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Contents

	PAGE
A New Variation of the United Front. <i>Editorial</i>	I
Mass Demonstrations. <i>B. V.</i>	6
The Meaning of Events at Lodz. <i>F. Brand</i>	12
"The American Federationist." <i>A Review by J. Zack</i>	20

A New Variation of the United Front

SOME days ago there appeared in the Soviet press a disclosure of the decision taken by a group of German bankers, with Mendelssohn at their head, on the question of this group attaching itself to the so-called "International Association of Russian Creditors."

Since that disclosure the question of the intentions of the International Association of Creditors has figured largely in the bourgeois press. In particular it is being discussed with ardour by the German bourgeois press, which is joyful because the German holders of Tsarist loans have been accepted in the International Association and thus can count on "general support in the general task."

THE International Association of Creditors of Russia has been organised a comparatively long time. At the head are two national organisations—one French, the other British. Both these organisations represent groups highly inimical to the Soviet Union, groups which are interested only in the question of getting back the money which they once lent to the Tsarist Government. At the head of the International Association are men who personify the worst and most reactionary sections of capitalism, frankly and cynically interested only in the profitable liquidation of their old relationships with Tsarist Russia. It is these same men who were at the back of

the interventions, if not directly as participants, as inspirers. It was these leaders of the International Association who were the authors—or stood at the back of the authors—of the so-called London Memorandum, which was presented to the U.S.S.R. at the Genoa Conference, and which represented a programme of colonial demands, to be extorted by the Entente countries from Soviet Russia, exhausted as she was by wars, interventions and blockades, and by the unprecedented famine.

THE great majority of the members of the International Association of Creditors were also members of the various delegations at the Hague Conference of 1922, which represented a continuation of the attempt, which had been begun at Genoa, to force the U.S.S.R. to its knees.

During the two years which followed the failure of the Genoa-Hague attempts to transform the U.S.S.R. into a colony of Western-European capital, the leaders of the International Association reduced their pretensions somewhat, or rather, they ceased openly and cynically to display them to the world. Such "moderation" was explained by the circumstance that the time coincided with the advance of the democratic-pacifist era, which, as we know, died before reaching full bloom. This era was signalled by the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Great Powers of Western Europe, Britain and France, and by the opening of negotiations between them and the U.S.S.R. for the regulation of the old debt claims on the basis of fresh credits.

ONE would have thought that the old usurers of the International Association could only welcome both the Anglo-Soviet and the Franco-Soviet negotiations, negotiations which promised them the recovery of a certain proportion of their old claims, and which opened before them the prospect of fresh orders from the U.S.S.R., and with them fresh profits. One would have thought that the International Association was bound in all ways to assist towards the success of these negotiations and to give real support to ensure their favourable consummation. In reality this was not so. The international

Shylocks were struggling only for their pound of flesh, which they were prepared to tear from the body of the Soviet Republic. They were not concerned with whatever might be the prospects of future work from the U.S.S.R. They did not wish to listen to talk about any form of credits. Like parrots they reiterated the phrase they had by heart: "Give us back our money."

Not only did they render no assistance to the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet negotiations, but they strove by all means to hinder the success of those negotiations. It was the British group of creditors which published its Memorandum against the MacDonald Government, which had ventured to propose a treaty with the U.S.S.R., a treaty based on the principle of a reciprocal dependence between the payment of a certain proportion of the old debts and the obtaining of fresh credits. In the British group of creditors the MacDonald Government found its bitterest enemies, who passed to an open attack on it as soon as the treaty with the U.S.S.R. was signed.

Exactly the same thing happened in France also. The French group of creditors broke off the Franco-Soviet negotiations—it was they who were at the head of the campaign directed against the former U.S.S.R. Ambassador in Paris, Rakovsky.

And now the German group of Tsarist bondholders has also entered this organisation.

WHAT is the political significance of this step taken by the group of German bankers?

In the first place, it is necessary to have quite clearly in mind the fact that the German bankers' entry into the International Association of Creditors is a step which cuts completely across the terms of the Rapallo Treaty. In the second clause of that treaty the German Government, in its own name and in that of its citizens, renounced all claims on the U.S.S.R. which were based on the obligations of the Tsarist Government (in this context the renunciation of other claims based on other titles was not mentioned). This renunciation is limited to a definite period, namely, the renunciation is abrogated in the event of the U.S.S.R. paying the old Tsarist debts of any third country. Then the German claims come

into force again, and the renunciation is recalled.

As is well known, the U.S.S.R. has so far paid no Tsarist debts whatever, and is not planning to do so. Thus it is quite obvious that the moment foreseen in clause two of the Rapallo Treaty has not yet arrived, and consequently the renunciation of claims contained in that clause has still to be regarded as in application.

