

Peace & Plenty

DEATH TRUST: American Medical Ass'n Mulets Profits; But Disease Is Rampant

By DAVID COWLES

The corrupt profits system haunts even the sick-bed.

Quite recently, the Federal government charged the American Medical Association, national organization of the medical profession, with acting as a health trust and restraining the free practice of medicine.

The chief issue involved is price. The price here is not for steel or fertilizer but for medical service.

The facts are simple: Several thousand low-paid Federal employees, whose sickness had cost the government hundreds of thousands of dollars, were encouraged by it to form a medical cooperative. Its aim was to give them regular medical attention at a cheap price. The government helped start the cooperative with a \$40,000 subsidy.

Advantages of Cooperative

The advantages were as follows: The doctors got a fixed salary for their services, the members got service to the full extent of their needs and the use of expensive equipment and specialized care for which they might have had to pay exorbitant fees otherwise. Moreover, the doctor's interest was now in preventing sickness rather than in prolonging it. Incidentally, due to the regular medical care and the drop in sickness, the government saved itself money.

However, the medical cooperative strikes at the vested interests in medicine. The doctors are still individual enterprises in the business of distributing medical service. The cooperatives would turn them into salaried employees. As enterprisers, they can charge what the client—"the market"—can bear. The cooperatives would substitute a fixed wage. As enterprisers, they may make unlimited incomes from unlimited fees. The cooperatives would limit them to a definite income stated in the contract. Cooperatives and government medical service are a boon to the unemployed doctors, to the doctors who are employed but who cannot get enough paying patients, and to those who are more interested in practicing medicine than in practicing extortion. They are a threat to the exorbitant fees and incomes of the well-established members of the American Medical Association.

For some time, therefore, the American Medical Association has carried on a bitter fight against medical cooperatives and government medicine. Like big business, when it is threatened with cooperatives, it has tried to destroy them. It forbade doctors from servicing cooperatives. It has expelled doctors who disregarded the warnings. It has kept them out of hospitals. And, in the current instance, it has closed the hospitals of Washington, D.C., to members of cooperatives, even in time of emergencies.

Halo Ripped Away

This action tears the halo from the medical profession and shows the corrosive workings of profits beneath it. Under capitalism, the first concern of the doctor is fees, not patient's health. Where life interferes with fees, the action of the organized medical profession is to let the sick groan and die.

William B. Mills, the warden of the Holmsburg prison in Pennsylvania, where the steaming to death of four hunger-striking prisoners is under investigation, began his career as a cavalry sergeant in the Philippine insurrection. During the three-year guerrilla warfare in the Philippines, atrocities committed by Aguinaldo's native soldiers were, as Charles A. Beard has put it, "repaid with compound interest" by the U. S. troops. The fighters for Philippine independence were finally put down by "generous use of what the Americans called 'the water cure.'"

August Heckscher, "financier and philanthropist," stated to the press on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday: "This used to be a great country before we had the income tax. For seventy years I didn't pay anything, but now we have nothing left." He had enough left, however, to celebrate with an elaborate birthday party, including champagne in his Vanderbilt Avenue penthouse.

A recent survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion revealed that nearly one-third of those surveyed could last only a month or less before going on relief if they lost their jobs, and another one-fifth could hold out for from two to six months. Only 21 per cent could keep going for three years or more on their savings or income.

The New York Times stated editorially last week: "To be sure, both Communists and Fascists may and do pretend to favor such movements (for democracy) merely for strategic reasons. But they become dangerous only when they begin to talk and act like Communists or Fascists." This is another instance of the ruling class showing clearer insight into the nature of the class struggle and the real dangers to capitalism in working-class movements than some so-called working-class parties. It is high time many people who think they are Communists learned that they will be dangerous to the capitalist system "only when they begin to talk and act like Communists," and not when they talk and act like bourgeois democrats.

