

Workers' Power or Fascism Is the Issue In France

2,000,000 STRIKE TO STOP FASCISM

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that this was NOT a political strike, but a mere protest against the abrogation of the 40-hour week, that perfect order, calm, and discipline and NOT the open struggle for power, was the slogan of the day.

Blum's Gesture
Blum and his fellow-Socialists, clinging desperately to the disappearing skirt-hem of parliamentary legality, feebly called for a "rump" session of parliament to "repudiate" Daladier's "illegality." But this futile gesture aroused no echo. The issue of power lay no longer in the empty halls of a discredited Parliament but out in the streets, in the factories, mines, and shops.

The prime issue was the power itself—the glaring choice between the onward march toward Fascist dictatorship or the establishment of the workers' power. But Blum & Co. bleated about "illegality" and Jouhaux and friends tried to make the whole problem one of the working hours.

Confused and disheartened, the workers called off their spontaneous sit-down strikes. The provocative measures of Daladier found them—as Daladier confidently expected—completely disarmed. They were confronted with a tremendous display of force and threats of mass repression and wholesale dismissals and their own leaders grasped from their hands the political and material means of combating this open advance of Fascist reaction.

Response Uneven
The result was complete confusion when the day of the general strike demonstration dawned. Daladier's strong-arm measures achieved their purpose. All public utilities continued to function. All trains ran. Communications were scarcely affected. Government services performed as usual. In the mines and factories there was an uneven response to the strike call, ranging from 10 to 90 percent.

Most significant of all was the fact that precisely in those factories where the spontaneous sit-downs occurred a week ago, the strike was only partially effective on Wednesday. It was claimed that the strikers in the metallurgical plants in the Paris region did not exceed 25 percent of the total personnel. In every field comparative handfuls of workers half-heartedly obeyed the strike call. In the circumstances there were few real attempts made to stop wheels from turning.

In the ports longshoremen struck but, as in Marseilles, ships reportedly left on schedule—and the seamen have always been among the most advanced and most radical of all the French workers! In 1936 they covered the harbor of Marseilles with hundreds of red flags, flying from the masthead of immobilized vessels!

Daladier Jubilant
Daladier and his minions were jubilant. They believe they will be able to proceed to complete the subjugation of the workers without a general battle. Most significant of all, the morning of the general strike, the Paris stock exchange showed a forward spurt and in financial and business circles there was supreme confidence in the outcome of the day's events. In other words they knew that their faithful lackeys, Jouhaux, Blum, Thorez & Co. would not fall them!

It was precisely on this that the ruling class of France has been counting. Having successfully used the People's Front to demoralize the workers, they are deliberately provoking the struggle under conditions favorable to themselves and unfavorable to the workers. That their drive toward Fascism will now continue at an even more rapid pace no one can now doubt and against this drive there is still time to mobilize the undefeated forces of the French working class.

With the issuance on Nov. 12 of the decree laws abrogating the five-day 40-hour week and increasing taxes in every category most costly to the workers—bus-tickets, subway fares, coffee, tobacco, wine, sugar, postal rates, foodstuffs—Daladier made it clear that he was preparing for a showdown with the workers.

In his speech at the Radical Socialist party congress at Marseilles a few weeks ago, the erstwhile hero of the People's Front openly and cynically challenged the workers, declaring they would have to bow to the needs of national defense. The decrees revealed what this meant by providing for prosecution as treason any agitation by the workers against the increase of the working week.

Strikes Begin
From the depths of the French working class, dispersed and betrayed a thousand times by the People's Front since the great strike of June, 1936, came new rumblings of protest. On the surface this was expressed in the feeble opposition to the decree laws by the Socialist and Communist bureaucracies but a few days later, as in 1936, the workers began to take the issue into their own hands.

Workers in the Renault and Bloch automobile and aviation plants in the suburbs of Paris occupied their shops. Coal miners at Anzin and metal and armaments workers at Denain and Valenciennes in the North followed suit. In a few days the number of strikers rocketed to 100,000.

At the General Confederation of Labor congress at Nantes the previous week the opposition of the workers had been shunted off into verbal expressions of protest and plans for demonstrations on Saturday, Nov. 26. But the pressure from below became so strong that Leon Jouhaux and his fellow-bureaucrats were forced to contemplate a further step and they finally announced on Nov. 25 a general strike for 24 hours on Nov. 30, actually allowing a space of five days for the government to engage freely in its preparations to beat the workers down and to break up the strikes already beginning to spread through the vital heavy industries.