THE German bourgeois press has already expended a by no means small quantity of ink on attempting to prove what is altogether impossible to prove. Thus, on the one hand the German bourgeois newspapers declare that no violation of the Rapallo Treaty is involved, because the treaty itself provides against the moment when the German claims shall be renewed. The artificiality of such arguments is obvious. The attempt to represent the step taken by the German bankers as a preparatory measure against the moment when it will be permissible to put forward their demands does not bear criticism. The International Association is occupying itself with far from academic questions, such as preparation for the putting forward of future demands. It is putting forward those claims already, it is bringing influence to bear on the corresponding governments, it publishes its memoranda and so on.

The German bourgeois press does not cease to declare that the action of the group of German bankers is a purely personal step, and that it connotes merely an attempt to defend their own interests with their own strength. The German Government took up a similar position in the official communiqué which was published by the Wolff agency. This communiqué also declares the step of the German bankers to be a personal step, which the German Government had no possibility of preventing. The Wolff communiqué definitely established the "neutral" position which the German Government has taken up on this question. There is not a word in the communiqué condemning the step taken by the German bankers, or any indication that this step is in contradiction to the Rapallo Treaty and to the obligations which the German Government took on itself in that treaty.

Meantime one may be permitted to have grave doubts as to how far the action of the group of German bankers is a private step in reality. Thus the "Rote Fahne" recalls, and not without justification, that at the Bankers' Congress in Cologne, which took place in September, the Minister for Economic Affairs, Curtius, welcomed the permanent commission for the defence of the interests of holders of foreign bonds, which had been set up in the previous year. This commission has as its task the obtaining of the recognition of the rights of the "distressed" holders of foreign bonds, in close co-operation with the emission banks and the German Government. The "Rote Fahne" emphasises that Curtius then quite definitely indicated the close co-operation which exists between the German Government and the banking organisations which have now joined the International Association of Creditors.

THERE is no doubt whatever that the decision of the German bankers to join the International Association of Creditors does not represent a personal affair of Messrs. Mendelssohn and Bleireder, but an act of which the political consequences have been estimated by the German Government, an act the political significance of which was not concealed either from its immediate authors, or from those who gave them permission to take the step. The circumstance that the conference of the International Association of Creditors is to take place in London, and that attempts are being made on the part of its directors to draw the American groups into participation in the Association gives the new campaign a quite definite political colouring. Needless to say, it is a question of a new variant of the united front against the U.S.S.R., a front on which action will necessarily begin with a united demand for the payment of the Tsarist loans.

At the Council of the League of Nations held in June last year Chamberlain outlined the successive stages of a united anti-Soviet front. According to his plan, the first of those stages was a united *moral* front against the Comintern (which in Chamberlain's language had to connote, and, of course, essentially did connote, a simultaneous united front against the U.S.S.R.). The second stage was a united

financial front. This front was to consist, in the first place, of simultaneous demands that the U.S.S.R. should pay both the pre-war and the war loans, and, in the second place, the realisation of a financial-credit blockade.

So far as the moral front is concerned it has not done much injury either to the Comintern or to the Soviet State, as we know. Morals are one of the weak points of the bourgeoisie and with "moral slogans" it rarely succeeds in fooling any large sections of the population. The united front in the financial and credit spheres is another matter. Here attempts may be made to do something. The resurrection of the corpse of the International Association of Creditors, putting forward claims killed and cremated by history and revolution, is a preliminary attempt to consolidate the disintegrated forces of the finance and credit front.

AT the beginning of this article we said that the German bourgeois press is unable to conceal its joy at the fact that henceforth the German bankers will be accepted in good society.

Both the German bankers and the bourgeois press, which represents their interests, are naively convinced that the International Association will assist the German bankers in the defence of their interests, and that the German bankers will assist the International Association.

A blissful belief!

So far as the present moment is concerned the harm done by Germany by the action of the German bankers is quite obvious. It can only be overlooked by those who wish to overlook it. The conduct of the German bankers on the one hand and the German Government on the other has produced a quite definite impression in the Soviet Union. That impression consists in the idea that the German bourgeoisie is beginning to incline towards the idea of a united anti-Soviet front. Needless to say, this impression cannot pass unnoticed in the general problem of German-Soviet relationships. The directors of the International Association are planning to draw in American groups which hitherto have stood outside their organisation. This attitude of the American financial groups is quite understandable if their comparatively small interest in the