POUM TRIALS POSTPONED; PRISONERS STILL IN JAIL

Information has reached us that the Loyalist Government has decided to postpone indefinitely the trial of the anarchists, Left-Socialists, POUMites and Trotskyites. The protests of working-class organizations throughout the world has evidently convinced the Loyalist Government that it would be inadvisable to proceed with a Moscow frame-up trial in Barcelona.

The indefinite postponement of the trial is an admission that there is not an iota of credible evidence against the revolutionary workers now in the jails of Barcelona.

If that is so, why are they being kept in jail? What interferes with their immediate and unconditional release? It would appear that while the Stalinists are not strong enough to compel the Loyalist Government to proceed with a frame-up, they are strong enough to prevent the release of the revolutionary anti-fascists.

The progressive workers everywhere will not be satisfied with the indefinite postponement of the trial. They will intensify their campaign for the release of the loyal anti-fascists. For victory against fascism liberate the revolutionary anti-fascists!

At all times, the supremacy of profits over health has resulted in sickness and death among the lower paid workers. But in the present epoch of capitalist decline, it oppresses even the better paid workers and the lower middle class. The answer of the latter has been to get doctors and medical care through cooperatives, thereby destroying the profit motive in health. But the fight of the American Medical Association is similar to that of all monopolies. It is a fight to keep up prices of services, to keep up profits and to increase their wealth, no matter at whose expense.

The government's warnings to the American Medical Association, however, are no sign that the New Deal has suddenly begun to represent the interests of the masses against the profit system. Deceivers and reformers will doubtless say so, but it is completely false. We need only glance at the past and present use of the anti-trust laws to see this clearly.

Laws No Safeguard

In the past, the anti-trust laws were used against industrial and financial monopolies. And that, indeed, was their original purpose. The smaller business men thought to use them as instruments with which to break the power of the monopolies over prices and give the competing small business interests a chance to make more profits. Today, monopolies exercise open dictatorship over the economic system and less obvious domination over the government. They are not only not prosecuted, but they are given official recognition. And they continue as before, manipulating prices, mulcting the masses, lowering living standards of the great majority of the people—and increasing disease as a consequence.

In the present case, the anti-trust laws act as an instrument of the industrial monopolists against the petty medical businesses who have associated themselves in the American Medical Association. The laws would act to break down their control over prices of medical care, to lower their profits, and to reduce their income. This would help profits in industry in two ways. First, lowering doctor bills would leave more money for

workers in the present period of economic decline saps the very life and resistance to disease out of them. It makes them open to every disease which slum living and rotten and inadequate food bear with them. The only prescription that can cure here is: Destroy decaying capitalism! Build a socialist world!

Meanwhile there are many millions without doctor's care, without hospital care, and even without medicine. To conserve their strength and prepare them for destroying capitalism, it is necessary to put forth a program now.

Hospitals Needed

To accommodate the sick in need of hospital treatment, the government should begin immediate construction of a large number of hospitals, with all modern equipment. These hospitals should be distributed throughout the country, in the slum areas of every large city. All services to workers and unemployed, the lower middle class and the poor farmer must be absolutely free of charge, whether for medicine, admission to the clinic, or anything else. The workers in the hospitals must get union wages and hours. The internes must get a minimum weekly wage of \$25. The doctors must get a minimum weekly wage of \$50.

Disease and sickness in the country districts have long been a subject for horrified discussion among medical circles. It is time to do something about it. Let the government build medium-sized hospitals throughout the farm belts, with special concentration among the poorest areas.

Sickness and disease is a national problem. It is for the national government to handle. If Roosevelt and his aides are not just making more campaign speeches, if they are not just trying to deceive the masses with honeyed phrases, let them start the health program now.

Instead of billions for war, destruction, and death, let them appropriate \$5,000,000,000 for building a better life. And let those with wealth pay the taxes for health. But the failure of the New Dealers to take any effective measures to guard the health and life of the masses will not be forgotten. It will only become more firmly fixed in the people's mind as part of the system of profits and disease. When the workers shatter capitalism, when they start forward to a healthy, socialist world, THEY WILL REMEMBER. And they will clear away the governmental rubbish also.

