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Expropriate The Railroads!

The railroad workers, one of the largest single sections of the American working class, are facing a new 15 per cent wage-cut.
 When the railroads first announced their proposal for a cut, the Railroad Labor Executives Association, composed of the union officials, replied with a threat to take "national strike action if the matter is pressed."
 They declared further that they would demand of Congress that it empower Roosevelt to take over and operate the railroads in case of a serious strike.
 The ideas expressed by the labor officials, even if not properly and fully developed, were correct.
 Three days after their statement, however, they announced that they had abandoned their demands on Congress. There is absolutely no reason in the world for such a retreat.
 The railroad industry is bankrupt. Its bankruptcy is part of the general decay of American capitalism. It is a living illustration of the inability of the American ruling class, the bankers and capitalists, to provide the workers with jobs, or to provide the employed with a living wage.

For the railroad workers to take the wage-cut lying down, would not only be a blow at themselves, but a blow at the entire American working class. The railroad workers have a golden opportunity now to show the workers of all industries the road to take—if they themselves will only take militant action. For a railroad wage-cut would only be the signal for cutting wages of the already badly-paid workers in all industries.

The most concentrated preparations must be made immediately to resist the insolent offensive of the railroad corporations and their banker-lords. But the railroaders must not limit themselves to strike preparations against the wage-cut. They can and should go further.

The railroad companies admit their bankruptcy, their inability to run the roads on the present basis. They have admitted it in another way in the past, by throwing hundreds of thousands of employees on the scrap-heap.

If they cannot run them, let the workers run them! The employers have made countless millions of profit on watered stock, on over-capitalization, on phoney bonds. Demand their expropriation! Let the government take over the railroads, but under the management of the railroad workers! The workers can run them, even more efficiently, without the payment of profit or interest, and with such a reduction in hours as will make it possible to re-employ the dismissed railroad workers at trade-union wages!

This would be a serious step towards counteracting the attempts of Wall Street to unload the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the workers. It is

a step that every railroader, employed and unemployed, would support and fight for.

We Are Not Excited

The Grand Jury has indicted a whole slew of men and women as Nazi spies and espionage agents, and the entire capitalist press, with the *Daily Worker* naturally in the lead, is having a Roman holiday with the big spy scare. It appears that "our government" is in danger, "our institutions" are imperilled, "our territory" is menaced, "our lives" are threatened, and there is a bomb under every subway seat.

We refuse to get excited. Our "democrats" are not concerned with fighting fascism, otherwise, for example, Roosevelt would never have had Frank Hague as national vice-chairman of his party, and LaGuardia would never have run on the same ticket with George U. Harvey. They are interested, above all, in preparing the war-hysteria atmosphere, in which a few spy raids always play an impressive part for the ignorant and gullible.

Every important country—we repeat, every single one, not even with the exception of the United States or the Soviet Union—has its secret agents trying to spy out the economic and military plans of every other country. Where its own spies are not enough, it uses free-lance agents. And the spies, like the governments they work for, know neither limits nor scruples. In war-time, spies become "heroes," and when war is over they sometimes have statues erected to commemorate their services.

So the latest spy scare is another piece of hypocrisy—one of those tricks governments use to work the people up to a fine frenzy of war-chauvinism.

And let us not forget that a spy scare is an excellent device for diverting the attention of the workers from their growingly serious plight under the system of rotting capitalism.

Where Anything Goes

According to its official resolutions, the Socialist Party is on record in support of the Loyalists in the Spanish civil war.

According to the same resolutions, the Thomas organization considers wars an inevitable product of capitalism, which can be eliminated only with the elimination of the present social order. Hence, the need of a militant struggle against imperialist war and capitalism.

In words, we see, not so bad. But if you imagine that the S. P. obliges its members to present the party's view in public activity—especially if the view is tinged in the least degree with radicalism—you show a deplorable ignorance of the Thomas party. Take the latest example:

The Peace House, a pacifist group, has just issued a leaflet, with an enrollment blank in which the signer is to pledge himself thus: "I therefore am determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive for the removal of all the causes of war."

Among the signers already listed we find Harry W. Laidler, chairman of the New York S. P., and Devere Allen. Allen, by the way, is the man usually chosen to report on the anti-war resolution at party conventions!

The S. P. is a party where anything goes. Or more exactly, anything but a revolutionary, socialist policy. Those who advocate such a policy are bureaucratically expelled by the hundreds, so that the party leaders may do just as they jolly well please. Witness the Thomas junket with Herbert Hoover and Owen D. Young!