Tsarist debts be taken into consideration. On the other hand, the treaty only just concluded between the Soviet Amtorg and the great General Electric Company provides a clear example of the businesslike fashion in which the American groups approach a resolution of the problems of American-Soviet relationships. This treaty (despite the insinuations spread by part of the bourgeois press) represents a renunciation of the former claims on the Soviet Government. The General Electric Company quite soundly took into consideration the fact that the advantages which they will reap from the new business relationships with the Soviet Union will greatly exceed the amount of the old claims, on the satisfaction of which they could not count in any case. The step which the General Electric Company has taken is not a simple individual step of a certain firm, but reflects the attitude of a number of business circles in America, who need to enlarge the market for export, both of their capital and of their goods. At the present time French capital also is in need of a similar extension of markets, for since the financial reforms it has swiftly accumulated enormous reserves, which are too large to be invested internally. Under such conditions the realisation of the plans of the International Association of Creditors for a financial and credit blockade of the U.S.S.R. will inevitably come up against serious difficulties. It goes without saying that credits to the U.S.S.R. (and in particular the credit of 300,000 marks obtained in Germany last year) cannot be regarded from the aspect of capitalist benevolence to the Soviet State. Such "benevolence" brings no little profit to the creditor groups of firms. As is well known, the renunciation of profits is far from being always a free action or one dependent exclusively on the desire or absence of desire of this or that capitalist group.

THE organisation of a united finance and credit blockade against the U.S.S.R. is a highly complicated task. None the less, it would be a serious error not only to depreciate the difficulties lying in the way of its realisation, but also to under-estimate the danger menacing the U.S.S.R. as the result of its being put into force.

The *danse macabre* planned in London by

the International Association of Creditors should receive the close attention of the working class of all countries. It is necessary unremittingly to follow the activities both of the international and of the national bankers, so as to unmask their designs against the U.S.S.R. in good time.

It is just as essential to unmask to the working class the role of the social-democrats who are in power in Germany. The affiliation of the German bankers to the federation of the International Association of Creditors, who are speculating in Tsarist debts, serves as a fresh confirmation of the fact that, since the entry of the social-democrats into the Government, the tendency to a western orientation in the official policy of Germany has been considerably intensified, and relations with the U.S.S.R. have become more strained. An adequate testimony to this is provided by the "Vorwaerts" malevolent attitude on the bankers' issue. The central organ of German social-democracy is already estimating in advance the success of the bankers and the triumph of the capitalist blockade against the

U.S.S.R., and is availing itself of this as an argument against the position that "the seizure of power is equivalent to the victory of the revolution." And the "left" social-democrats are in their own fashion assisting "Vorwaerts." Quite justly suspecting that the British and French bankers have acted not without the agreement of their governments, the "Leipziger Volks-Zeitung" is resorting to a "left" manoeuvre, warning the innocent German Government against being drawn by the bankers into a political adventure. As if it were not clear that the German bankers were no less close to the German Government than the French and British bankers are to their Governments!

The German social-democrats are proving to be fiery champions of not only the "western orientation," but of an openly aggressive anti-Soviet bloc. The workers must put up an equally energetic resistance, not only to the plans of the bankers but also to the anti-Soviet policy of the social-democratic leaders who are working with them.

TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

by

JOHN REED

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Mass Demonstrations

B. V.

THE resolution on the report of the Executive Committee of the Communist International at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern obliged all Communist Parties to develop to the utmost the work of organising mass revolutionary demonstrations, giving particular attention to the carrying through of these demonstrations during great political campaigns of an international character.

This resolution applies chiefly to the European Communist Parties, which of recent times have not adequately succeeded in carrying out a single great international political campaign, and which in a number of cases have shown themselves unequal to the situation when attempting to call the proletarian masses on to the street in connection with internal questions of the political life of their country.

During the miners' lock-out of 1926 the attempts of the E.C.C.I. to arouse an extensive movement of sympathy and support did not yield the desired results. Only the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. fulfilled its international task. As a result, while the basic causes of the defeat are the betrayal of the trade union leaders and the weakness of the British Communist Party, that defeat was also contributed to by the fact that the international proletariat did not come to their help with material and political assistance in time. The same has to be said of the campaign in aid of the Chinese revolution. In the U.S.S.R., that campaign was carried out with great success, it embraced the widest sections of the proletariat, and met with the great sympathy of the peasant masses. In the capitalist countries the campaign for assistance to the Chinese revolution was a poor one. But the failure of the "Red Day" in Czecho-Slovakia and of the demonstration at Ivry (France) particularly called for the attention of the Comintern.