Puerto Rican Nationalists Face Trial; Lawyer Quits

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico. — With an unusual degree of efficiency, the court authorities of Puerto Rico have placed nine young Nationalists under indictment for the attempted assassination of Governor Winship on June 25.

The governor himself has not remained idle; he called a special session of the colonial insular congress in order to press through a measure reintroducing the death penalty abolished in 1924. The Puerto Rico prosecuting attorney, Pierluissi—lacker is always more shameless than their bosses—lost no time in declaring that he would have no qualms about demanding the death penalty for the youthful defendants and "then going quietly home to lunch."

The legislators of the republican-socialist coalition are much embarrassed. They would like very much to prove their loyalty to Washington by cleaning up on the terrorists, but on the other hand, the sympathy of the population for the nationalist defendants is so great, in spite of the propaganda inspired by Winship and consorts, that they do not dare to follow the dictation of the White House in San Juan.

In this dilemma they transform the "humanitarian" opposition to the reintroduction of the death penalty into a means of disguising their participation in the official terror against the Nationalists. The proposed legislation of the governor will hardly find the necessary majority.

The defendants have appeared without defense in the sessions of the trial held up to the present time. However, there bobbed up along side of the defendants a unique kind of lawyer. He asked in the name of the defendants for new postponements to carry on the search for defense attorneys. But he declined emphatically to be considered by the court as the representative of the Nationalist defendants. This remarkable defense and non-defense attorney is the Stalinist lawyer Bahamonde.

In the past trials of Nationalists the Stalinists placed themselves openly on their side. But the "legal" side of the trials was different. The charge against the leader of the Nationalists, now in Atlanta penitentiary, Albizu Campos and his comrades, was a rank frame-up. The trial against the

victims of the police massacre at the time of the Nationalist demonstration in Ponce in 1937 was so incredibly arbitrary and indefensible that even the Puerto Rican bourgeoisie had to take a stand against Winship.

Picture Changed

This time, however, the "legal" as well as the political picture has changed. It is common knowledge that the defendants have broken the laws of imperialist justice as far as their participation in the shooting can be proved. For Marxists, this has, of course, no significance. Their moral solidarity with the young rebels is unreserved. Their sharp differentiation from the acts of terror of the Nationalists falls in the category of revolutionary expediency. For them the struggle of the masses for liberation is incompatible with individual terrorism.

But the Stalinists no longer hold this view. According to their new constitution, "Terrorists" have no place in the company of well-bred communists. Therefore when a couple of confused colonial slaves resort to the revolver, these "Communists" find themselves on the side of the exploiters.

It is understandable that this new philosophy doesn't penetrate the heads of the Porto Rican Stalinists easily. For those who live amidst the misery of an exploited people, the blessings of Yankee freedom are not so manifest as for Browder and the Caribbean Buro in New York.

Strange Defense

Therefore, the Stalinist Bahamonde tries honestly if unsuccessfully to do right by both sides. He can't resist appearing in court at the side of the Nationalists, but at the same time Bahamonde declares that he is interested in the defendants not because they are innocent, but because they are "defenseless."

Naturally, the court has nothing to fear from such a defense attorney, and Bahamonde together with some other remaining "loyal" lawyers was named defender ex-officio.

But the court didn't take into account Stalinist party discipline, which can no longer suffer even the mere appearance of solidarity with the terrorist "underworld." Bahamonde stated suddenly that he must retire from the defense indefinitely for "family reasons."

