrade Auinger assumed complete responsibility for the deeds charged to him. He declared that "the birth of the Trotskyist movement is due to our opposition to the liquidation of the world revolution by the Third International." "They (the Stalinists) have turned away from the path of Lenin and are leading the USSR to catastrophe." "Everyone who works in illegality must know that he works to overthrow the government."

Comrade Georg Scheuer, 21 years old, made several long political statements. A Socialist since his childhood, previously arrested for political activity, he took responsibility for editing the eleventh number of Der Bolshewik, as did Comrade Fischer.

Comrades Grad and Schoffman also declared themselves Trotskyists, but denied the particular acts attributed to them.

Ludwig Auinger was sentenced to two years at hard labor. Georg Scheuer to eighteen months, Karl Fischer to fourteen months, and Johann Schoffman to twelve months of hard labor. Hans Mayer and Berthold Grad were released, the specific charges not being proved against them.

These are not the only recent arrests of Austrian Trotskyists. Three months prior to the August trial, Comrade F. Niescher, a 24-year old commercial worker, received a sentence of eighteen months imprisonment for writing for Der Bolshewik. Previous to that Karl Hochrainer, aged 19, was given a sentence of five years at hard labor for having sold and distributed Der Bolshewik.

A Young Socialist of Vienna writes to La Lutte Ouvriere of Belgium (Trotskyist): "Our whole unit has discussed the trial of the Trotskyists in very lively fashion and has unanimously concluded this: whoever now dares still to designate the Trotskyists as fascists or their agents, is a miserable vilifier."

## MARTIN ATTACKS COMMUNISTS

Homer Martin, president of the United Automobile Workers, told the Associated Press, September 8, that Communists are entitled to membership "only in the rank and file and not as U. A. W. A. organizers." Martin made this statement on the eve of the meeting of the executive board at which organizers and office employees for the ensuing year will be designated.

Martin was unopposed for the presidency at the recent convention, the Stalinists voting for him. The Lovestone "Independent Communist Labor League" delegates were in the same caucus with Martin and vigorously defended him against all the "leftists."

## John Bull, Arming, Pledged Support by Reformist Chiefs

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ing to prevent unnecessary repercussions in other spheres from the given conflict. In addition, at the appropriate moments, she offers "solutions" designed to provide a formula for settling the conflict with the least international disturbance. Often several solutions are attempted, offered at first experimentally, and withdrawn if the time is not ripe—as was so conspicuously true of Great Britain's handling of the Ethiopian affair.

In seeking to delay the outbreak of the war, however, Great Britain finds herself in a partial dilemma. The advances of the rival powers threaten constantly to weaken Britain's own military and naval position. She must weigh this threat always against her incomplete preparedness, for if her position were too much weakened in advance, she would not be recompensed even by gaining the delay for further rearmament. From this results the apparent inconsistency, hesitation, zig-zags of British foreign policy: in reality only the cautious, sober, and careful experimental moves of the world's most accomplished diplomats in working out the most useful solutions to problems which by their very nature are incapable of being wholly solved.

The Italian conquest of Ethiopia did, in point of fact, to some degree weaken Britain's position. Nevertheless, her astute maneuvers kept the loss to a minimum, and effectively gained time.

### Compromise in Spain

For Spain, Britain has followed the same general course as in the Ethiopian affair: localization of the disturbance, protection so far as possible of her own position as against the other powers, attempts and proposals at a "solution". The most favorable—though not the sole acceptable—solution from Britain's point of view is a "compromise" of the Civil War by agreement between the opposing military staffs, the establishment of some form of unified bourgeois regime perhaps backed by international (troops), with protection for the "rights" and interests of all of the imperialist powers in Spain and no new naval bases for Italy or Germany. This solution is undoubtedly making headway, particularly since the internal developments in Spain have, since May, been rapidly erasing the line between the Loyalist and Franco regimes and thus taking the social content out of the Civil War.

### Opposes Rome-Berlin Axis

Britain's second task, of jockeying for the most favorable position in the maze of alliances and counter-alliances, is being carried out in her traditional manner, chiefly through the negative means of preventing the firm consolidation of an overpowering alliance on the Continent. This, of course, is her only worry over the "Rome-Berlin" axis: Britain is quite content to find terms with either Germany or Italy, but she must aim to obstruct the crystallization of too powerful a bloc, from which France would be excluded, around Germany and Italy.

Suddenly, about a month ago, the raids on neutral shipping—including many ships of British registry—began to occur almost daily in the Mediterranean. Here was a threat far more serious than the Civil War in Spain, for Britain must keep the Mediterranean open. At the same time the Rome-Berlin axis was tight-

ening. The "lumbering democracy" proved able to act as quickly as the dictatorship: the Nyon Conference was called and completed in what must be close to record time.

### Britain wins "Strong Hand"

As a preliminary, Britain was willing to permit the Soviet Union the luxury of its sharp notes to Italy: an act which the Kremlin, slavishly dependent on the British Foreign Office, would never have committed without Britain's prior knowledge.

The Conference was held, and Britain can record the following results: the Rome-Berlin axis was (through the exclusion of Italy and Germany) if not weakened, reminded that it should not have too exclusive a character but must take the rest of Europe into account; a juridical status was given to the presence of a large section of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean; recognition of belligerent rights for Franco—demanded by Germany and Italy, and a pre-requisite for a solution of the Spanish conflict—was advanced a stage further by giving identical treatment in the Nyon Declarations to the fleets of Franco and of the Loyalist Government; the Non-Intervention Committee was dropped into the background; Britain recovered freedom to exercise effective control on how much material aid enters Spain for either side (it has been her general policy to attempt to balance aid in such a manner as to prevent either army from winning a quick and overwhelming victory, but this balance was upset by the serious threat of "piracy" to all aid to the Loyalists); all of these, together with the fact of the Conference itself and Britain's new "strong hand", constitute a further step toward Britain's solution of the Spanish question through a "compromise".

### War Postponed

From Britain's success at Nyon there follows the probability of the postponement for the immediate future of the imperialist world war, since such postponement is part of Britain's basic strategy. This probability is by no means, however, a certainty, and no way alters the inexplicable fact that the conclusion of the present period of international developments will be found in the new war on a world scale. It is still possible that Britain will find her position being so seriously undermined that she will resort to what would be in effect "preventive" war before completing her rearmament program.

Again, it is not at all certain that the Spanish Civil War can be liquidated in any manner; in which case the struggle in Spain (together with that in China) may spread link by link until the great powers find themselves involved in war de facto with perhaps no diplomatic recognition or declaration of a "state of war". And, furthermore, the general international tension is by now so grave that some one of the daily "incidents" might well lead to an irrevocable step.

### Labor "Leaders" Help

Recognizing these possibilities, Britain does not wait "at home". Military rearmament is not enough, her rulers know, for the successful prosecution of the war. She must solidify the "national union" of all classes in order both to have a free hand for rapid negotiations and maneuvers

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