THE FAILURE IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

In Czecho-Slovakia, in connection with the interdiction of the Spartakiade by the Govern-

ment, the C.P. decided to carry out simultaneous powerful demonstrations of protest throughout the country. The Government banned these demonstrations. The C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia called upon the Czech proletariat to demonstrate despite the Government ban. In order to prevent the demonstrations the Czech Government not only published prohibitive orders, but also mobilised large forces of police and military. As a result, in Prague not even the members of the party demonstrated, and the result of the demonstrations was not an energetic protest against the Government's reactionary measures but the discrediting of the C.P. and a great moral and political consolidation of the reactionary forces. The Czecho-Slovakian and foreign reactionary and social-democratic press shrieked that the Czecho-Slovakian C.P. had demonstrated its practical impotence, that there was nothing more revolutionary than its phraseology in the Czecho-Slovakian C.P., and that, in a word, the Czecho-Slovakian Communist devil is not as frightful as it paints itself.

THE FRENCH FAILURE

There was a somewhat similar result to the Ivry demonstration. This demonstration was organised on the proposal of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party for the anniversary of the imperialist war, and was intended to demonstrate the unswerving will of the French proletariat not to allow a repetition of slaughter. Naturally the Government banned the demonstration. The central organ of the French C.P., "Humanité," declared in the name of the Party that the demonstration must take place at all costs, despite all the measures taken by the Government. This declaration was repeated several times by the Party in the most categorical manner. None the less, at the very last moment the Party announced that the demonstration would be replaced by three great meetings. In the end there were several small clashes with the police at Ivry, and more

than a thousand persons were arrested in ones and twos. The demonstration was a failure, and once more the reactionary and social-democratic press were jubilant. The following excerpt from the leading organ of the French reformists, "Le Peuple," is significant. On August 15th "Le Peuple" says: "We look through 'Humanité.' On Friday, 3rd August: 'We shall demonstrate against war'; and in great capitals, 'The C.P. and Young Communist League will not yield to the demands of the Government.' Saturday 4th: 'This evening in the Paris circus, tomorrow at Ivry!' And in heavy type. 'The demonstration will take place at all costs.' Sunday 5th: 'To Ivry at all costs.' . . . 'Workers, the demonstration of August 5th will play an extraordinarily important role. Not one of you must desert his militant post on this day!' And right next to this thunderous sentence is the soothing phrase: 'The Party and the Y.C.L. have decided that the demonstration which has to take place at Ivry to-day is to be organised in the form of three great meetings, which will be held in the hall of Merni, in the Conference Hall and in the public baths.' Baths! A pleasant prospect! A pleasing picture! A soothing symbol! M. Vaillant-Couturier himself adds the soothing programme: 'In connection with Ivry we are not raising the issue of revolution or revolt, it is a question of a demonstration of cold blood and revolutionary order. . . . We wish to avoid our Party taking a further step towards illegality. . . . We, a legal Party, desire only to gather under conditions of order.' We shall see, we shall see," the "Peuple's" leading article continues. "On the one hand they talk of a militant post, on the other of a legal demonstration. Whom are they fooling, and who is doing the fooling? If we have understood M. Vaillant-Couturier aright, the Party wishes to remain a legal one. The Party entreats the bourgeois Government to let the cup of illegality pass from it. . . . It is good that Vaillant-Couturier is a law-abiding person. He washes his hands of all the illegalities which might be committed under the Government ban by the lads paying membership contributions or in sympathy."

POSSIBILITIES OF DEMONSTRATING

Failures of mass revolutionary action undertaken by the European C.P.'s recently raise the question of the extent to which those Parties will be equal to developing a series of mass actions of increasing pressure on the ruling classes in the struggle against war, in fulfilment of the decisions of the Comintern Sixth Congress. On their part the ruling class will undoubtedly exploit all the forces and resources for direct suppression, and will have the help of the social-democrat and trade union reformists to smash the class revolutionary demonstrations organised by the C.P.'s. That means that while it is already difficult to organise and carry through such demonstrations, in the future it will be still more difficult. Meantime the whole situation at the moment imperatively demands the strengthening of the mass revolutionary movements of the masses. Otherwise the whole struggle with the dangers of imperialist war will be mere idle talk, and in essence will lead to the previous empty social-democratic babblings anent the criminality of the bourgeoisie and so on.

At the moment when these lines are being written, information arrived of a fresh failure of the French Communist Party. This time the failure has been in the Youth Day organised by the French Young Communist League. The French Y.C.L. decided to organise a demonstration in Saint Denis. The Government flooded Saint Denis with military and police forces, and the demonstration was smashed. It is true that in certain of the suburbs of outlying Paris there were youth demonstrations, but they were not held everywhere, they were of a partial nature, and Paris proved to be quite free of the Communist infection. Obviously the lessons of Ivry have passed without practical results for the French C.P.