Wastes No Time
Daladier wasted no time in taking advantage of this opportunity. Giving every indication that he intended to split up the workers and knock them off in sections, the ex-People's Front Premier moved into action on a virtual war-time basis. In a few days he invoked all the special authoritarian powers granted him in the recent war crisis, directed this time against the workers.

Mobile Guards and police broke into the Renault plants and other occupied factories and after pitched battles with the unarmed workers succeeded in clearing them. Nearly 400 strikers were arrested. The next day the Renault company locked out its 30,000 workers as a means of weeding out "undesirable agitators."

The government threatened all foreign workers—there are many Poles and Belgians among the miners in the North—with expulsion from the country if they did not abandon the strikes.

The mines and railways were placed under military law and military courts were set up to deal summarily with recalcitrant strikers. Employees of the state were threatened with dismissal and punitive action if they strike.

Rumors of Dissolution
Meanwhile Daladier made sure that rumors began to spread that the dissolution of the Socialist and Communist parties would be among his next measures.

What did the Socialist and Communist leaders do? Paris correspondents have in incidental paragraphs shown them "in action."

Blum Goes Begging
"Last night's rumor that Premier Daladier was preparing to dissolve the Communist Party threw the Communists and Socialists into a state of alarm," reported the New York Times on Nov. 26. "Leon Blum went rushing from one Radical Socialist leader to another—Edouard Herriot, president of the Chamber of Deputies among them—demanding that they immediately withdraw their support from the Premier and protesting that, of course, the Socialists had no quarrel with the Radicals. He encountered refusal everywhere. . ."

What a shameful picture! The workers are again taking the bit between their teeth, racing far ahead of their frightened union bureaucrats. The government is obviously taking provocative steps preparatory to smashing the workers' organizations. And Leon Blum rushes around to his former bourgeois associates in the People's Front governments to plead with them to lay off, to persuade them that the Socialists are good boys!

Duclos Follows Suit
And where meanwhile were the heroes of the Stalinist Party? The Stalinists, paralyzed by the outcome of their People's Front treachery, demoralized by the substitution of the Munich pact for the Franco-Soviet alliance, are waiting desperately for some sign from Moscow of a new line. Meanwhile their efforts are directed toward seeking allies anywhere, anyhow, including the extreme Rightist de Kerillis, willing to join in derailing Daladier and checking the French orientation toward an understanding with



The Clenched Fist In France

Issue of Power Faced In France Since 1934 Riots and Great Strike of 1936

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of Hitler, and by the rise of the Fascists as demonstrated on Feb. 6, 1934, they retreated in fright from their play-acting revolutionism. In other words they shouted for revolution when the workers were not ready and abandoned the revolution precisely when the workers began dimly to reach out for it.

United Front Created
The will of the workers to struggle against the Fascist threat was so imperative, that the union bureaucrats were forced to act. As during this week, they sought to canalize the fury of the workers into peaceful channels and called for a 24-hour general strike on Feb. 12, 1934, as a demonstration of protest. The workers, who had been indifferent to the struggle for partial demands that could no longer be met, poured out into the streets in millions in a tremendous display of their readiness to struggle for the conquest of power that a general strike so clearly implies.

This same pressure brought about the positive result of a united front between the Socialist and Communist Parties. This united front, however, remained on paper and offered no program of action to the workers. Throughout 1934 the French Bolshevik-Leninists (Fourth International) who had entered the Socialist Party to help the crystallization of its left wing, agitated incessantly for the creation of workers' defense militia against the Fascist bands, for the revolutionary general strike against the Bonapartist governments, and for a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Program Proposed
The pressure from below became so strong that in January, 1935, the Socialist Party leadership actually offered to the Communist Party a proposal to wage a joint struggle on the basis of the conquest of power. But the Communist Party was attuned not to the needs and interests of the French workers but to the dictates of the Kremlin. Stalin, whose rejection of the united front had helped Hitler to power in Germany and who subsequently was rebuffed in his efforts to

Hitler. Together with the Socialist and C.G.T. bureaucrats the Stalinists bleated about the "illegality" of Daladier's measures. As though illegality amounted to a damn now that the issue of power was being clearly drawn! Speaking in the finance commission of the Chamber, Jacques Duclos, Stalinist spokesman, protested against "the expulsion of workers by force from the factories when it could have been done by agreement." In other words, Duclos was still offering the good services of his party as a strikebreaker and wept only because Daladier preferred the Mobile Guards!