Leon Trotsky

Mexico and British Imperialism

The international campaign which imperialist circles are waging over the expropriation of Mexican oil enterprises by the Mexican government has been distinguished by all the features of imperialism's propagandistic Bacchanalias—combining impudence, deceitfulness, speculation in ignorance with cock-sureness in its own impunity.

The signal for this campaign was given by the British government when it declared a boycott upon Mexican oil. Boycott, as is known, always involves self-boycott, and is therefore accompanied by great sacrifices on the part of the boycotter. Great Britain was until recently the largest consumer of Mexican oil; naturally not out of sympathy for the Mexican people, but out of consideration for her own advantage.

Britain and Cedillo

Heaviest consumer of oil in Great Britain itself is the state with its gigantic fleet and rapidly-growing air force. A boycott of Mexican oil by the British government signifies, therefore, a simultaneous boycott not only of British industry but also of national defense. Mr. Chamberlain's government has shown with unusual frankness that the profits of Britain's capitalist robbers loom above state interests themselves. Oppressed classes and oppressed peoples must thoroughly learn this fundamental conclusion.

Both chronologically and logically the uprising of General Cedillo grew out of Chamberlain's policy. The Monroe Doctrine prevents the British admiralty from applying a military-naval blockade of the Mexican coast. They must act through internal agents, who, it is true, do not openly fly the British flag, yet serve the same interests as Chamberlain—the interests of a clique of oil magnates. In the White Book issued by British diplomacy just a few days ago we may be sure that the negotiations of its agents with General Cedillo are not included. Imperialist diplomacy carries on its major business under cover of secrecy.

Ignorance and Deceit

In order to compromise the expropriation in the eyes of bourgeois public opinion, they represent it as a "communist" measure. Historical ignorance combines here with conscious deceit. Semi-colonial Mexico is fighting for her national independence, political and economic. This is the basic meaning of the Mexican revolution at this stage. The oil magnates are not rank-and-file capitalists, not ordinary bourgeoisie. Having seized the richest natural resources of a foreign country, standing on their billions and supported by the military-diplomatic forces of their metropolises, they strive to establish in the subjugated country a regime of imperialistic feudalism, subordinating to themselves legislation, jurisprudence, and administration. Under these conditions expropriation is the only effective means of safeguarding national independence and the elementary conditions of democracy.

What direction the further economic development of Mexico may take depends decisively upon factors of an international character. But this is a question of the future. The Mexican revolution is now carrying out the

same work as, for instance, the United States of America accomplished in three quarters of a century, beginning with the Revolutionary War for independence and finishing with the Civil War for the abolition of slavery and for national unification. The British government not only did everything at the end of the eighteenth century to retain the United States under the status of a colony, but later, in the years of the Civil War, supported the slaveholders of the South against the abolitionists of the North, striving for the sake of its imperialist interests to thrust the young republic into a state of economic backwardness and national disunity.

Britain and Slavery

To the Chamberlains of that time, too, the expropriation of the slaveholders seemed a diabolical "Bolshevik" measure. In reality the historic task of the Northerners consisted in clearing the arena for the independent democratic development of bourgeois society. Precisely this task is being solved at this stage by the government of Mexico. General Cardenas stands in the series of those statesmen of his country who have been fulfilling work comparable to that of Washington, Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and General Grant. And, of course, it is not accidental that the British government in this case, too, finds itself on the other side of the historic trench.

The world press, in particular the French, preposterous as it may seem, continues to drag my name into the question of the expropriation of the oil industry. If I have once already refuted this nonsense, it is not at all because I fear "responsibility" as was insinuated by one talkative agent of the G.P.U. On the contrary, I would consider it an honor to carry even a part of the responsibility for this courageous and progressive measure of the Mexican government. But I do not have the least basis for it. I first learned of the decree of expropriation from the newspapers. But, naturally, this is not the question.

Two Aims Pursued

Two aims are pursued in interjecting my name—first, the organizers of the campaign wish to impart to the expropriation a "Bolshevik" coloration; secondly, they are attempting to strike a blow at the national self-respect of Mexico. The imperialists are endeavoring to represent the affair as if Mexico's statesmen were incapable of determining their own road. A wretched and ignoble hereditary slaveholders' psychology! Precisely because Mexico today still belongs to those backward nations which are only now impelled to fight for their independence, greater audacity of thought is engendered among her statesmen than is granted to the conservative dregs of a great past. We have witnessed similar phenomena in history more than once!