French Workers in Action During an Auto Strike



French Workers Grow Restive Under Deepening Crisis; Strikes Break Out

Militancy Checked By "Loyal" CGT Bureaucrats

By TERENCE PHELAN

PARIS, August 18.—Under the calm of the August vacations, premonitory rumblings presage an uneasy autumn. Just prior to the opening of the disquieting German maneuvers, the franc reached the lowest point permitted under its new stabilization. The weakness of its subsequent recovery, coupled with the visit of Morgenthau, U. S. Secretary of the Treasury, suggests the possibility of another devaluation, but even more the probability of France's first trying some special form of exchange control.

After the boastful self-congratulations of French imperialism on the success of its first pre-war war-loan, it is significant that after three whole weeks there have not been issued any figures whatsoever on the public acceptance of the second, the National Defense Bonds. French capitalism continues to be sick. And whoever has not temporarily escaped to the forgetfulness of vacationing is nervous. No sooner is the Nippon-Soviet incident settled than Italy closes its French frontier. Just when lenient judges had freed the last of the C.S.A.R., 140 tubes of cheddite are found in a Cagouard's garden near Clermont-Ferrand. And though wholesale price indices soften slightly, the retail cost of living inexorably rises.

Marseilles labor, always militant, now increasingly active, holds attention on the strike front. After 24 days, the strike of the metal workers, sabotaged by its own national federation in the C.G.T. went down to bitter and angry defeat. But no sooner had the bosses permitted themselves a little too-public gloating than the strike burst out again. A temporary truce and resumption of work was arranged on August 17, but the situation smolders angrily.

Dock Workers Strike

Meanwhile the dock workers become an increasingly irritating thorn in the bosses' sides. Demanding 64 francs a day instead of 55 1/2 (the franc is quoted this week at 273 cents), the dockers refused to work any supplementary hours beyond the statutory 40 unless they were given good overtime percentages above the regular hourly rate, and enforced their demands by direct action. Now the shipping company bosses are about the most reactionary in France, demonstrably behind two important fascist factions, the C.S.A.R. and de la Roquette's P.S.F. They have unleashed a furious campaign against the dockers. First they demanded that the government, as it had threatened to do in the Paris transport strike, declare a state of emergency and call the dockers (who are army reservists) to the colors for strike duty; then, under threat of the army penalties for mutiny and desertion, make them work the boats and break their own strike.

Since this was written, Senegalese troops were used last week-end to move cargo that the Marseilles dock workers refused to handle after they had worked their 40-hour week.—Ed.]

When the government showed it was afraid to do this, the shipowners started a wild agitation in Algeria among the fruit and vegetable growers, some of whose shipments have been partly spoiled in the port of Marseilles by the dockers' refusal to break the 40 hours. Mediators sent by the French capitalist state have, on not very plausible technicalities, decided invariably against the workers. But worst of all, the C.G.T., the national labor federation, is doing absolutely nothing to help this strike of one of its own unions, and the trade-union bureaucrats have to date succeeded in holding back the other

Marseilles workers from any solidifying action with the dockers. No accident, but policy, this sabotage by the C.G.T. of the strikes of its own component organizations is deeply significant. The Marseilles struggle looks to be long-drawn-out, a war of attrition (though at present writing the Marseillais may succeed in getting a general strike of stevedores in all French Mediterranean ports). And, with the sabotaging attitude of the C.G.T. tops, the prognosis is not very favorable. The situation should be underlined, however, as symptomatic of the situation of French labor today: a basic militancy, kept carefully localized and canalized by the trade-union bureaucracy, and sabotaged if it gets out of hand.

Teachers Show Militancy

The other side of the picture is more cheering. Preparatory to the annual convention of the C.G.T. in November, its component federations are holding each its own. Among these the pacifist has always been the teachers' union, outstanding for being almost unanimously representative of the teachers of France (110,000 members out of 130,000 teachers). This union has just held (August 3-6), at Nantes, an exciting congress. The directing majority under Delmas, straight syndicalist rather than political, submitted a majority general report smashing a condemning Popular Frontism as a sell-out and a failure, frankly telling the Stalinist party to keep its tyrannical hands off the teachers' union, and demanding militant action in the autumn for the demands of the teachers and all the other government functionaries.