Duclos too, like Blum, made the rounds of the Radical Socialist leaders. He had an interview with Herriot, but the President of the Chamber, we are informed, preserved "impartial and judicial objectiveness."
Blum Beats On
On Nov. 26 Leon Blum continued his urgent pleading. Even the New York Times correspondent detected the note of "frenzy" and fear in the article in Le Populaire in which Blum urged Daladier's friends to persuade him to resign "by urging him not to be obstinate and accusing him of stirring up this social battle."
But while the misleaders of the

make a new deal with the Fuehrer, had begun to turn toward France. The Franco-Soviet pact was in the making. The Soviet Union entered the League of Nations. The Kremlin bureaucracy became the chief prop of the status quo in Europe and its hireling Communist parties were ordered to act accordingly. In France especially, the bourgeoisie had to be reassured. It had to be freed from fear of any workers' revolution.

The French masses, as various elections showed, were turning away from the Radical Socialists, the traditional party of the French petty bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie was clearly undergoing a process of polarization to the left toward the workers, and to the right, toward the Fascists. By a bold revolutionary policy and a program that showed the petty bourgeoisie a new way out in socialized production for the shopkeepers, small merchants, peasants, and peasant artisans of France—the working class parties could have atomized the Fascist threat and won the masses to the banner of the revolution.

Declined, With Thanks
But the Communist Party, rapidly becoming transformed into the most reactionary brake on the working class, wanted none of this. Leon Blum, Paul Faure, and the other Socialist bureaucrats, forced leftward by the workers' pressure, were delighted to find that the Communists had no intention of taking the January program for conquest of power very seriously. Much to their relief, the Communist Party demurred, saying "there is no revolutionary situation."

The Socialists, who had always allied with the Radicals, had been forced from below to break with their own right-wing section that represented that traditional policy of alliance, known as the cartel. Instead of helping this process along, the Communist Party bureaucrats worked might and main to reconstruct the cartel, adding themselves to it, and to rehabilitate the Radical Socialist Party in the eyes of the masses.

The result was the emasculating of the workers' united front

workers, Jouhaux, Blum, Duclos, Thorez, & Co., are shouting about the "illegality" of the government and urging "calm, order, and discipline" on the workers. Daladier is determinedly remaining "obstinate" and driving ahead for the "social battle."
The masters of France, the big bosses of finance capital whom Daladier represented in the People's Front and for whom he is now carrying out his present program, want to be done with the intolerable insistence of the workers that they too have rights. They consider the forces of the workers sufficiently dispersed by the experience of the People's Front to make a trial of strength as a preparation for locking the people into the strait-jacket of Fascism. For this Daladier is paving the way.

Against this the workers can make only one answer: Not a 24-hour general strike but a national general strike under the slogan: "For a workers' and peasants' government!"
Force the Socialist and Communist Parties and the C.G.T. to take power! Form councils of action in all factories, communes, and towns. These are the slogans of struggle today that can beat back the advancing wave of Fascism. Any other road leads to new defeats.

Roosevelt Speeds Drive To Mobilize Hemisphere

Wall Street Dictator Rules Peru, Seat of Conference

By DONALD BERGNER
President Roosevelt's Pan-American Conference will open next week in Lima, Peru. According to the President's smiling statements the conference has as its purpose the defense of "democracy" by the "united Americas." To the people of Peru, the seat of this great "democratic" gathering, this is one of the bitterest jokes in years. For Peru ranks with Brazil and Cuba as one of the three most bloody, dictator-ridden, un-democratic nations on this side of the ocean. Long before Adolf Hitler began his bloody pogroms, beating and killing thousands of defenseless Jews and non-Jews, the Peruvian masses knew the weight of imperialism's murderous fist.

In 1930, three years before Hitler burned the Reichstag, thousands of Peruvians were slaughtered following the suppression of the famous Trujillo revolt against the provocative dictatorial actions of the government. But this revolt, and the many others that preceded and followed it, were not directed solely against the dictator in Lima.