The French weekly, "Marianne," a notorious organ of the French People's Front, even asserts that on the oil question the government of General Cardenas acted not only as one with Trotsky but also... in the interests of Hitler. It is a question, you see, of depriving the great-hearted "democracies" of oil in case of war and, contrariwise,

of supplying Germany and other fascist nations. This is not one whit more clever than the Moscow trials. Humanity learns, not without amazement, that Great Britain is being deprived of Mexican oil because of the ill-will of General Cardenas and not because of Chamberlain's self-boycott. But then the "democracies" possess a simple way of paralyzing this "fascist" plot: let them buy Mexican oil, once more Mexican oil, and again Mexican oil! To every honest and sensible person it is now beyond all doubt that if Mexico should find herself forced to sell her liquid gold to fascist countries the responsibility for this act would fall fully and completely upon the governments of the imperialist "democracies."

Prompting from Moscow

Behind the back of "Marianne" and her ilk stand the Moscow prompters. At first glance this seems preposterous, since other prompters of the same school use diametrically opposed librettos. But the whole secret consists in the fact that the friends of the G.P.U. adapt their views to geographic gradations of latitude and longitude. If some of them promise support to Mexico, others picture General Cardenas as an ally of Hitler. From the latter point of view, Cedillo's oil rebellion should be viewed, it would seem, as a struggle in the interests of world democracy.

Let us, however, leave the clowns and intriguers to their own fate. We do not have them in mind, but the class-conscious workers of the entire world. Without succumbing to illusions and without fear of slander, the advanced workers will completely support the Mexican people in their struggle against the imperialists. The expropriation of oil is neither socialism nor communism. But it is a highly progressive measure of national self-defense. Marx did not, of course, consider Abraham Lincoln a communist; this did not, however, prevent Marx from entertaining the deepest sympathy for the struggle which Lincoln headed. The First International sent the Civil War president a message of greeting, and Lincoln in his answer highly appreciated this moral support.

Workers, Support Mexico

The international proletariat has no reason to identify its program with the program of the Mexican government. Revolutionists have no need of changing color, adapting themselves, and rendering flattery in the manner of the G.P.U. school of courtiers, who in a moment of danger will sell out and betray the weaker side. Without giving up its own identity, every honest working class organization of the entire world, and first of all in Great Britain, is duty bound to take an irreconcilable position against the imperialist robbers, their diplomacy, their press and their fascist hirelings. The cause of Mexico, like the cause of Spain, like the cause of China, is the cause of the international working class. The struggle over Mexican oil is only one of the advance-line skirmishes of future battles between the oppressors and the oppressed.

LEON TROTSKY.

June 5, 1938

Coyoacan, D. F.

U. S. Will Fight in New War, Says N. Y. Times

The New York Times is the most powerful, authoritative and authentic organ of American finance capital. It is not given to momentary hysteria. Its policies are weighed coldly and deliberately, from a point of view which has little in common with the rantings of cheap and yellow journalism.
 The position of the Times is acknowledged by a dozen governments, including the government of the United States. In decisive matters, the Administration often speaks first to the public through columns written by Arthur Krock, head of the Times staff in Washington. Because of its traditional adherence to Anglo-American collaboration, British imperialism also, as is well known, frequently uses the Times as its American mouthpiece.

Voice of Authority

The Times utilizes its editorial columns sparingly. Most often they are filled with dull or trivial pieces of no great significance to anyone. Only occasionally, on a subject of genuine and decisive importance, does the Times square off and make known its point of view in two or three firm and weighty columns, compared to which the editorials of most other papers sound like small boys quarreling. On a presidential election (it will be remembered that almost alone among the big bourgeois papers, the Times declared for Roosevelt); labor acts or reorganization bills; sit-down strikes; above all, on foreign policy, this newspaper speaks with the voice of authority.

In the light of these considerations, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the leading editorial which appeared in the Times of June 15. Coinciding with and complementing perfectly the recent addresses of Secretary of State Hull and his assistants, the Times, in this editorial, entitled "A Way of Life," states its program for American imperialism on the most vital of all questions. There is no ambiguity here; no illusions nor day-dreams; this is the voice of the rulers speaking.

U. S. Will Go to War

The content of this editorial can be summed up in a single sentence: A war is coming and the United States is going to take part in that war. Indeed, with a surprising lack of hypocrisy, the editorial says this in so many words in its very first sentence: "Though the United States has lived for two years under a Neutrality Act which expressed its wish to remain at peace, the American people are not neutral now in any situation which involves the risk of war, nor will they remain neutral in any future situation which threatens to disturb the balance of world power."

Naturally the Times does not leave it at just that. The editorial goes on in an amazingly frank manner to state both the genuine reasons for the United States' entry into the coming war and also the ideological and moral justification which is being and will be used to enlist the people of the United States in that war.