This program the Stalinists, swallowing their rage as best they might, had to support with

all their weight, because the minority program, put forward by the revolutionary left under Valliere, went ten times as far in the same direction, and the serious danger of its passage had conditioned the leftness of the majority resolutions. The vote, 862 to 238, with 38 abstentions, gives some idea of the leavening force of the revolutionary left. Finance-capital's organ *Le Temps*, which has lately been getting more and more jittery about labor, rushed out a front-page editorial, raving about 'a state within a state,' hinted treason, and generally acted hysterical. But more was to come.

Jouhaux Boomed

The next day, following the enthusiastic singing of "The International," Jouhaux, the William Green of France, attempted to address the convention. Half the delegates and all the audience (over a thousand non-delegate teachers) whistled and boomed him into silence. It was necessary to clear the hall and severely warn the delegates before Jouhaux could purr his hurt and offend words to the still sullen and often angrily interrupting congress. (One may imagine the embarrassment of the Stalinists, who hope by giving Jouhaux a post in their international trade-union organization to get as a swap high posts for themselves in the C.G.T.)

The teachers' convention is as significant as the Marseilles dockers' struggle. If the other C.G.T. union congresses, taking this keynote, will renew the class-struggle militancy they had in 1936, the November Convention of the C.G.T. will relaunch French labor on that revolutionary path from which the will-o'-the-wisp of Popular Frontism lured it so tragically away.

Europe Tense in War Crisis; Waits Nazi Move

(Continued from page 1)

and within easy reach of great cities. It would increase by hundreds of miles the frontier which Germany would have to defend against possible attack. But a Czechoslovakia that is at least truncated from Bratislava northward, with the western section "autonomous," would turn Germany into a far more powerful fighting machine.

The "autonomous" section would be swallowed up by Germany, increasing its economic-military strength. The salient line to Germany would exist no more, and the frontier to be defended against invasion from Czechoslovakia would be reduced by about four-fifths. Germany would have practically the resources of its pre-war alliance with Austria-Hungary without the weakening elements of that alliance: the nationalist movements striving for independence, the sprawling territory and the poorly organized control. Germany would have one solid block of territory with a minimum frontier to defend and maximum striking power for attack. German imperialism would dominate Europe.

That the German drive to truncate Czechoslovakia is definitely on is obvious from observing the demands of Henlein and the Sudeten Party. They demand nothing less than complete autonomy, free from all intervention from the central government, controlled by the Czechs. The Czech bourgeoisie refuse to concede this, since they realize that doing so would be to sign their own death warrants in favor of German capitalism. And they are prepared to crush the Sudetens by force should the latter try to overthrow the government. But the Sudetens are only the tools of the German foreign policy. And behind the Sudetens, and preparing for intervention in

Czechoslovakia to restore "order" stands the Nazi war machine.

Powers Back Czechs

But if the Sudetens are supported by the Nazis, the Czechs are backed by an even more imposing array of powers. The threat of Nazi intervention in Czechoslovakia had immediate repercussions. France, which has a diplomatic and military alliance with Czechoslovakia, announced that German invasion of the territory would be considered as war against France, Rumania and Yugoslavia, as members of the Little Entente, are bound to come to the support of Czechoslovakia against the invasion. The Soviet Union, as an ally of France, was certain to declare war against Germany, England, as an ally of France, warned Germany that she would be drawn into the conflict also. And the United States showed more openly than ever that in case of war in Europe, they would be involved and on the side of the "democracies."

Should Germany drive on Czechoslovakia, and should Italy support her, then the beginning of the European war is a matter of days. Once it begins in Europe, the imperialist blocs will expand over the world. On one side Italy-Germany-Japan, and on the other side England-France-United States, with the Soviet Union finding a fitful resting place among the "democratic" capitalist powers.

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