Puppets for Wall Street
The various Peruvian Strong Men of the past decades have all been little more than puppets for the Fat Men in Wall Street and their tight-lipped Coolidges or grinning Roosevelts in Washington. United States' control over Peru's destiny is not a platonic matter. Fully 70 per cent of Peru's petroleum industry is controlled by U.S. interests, chiefly through the Standard Oil Company's subsidiary, the International Petroleum Company. Peru's other leading industry, the production of copper, is also largely controlled by Americans through the U.S.-owned Cerro de Pasco Copper Corp. and the American Smelting and Refining Co. The Cerro de Pasco Co. alone has \$90,000,000 invested in Peru's copper mines.

U. S. Investments
U.S. investments in Peru, only \$35,000,000 in 1913, more than doubled during the World War while England, America's greatest rival in the field of Latin-American investments, was busy saving and expanding her control of the Old World. By 1918, therefore, the U.S. was able to invest \$85,000,000.

Washington Runs President
It is only natural that, controlling the economic life of the country, the U.S. should control other phases of Peruvian life. For example, on February 2, 1938 the United States Navy announced the appointment of a number of American navy officers to help President Benavides run his navy office too. When Roosevelt sent his famous last-minute appeal this September, Peru quick-

and even insurance company offices, the red flag was run up. The revolution was on the order of the day. The Fascists and their capitalist masters were in full retreat.

But the People's Front hastened to their rescue. Blum and his friends hastily drafted sweeping social legislation for collective contracts, the 5-day, 40-hour week, paid vacations, which were rushed through a badly frightened parliament. Most of the bills were adopted unanimously, even the extreme Right recognizing that only Blum & Co. could now save the capitalist order.

With these bright promises, by cajoling and wheedling, temporizing, and persuading, Blum, Cachin, Thorez & Co. succeeded in terminating the strikes and saving French capitalism.

Strikebreaker-In-Chief
During the next two years the People's Front played out its role to the end as strikebreaker-in-chief on behalf of French finance capital. All its brightly-painted reforms turned out to be phoney. It claimed to "democratize" the Bank of France and even provided the spectacle of Jouhaux, the trade union leader, as a member of the board of directors!

Meanwhile it served the real masters of the Bank of France and the Bank of England by taking the leading role in strangling the Spanish revolution fighting for its life just across its own borders! Blum of the People's Front initiated the cruel farce of the "Non-intervention Committee" and the Stalinists went right along with it, while verbally protesting their solidarity with the Spanish workers. The workers'

obliged with messages to Hitler and Benes.
Since the people of Peru feel the effects of Wall Street domination a little more strongly than those of the U.S. they have reacted with a little more vigor. As a result the Wall Street government in Lima cannot afford the "democratic" luxuries of the Wall Street government in Washington. The A.P.R.A. (American Popular Revolutionary Association)—Peruvian nationalist mass movement—and the L.T.R. (League of Revolutionary Workers)—revolutionary socialists—and even the Stalinists, despite all their shouting of loyalty to U.S. imperialism, are all illegal.

Nationalists Illegal
The A.P.R.A. was dissolved in 1930 on the eve of elections by the then-President Leguia. The dissolution was attended by severe cruelty which finally provoked the unsuccessful Trujillo uprising. For years after, the Apristas, and their leader Haya de la Torre, made the rounds of banishment, hounding, and prison. Many thousands were brutally murdered and the movement was seriously weakened.

Leguia's successor, Oscar Benavides, made the democratic gesture of permitting the A.P.R.A. to emerge into legality. But the gesture was short-lived. As the 1938 elections approached, it became evident that A.P.R.A., if permitted to run, would poll a tremendous vote. It was again dissolved.

Elected Without Running
Benavides was so unpopular that he was afraid to run again, so he ran one of his stooges named Prado as the "candidate of the National Front." Then, running as a Social-Democrat, Dr. Luis Eguiguren entered the race with full A.P.R.A. support and to everybody's surprise including his own won a majority of the votes. But the great "democrat" Benavides, who will next week welcome his fellow "democrats" to Lima, gave a prompt even if undemocratic answer to the election results. He annulled the election, had his puppet Assembly declare him reelected (he hadn't even been a candidate), dissolved Congress and ruled by decree law!

But no one was surprised by this, at least no one in Peru, for in the preceding July at a demonstration in Arequipa over 100 women and children were beaten and arrested by Benavides' police. To follow up his coup, Benavides arrested the entire leadership of A.P.R.A., with the exception of those who were out of the country, charging them with planning a revolt, presumably against the "democratic" institutions.