Can the French C.P. be regarded as an exception by comparison with the other European C.P.'s in their inability to organise mass revolutionary demonstrations? Obviously not. Can one accept the argument that the mobilisation of large forces of military and police was sufficient justification for abandoning the demonstrations and other mass revo-

lutionary activities? Again obviously not. Consequently the European C.P.'s must make the maximum exertions in order to overcome their present weakness in regard to mass revolutionary activities, and that as swiftly and radically as possible.

PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

What practical proposals can be put forward? In the first place, the C.P.'s must cease to be afraid of action which may appear to break through the frame of bourgeois legality. The ruling classes are driving the C.P.'s underground. The C.P.'s must struggle for the retention of their legal position. On the contrary, that action will the quicker lead to positive results the more swiftly and strongly the C.P.'s oppose bourgeois reactionary measures.

For example, the Czecho-Slovakian C.P. has recently been unable to explain its political line and the tasks of the Party in the pages of its journals. The Governmental censor strikes out all that has even indirect reference to the discrediting of the Czech authorities. The Party newspapers are published with great white blank spaces, and the censor even strikes out the title of the article, evidently so that it should not be possible to guess even what the forbidden articles are about. It is obvious that if the Czech C.P. took the line of passive submission to the censor it would simply be necessary to stop the publication of the Communist press until the organisation of a Soviet Republic in Czecho-Slovakia, which in its turn will remit the present Czech censorship to a museum for antiquities. Nor could the Czecho-Slovakian C.P. count on much more from the "democratic" parliament of its country. The sole practical answer to the activities of the censor is that together with a general intensified struggle for a workers' and peasants' government the Czecho-Slovakian C.P. must obviously develop the most intensive work on the publication of uncensored literature, with the aid of which it will be possible to fill out the gaps in the legal press. And that would be a real struggle for the legality of the Communist press. A secret press would stultify the censorship of the Government, demonstrating their complete im-

potence and ignorance, and simultaneously demonstrating the helplessness of the Government in the face of the will of the revolutionary proletariat.

If this example be applied to the sphere of mass activities, to the sphere of revolutionary demonstrations, the question has to be raised in an analogical fashion. A bourgeois Czecho-Slovakian Government bans a demonstration, the C.P. must organise it without the permission of the Government, demonstrating the impotence of the Government to restrain the revolutionary demonstrations of the proletariat.

That this is possible is demonstrated by the fact of the mass revolutionary demonstrations organised, and still being organised, by the C.P.'s of certain countries—China, Poland and elsewhere. The question consists in knowing how to organise demonstrations, in the necessity of learning how to organise them. There is a large international experience to be drawn upon in this question.

PREPARATORY MEASURES

It is absolutely necessary that the preparation of the demonstration should be done from below, in the factories. Needless to say, the directing organs of the Party must carry on general agitation, must with the aid of the press, and through meetings, etc., call the workers to the support of the revolutionary proposals of the Party. But together with the general press and oral agitation there must necessarily be carried out corresponding preparatory work in the factories, and it is on this work in the factories that the attention and finest forces of the Party must be concentrated.

How is this work to be carried on? Quietly, and as far as possible imperceptibly. The work must be carried on with the aid of the factory newspapers, and in particular with the aid of the personal agitation of the members of the factory nuclei and the sympathisers working in the factories. The basic task of this work is the grouping of the maximum number of the workers in the factories under the slogans of the Party for a demonstrative movement, organising them in such a way that the demonstration takes place directly from the factory during the dinner hour or at the

close of the working day. In order to prepare the working masses and the party organisations for joint mass activities, the Party must at first begin with the organisation of small demonstrations, adapting them to the conflicts in the enterprises (strikes, etc.). While preparing strikes and other forms of bringing the workers to defence of their immediate demands, the Parties must include among the measures for this struggle demonstrations of workers in the factories. The slogans must include not only a simple specification of the demands for which the workers are struggling. They must also include appeals to the workers of other enterprises to support those demands, appeals to the unemployed not to break the struggle by strike-breaking, appeals to all workers supporting the bourgeoisie, and appeals of a like kind. In order to give these appeals the greater force, as soon as a conflict develops with the employers in any given enterprise the Party must set itself the task of calling on the workers to resist the bourgeoisie, or proposing that they should immediately select delegates to send to other works and to the unemployed with requests for support; and also of establishing fraternal relations with the military. These very revolutionary demonstrations of which we have spoken above have also to be organised in such a manner as to make it possible for the workers of other enterprises, the unemployed, and so on to ally themselves. Consequently in arranging a demonstration it is extremely important to give a correct indication of the hour and the place, and also to give early notice to the workers who can ally themselves with the demonstration and prepare and organise the alliance of several detachments.