Imperialist Frankness

The United States is on the side of China, says the Times. And with contempt to mere hypocrites, it remarks: "We are not ashamed of a frank commercial interest in desiring the continuation of the Open Door." But not China alone. The United States is also on the side of Czechoslovakia, against the European "aggressors." And with scorn for purist isolationists: "The average American knows that, despite geographical remoteness and a traditional desire to avoid entanglements in other peoples' quarrels, we are inevitably the natural allies of the democracies of Europe."
 And to the pacifists and dreamers in general:

"We shall be fully prepared, if war on a large scale envelops Europe, to choose the side of the democracies."

"That will mean, at the very least, what it meant in the years from 1914 to 1916: an immense moral support... and a deliberate policy of favoring our friends in the interpretation of laws which control our relations which govern our policies on the high seas (the Times is not at all "legalistic" in its thinking—in a crisis it knows how unimportant are the laws on statute books). At most it will mean, as it meant in 1917, a decision on the part of the United States to intervene...."

U. S. Rivals Warned

"It is important that the statesmen of aggressor countries should realize that today, no less than in 1917, there are specific and vital American interests in all parts of the world which would almost certainly be affected by war on a large scale..."

"No remoteness from the scene of a potential European conflict can isolate the United States from the consequences of major war. No Neutrality Act can prevent the American people from favoring their natural allies. In any ultimate test of strength between democracy and dictatorship, the good-will and the moral support—and in the long run more likely than not the physical power of the United States—will be found on the side of those nations defending a way of life which is our own way of life...."

How empty seem the eager and nervous debates between "isolation" and "collective security" in comparison with this! The Times cuts through the controversy because, unlike the debaters, the Times means business—imperialist business, and it knows that imperialist business means war.

The "Democratic Garb"

Of course, the Times also draws around its program the shining folds of "international law and order" and above all of "democracy." The frankness—the Open Door, the defense of imperial interests—will disappear as the war approaches nearer; the "way of life" will alone remain. "Loyalties," "freedom," "tradition," "progress," "equality"—these will be inscribed on the banners. They are all included abundantly in the editorial. But today the Times can still afford to speak more openly about the hard realities lying behind the banners.

There are many, unfortunately many, who regard the position of Marxists on the question of war as sectarian and over-rigid. Let them study well this remarkable editorial. The program of the Times differs from that of the Stalinists only in being less hypocritical; it differs from the isolationists only in being more realistic, only in dealing with the real world instead of a world in someone's imagination.

You have got to be either for or against imperialism; there is no middle ground. And if you are for it you are for its wars, whatever slogans you use to try to hide this. And if you are against imperialism and its wars, you have got to overthrow it. There is no other way. The Times rightly calls its program "A Way of Life." And in the modern world there is one and only one other to oppose it.

SPANISH WORKERS' GAINS ATTACKED

(Continued from page 1)

Union which Stalin thought to strengthen by preserving capitalism in Spain, is now more perilous than ever before. The capitalist "realism" of Chamberlain-Daladier-Negrin can be fought only by the revolutionary realism of the masses.

important factor of the agents' commissions in increasing costs. The average agent's commission is from 20 to 30 per cent of the workers' earnings, and in 22 per cent of the cases it is from 30 to 50 per cent.

With wages at less than two cents an hour for half of the workers, the consternation of the bosses at the prospect of a 25-cent minimum wage is comprehensible. But the Puerto Rican workers must not let themselves be impressed by threats that application of the law "would bring further economic difficulties by diminishing the working opportunities." They must oppose amending the Bill to exempt Puerto Rico. In an Island where food costs are from 20 to 25 per cent higher than in New York City, 25 cents an hour is scarcely too much to demand.

Puerto Rican Bosses Balk At Wage Bill

(Continued from page 1)

average woman \$3.49 for 34.4 hours. When the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration set up a needwork cooperative, it was found it could not profitably pay the wage asked by the I.L.G.W.U. of \$1 a day.

Commissions Not Mentioned

The "business leaders" protesting the Wages and Hours Bill have pointed to high "labor unit costs," attributing them to "less skilled and less efficient labor." They fail to mention the

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SPAIN FEATURED IN N. I. FOR JULY
 Among the many features of the July issue of the New Internationalist, which is now on the press and will be ready for sale shortly, is a sensational article on the "Betrayal in Spain," written by a syndicalist militant who was both participant and eye-witness in the civil war in Spain.
 With indisputable facts and detail, the author shows how the rulers of Loyalist Spain—the Popular Frontists—have been steering the struggle to defeat in the interests of the financial and political overlords of British imperialism.
 The revelations, dramatically written, are certain to create comment everywhere. Branches are urged to make all the necessary arrangements for the widest distribution of the July issue. All orders should be forwarded to the business manager at 116 University Place, New York, N. Y.

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