Such is the democracy that the workers and peasants of North and South America are asked to support with their lives!

militancy was scattered on the winds of parliamentary illusions. The People's Front government savagely shot down and imprisoned opponents of French imperialism in the French colonies and in every other way carried out the orders of its bourgeois masters.

The workers were told that the People's Front had ended the threat of Fascism because it passed laws dissolving the Fascist gangs. But the Croix de Feu simply changed its name to the French Social Party and continued its preparations under the protection and patronage of the General Staff, left intact, of course, by the Blum regime.

Blum's government lasted a year, just long enough in the opinion of the finance capital masters of France, to make it possible for a new capitalist offensive to begin—for the crisis was pressing in and the workers had to be made to pay for it. Blum was replaced by Chautemps, and Chautemps in his turn by Daladier and it was Daladier, as People's Front premier, who kicked the People's Front down stairs and embarked openly on the road to Fascism.

Considering that the workers were sufficiently demoralized to leave the road open for a new offensive, Daladier was commissioned to launch it. French capitalism, faced by the aggressive advance of its totalitarian rivals, snatched at the Munich accord for the respite it offered, abandoned the Franco-Soviet pact as useless, and now seeks the way of revitalizing its own sapped strength to meet the tests that are yet to come. For this it could

"M-Day, that dreaded 'zero hour' when secret mobilization orders herald the beginning of war, is the chief concern of Washington nowadays."

With these blunt words Hanson Baldwin, noted expert on military affairs, summed up in last Sunday's New York Times the present aim and activities of the Roosevelt administration.

Echoed in the press in a hundred different ways, this lesson is being driven home—Roosevelt is preparing the country for war. Every aspect of governmental activity is being subordinated to this central task.

Aims At Lima
The "national unity" delegation to the Lima Pan-American conference, including Alf Landon and John L. Lewis' daughter, has left for the conference where Yankee imperialism hopes to give concrete form to the new Roosevelt doctrine of "inter-continental defense"—i.e., the mobilization of the whole western hemisphere under the aegis of United States finance capital in a coordinated military, naval, and economic unit.

Meanwhile Roosevelt is wasting no time in pushing ahead with his plans along a many-sided front.

Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles announced on Nov. 23 that the number of U.S. naval, military, and air attaches in Latin American countries would be doubled.

A few days earlier the State Department announced that a naval, military, and air mission would proceed to Colombia to help reorganize the armed forces of that country and enthusiastic compliments were exchanged by the Senate of that country and President Roosevelt.

Batista Enlisted
Col. Fulgencio Batista, assassin of the Cuban workers, returned to Havana from a wining-and-dining tour in the United States and said his admiration for Roosevelt was "unbounded." This meant, in plainer words, that Batista had been satisfactorily lined up for the program of "inter-continental solidarity." We may be sure that naval and air bases will spring up on the south coast of Cuba. In partial return, Batista was able to announce that the reciprocity treaty between the two countries would be modified in favor of certain Cuban products.

In Washington this Thursday 180 high-ranking officers of the Army and Navy met to discuss the Roosevelt industrial mobilization program. For this program a preliminary survey has already been completed and 10,000 plants earmarked for re-gearing into the American imperialist war machine.

Calling of this conference followed shortly after the publication of Secretary of War Woodring's report which significantly emphasized the need for industrial mobilization to back up specifically military and naval measures.

Emphasis on Industry
The emphasis upon this aspect of the war preparations is not accidental. The imperialist masters realize now more clearly than ever before that wars are really fought and won on the home fronts and this means the successful regimentation of labor in accordance with the war needs of the bosses.

no longer use the People's Front, for the workers now have to be not merely fooled but beaten into submission. This is the meaning of the Daladier decrees as the first open step toward an outright dictatorship.
But perhaps these gentry have miscalculated. The strikes of the past week, breaking once more without so much as a "by-your-leave" nod in the direction of the union bureaucrats, show that the vitality of the French workers has not been sapped, that the will and ability to struggle is still there despite the debilitating effect of four years of betrayal by Daladier, Blum, Thorez & Co.

The party of the Fourth International in France, the P.O.I. (Workers' Internationalist Party), has identified itself through this period with the program of struggle, of armed resistance to Fascism, of the general strike for power, of the workers' and peasants' government. That party must now place itself in the front ranks of the struggle now unfolding and there join with all other revolutionary militants in creating a new leadership for the critical days ahead, for the issue is Fascism or a workers' France. There is no third road.