OBSTACLES TO BE MET

Needless to say, obstacles will be put in the way of such demonstrations also. But that will only testify to the necessity that together with the widest general agitation the concrete forms of such demonstrations have to be prepared as far as possible with a careful estimation of all possible obstacles and difficulties. It is especially important to make a correct estimate of the attitude of the masses, the extent to which the slogans put forward by

the Party satisfy them and so on. In order to circumvent opposition it is also important that such demonstrations should be organised as lightning demonstrations, but frequently also with such alternations of time and space as to make interference difficult. Although the forces of the bourgeoisie have swift methods of transport at their disposal these methods do not work with the speed of thought, and fifteen to thirty minutes is adequate time in which to carry through a short demonstration before the gates of a factory and in the workers' quarters close to the enterprise. When the demonstration takes on enormous dimensions it will not be so easy to oppose it.

METHODS OF ORGANISATION

In preparing a large general demonstration the Party must necessarily, firstly, carefully select their slogans. For instance, it is quite obvious that it is definitely impossible to arouse the great masses of workers with a slogan of struggle over the prohibition of the Spartakiade. Secondly, through its factory groups it must diligently check the extent to which the slogans put forward are really able to attract the masses. The general slogans must necessarily be supplemented by slogans particularly comprehensible to the most backward sections of the proletariat. Thirdly, as a rule the place and time of the demonstration must not be published. The place and time must be fixed at conferences of the organisers of the demonstration, and in doing so they must fix them so that (a) the workers of the largest enterprises can participate in the demonstration at the end of their work or during the dinner hour, and (b) in order to unite the various columns of the demonstration several variants of route should be planned. In addition, the following measures have to be given previous consideration: a special liaison service must incessantly keep the leaders of the demonstration informed of the movements of the various columns of demonstrators and of the movements of opposition forces, so that timely alterations in the routes can be effected. (c) In order to ensure the demonstration the greatest possible success it is of extreme importance that there should be previous knowledge of the plans of opposing forces, their

strength and so on. (d) In order to carry out all these measures it is necessary to have a good, strong leadership, basing itself on defence corps to maintain order, the members of which are selected by the factories and trade unions. Non-party workers, especially young workers, must be drawn into this work in the most extensive fashion.

Certain C.P.'s organise demonstrations at a time when the workers are at home indoors. This is unsound. It is more difficult to get the workers on to the street out of their homes. Besides, it is impossible to check the extent to which those are drawn into the movement whom it is of particular importance to attract—the workers of the large enterprises in the basic industries.

ANTI-WAR ACTION

The Sixth Congress of the Comintern decided that one of the methods of struggle with the dangers of imperialist war was the immediate beginning of preparations for carrying out a "Red Day" simultaneously in all countries in the form of simultaneous mass revolutionary demonstrations. The date and the

concrete forms of this international "Red Day" will be indicated by the E.C.C.I. These preparations must begin with the organisation and carrying out of individual partial revolutionary demonstrations, and in doing this the C.P.'s must always (1) associate these attacks with the tasks of the struggle against the war danger; (2) endeavour to extend each partial demonstration to cover a number of enterprises, an entire town, district and so on; (3) concentrate attention on the organisation of revolutionary mass demonstrations of the workers of the largest enterprises in the most important spheres of industry (especially those which play a part in the preparation of imperialist wars).

By steeling and tempering separate divisions of the proletariat such partial demonstrations will conduce to the growth and strengthening of the C.P., and at a definite moment will create an adequate or organisational basis in order that against the whole capitalist world may be organised one international "Red Day" as the first powerful blow in the approaching struggles for the rule of the working class.



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The Meaning of Events at Lodz

By F. Brand

THE strike of the Polish textile workers has not ended in victory. After three weeks of heroic struggle the textile workers were betrayed by the Polish Socialist Party leaders of the trade union, who, behind the backs of the workers, came to an agreement with the factory-owners for a completely inadequate rise in wages, and did not even demand that the strikers should be taken back. The owners are now dealing with the workers, throwing the most active among them into the street. The secret police carry out mass arrests, seeking for those who were in the front ranks during the strike.

A familiar, a typical picture, and that not only for Poland.

But in the Polish incidents there are special, unusual features, which give them a transcendental importance.

POLAND'S POSITION

Poland is a country of Fascism, where those, albeit restricted, "democratic liberties" which the workers of France, Germany and Britain use in their struggle do not exist. Poland is a land of White Terror, of savage police suppression of the workers, and the complete illegality of the Communist Party.

Poland is the weakest link in the chain of European stabilisation. Owing to the backwardness of Polish industry, owing to the enormous load of expenditure on State, and particularly on the military, apparatus in Poland, stabilisation is conditional exclusively upon a high rate of exploitation of the workers. That unprecedented exploitation is the corner-stone of Polish stabilisation.

Finally, Poland is the country which more intensively and extensively than any other is preparing for war against the U.S.S.R.; in

that war it is assigned the role of the capitalist advance-guard.

Consequently in Poland "class peace," the complete strangulation of the class struggle, the unprotesting submission of the working class to capital and to its State is the basic condition of the success of stabilisation and the war plans of capital.

The three weeks' strike of 150,000 textile workers in Lodz and the entire district, the general sympathetic strike which embraced all the workers, including the waiters in the cafés and the domestic servants in a number of towns, demonstrate that there can be no "class peace" in Poland, that the Fascist terror is impotent against the class solidarity of the workers, that in the event of Pilsudsky's attacking the Soviet Union his rear will not be safe.

THE COMMUNIST POSITION

The events at Lodz show that the Communist Party, which is actually able to link itself with the real proletarian masses, which bases itself on tempered revolutionary workers, cannot be shattered, cannot be isolated from the masses. The events at Lodz have shown that the Polish Communists stand at the head of enormous masses, that they were the real inspirers, the initiators and leaders of the movement. More than that, the Lodz strike has shown an attempt, which though not crowned with success, was in any case a thought-out, firmly carried out, serious and highly promising attempt to realise the independent organisational leadership of the strike struggle on the part of the C.P. and the revolutionary wing of the trade unions, despite their compromising heads, in conditions of complete illegality, and in face of the compromisers having in practice the support of the entire machinery of the Fascist camp.

The experience of the Polish comrades during the Lodz strike must be studied by the whole of the Comintern.

WAGES IN POLAND

Statistics have been given concerning the wages of the Polish textile workers, which are only half those of the German textile workers. We supplement this with certain general information on the condition of the Polish proletariat, taken mainly from the recently published official materials of the "Investigating Commission" set up a year ago by the Polish Government, *i.e.*, from a source which it is impossible to suspect of injustice to the capitalists. These statistics confirm the position that stabilisation in Poland is built up on an exploitation of the workers which is unexampled in Europe.

According to the Governmental Investigating Commission the real wages of the miners in coal mines at the end of 1926 were 26 per cent. lower than those of pre-war, and constituted only 40 per cent. of the real wages of miners in the Ruhr Valley. The Government Commission's report reads (Volume V., page 153) :

"The comparison of the growth of the workers' productivity of labour with the increase in wages and increase in prices of coal reveals a clear lack of correspondence in the development of these levels to the detriment of wages. The wage is inadequate to satisfy the indispensable needs of the majority of the workers occupied.

In 1928 the miner's productivity of labour exceeded that of pre-war days by 10 per cent. Wages were 20 per cent. behind those of pre-war days. Thus the cost of wages in producing a ton of coal fell by 27.3 per cent. by comparison with 1914, while the price of coal rose by 6 per cent. The rate of exploitation rose rapidly, and the miners suffer from terrible impoverishment.

The Investigating Commission stated that in the sugar industry of central Poland 88 per cent. of the workers receive a wage which is more than 25 per cent. below subsistence level.

The report speaks of the "critical" position of the workers.

Of the super-phosphate industry the Investigating Commission stated that in a number of factories not a single worker receives more than 33 per cent. of the recognised subsistence level.

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

We turn to the textile industry. It is chiefly concentrated in Lodz, in point of size the second largest town in Poland (600,000 inhabitants), where there are about 1,000, large and small, factories, and in a number of factory towns around Lodz (Pabianitza, Egerz, Ozorkov, Pietrokov, Kalisz and others). The two other centres, Bialostock in the east and Bielsk in the south, are of secondary importance. Of the 850,000 workers occupied in Polish industry in works employing more than twenty hands in June, 1928, 167,000 or 19 per cent. were textile workers. They form a large section of the Polish working class.

During the last two years the textile industry has in general been in a very favourable position; the cotton section exceeded the pre-war level of output, working up 79,000 tons of cotton in 1927 as against an average of 70,000 tons in the three years previous to the war, and against the 65,000 tons of 1922, which year was the record year of the inflation period. The woollens section is producing 50 to 60 per cent. of the pre-war figure, but one that is higher than that of the preceding years.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL PROSPERITY

The number of workers in the entire industry has increased from 148,000 in June, 1925, to 167,000 in June, 1928, despite the rationalisation which has been carried out during this period. The prosperity of the manufacturers is evident by the fact that the factories are being enlarged and new equipment being introduced. The import of textile machinery has grown from 4,400 tons on the average of 1924-26 to 9,000 tons in 1927, and 7,100 tons during the first eight months of the present year.

All this prosperity, however, is based on the exceptional rise in the rate of exploitation of the workers.

The severe economic crisis of the end of 1925 and the beginning of 1926, when the number of textile workers was reduced by half, while the remainder worked a short week, a time when Lodz was literally dying of hunger, was exploited by the manufacturers for the purpose of a resolute attack on the textile workers. The eight-hour day was abrogated, wages were cut down by fixing rates in paper zloties (a zloty is about 6d.) in face of a sharp fall in the currency—"rationalisation" had begun. The Fascist *coup d'état* in May, 1926, set up a firm Government which stood on guard over these conquests of the capitalists. During a period of favourable trade the textile workers were compelled to work under conditions which had been forced on them in the days of the most terrible need and unemployment.

THE WORKING HOURS IN FACTORIES

How many hours does the Polish textile worker work? We find our answer in the investigations made by the Inspector of Labour, Mme. Gallina Krakhelska, the results of which were published in 1927:

"There is no eight-hour day in Lodz. Lodz has repealed it. The twenty-four hours of the labour day are divided into two shifts of twelve hours each.

"To-day a twelve-hour shift is by no means a record. Sixteen-hour shifts without a break are to be met with. A large number of the factories in the Lodz county are working sixteen hours with the same workers."

Among the factories applying the twelve-hour shift, Madame Krakhelska specifies the very largest: Scheibler and Groman, with 7,400 workers; the Posen, with 5,800; Gayer, with 4,000; the Vidzevsk Manufactory, with 11,000 workers and so on.

She points out that "the workers are working twelve hours and more without any additional wages."

EARNINGS OF POLISH WORKERS

And how much does the Polish textile worker earn?

The Government Investigating Commission established on the basis of an investigation of the reports of factories embracing 50,000 workers, that in 1925 the average wage was 1,150 zloties (gold), *i.e.*, 1,978 paper zloties per annum. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labour the wages in the summer of 1928 constituted 80 per cent. of the nominal of 1925, *i.e.*, 1,582 zloties per annum, or 30 zloties per week. Thirty zloties is about 15s. in value.

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labour the official rate for a qualified worker in the textile industry does not reach 90 per cent. of the subsistence level. Taking the wage rates, a spinner receives 60 per cent. and a labourer 50 per cent.

But these official statistics gloss over the reality.

In the first place, even during the best months, 20 to 30 per cent. of the workers do not work a full week (in August, 1928, only 40,000 out of 165,000); in the second place, it is the practice everywhere in Lodz to pay below the rate; despite the collective agreement signed by the manufacturers themselves, they pay 10 per cent. lower than the rate and even less. In 1927 a series of local strikes arose out of the sacking of factory delegates who protested against this systematic fraud. The conditions of labour are reminiscent of conditions in British factories in the middle of the nineteenth century. Mme. Krakhelska says:

"There are dining-rooms in the large factories, but they are not used; in Lodz a dinner break is to-day numbered among myths together with the eight-hour day.

"The great majority of the Lodz factories have no ventilation system even in the spinning rooms, even where the cotton waste is separated.

"In the largest of the factories, in rooms where several hundred workers are labour-

ing, one can find washing-basins with taps that have not been in working order for several years.

“Even the most modest demands, such as the erection of separate lavatories and washing-places for women, are regarded as impossible of fulfilment,” and so on.

RATIONALISATION

In regard to “rationalisation,” the report of the Governmental Commission says :

“The reorganisation of labour has consisted essentially only in a reduction of the number of workers operating the machinery in the spinning and separating rooms, and in an increase in the number of looms attended by one weaver.

“Reorganisation has not been accompanied by increase of wages proportionate to the increase in the intensity of labour. Wages have changed little or not at all.”

Madame Krakhelska says :

“By comparison with the minding of two looms stipulated in the agreement, the minding of four looms demands a doubled expenditure of energy. Unfortunately this has not brought with it a rise in wages. On the contrary, a woman working at four looms sometimes does not earn even the rate which was laid down for two looms; the 50 per cent. premium for intensified labour which was first introduced is no longer given.

“Meantime looms without automatic adaptations must come to a standstill every time the thread breaks, and thus the work is continually being interrupted. With bad thread the minding of four looms is so intensive and heavy a labour that the worker is plunged into despair.”

But this picture of unrestricted exploitation still does not satisfy the Lodz manufacturers. At a conference in the Ministry of Industry, held in February, 1928, their representative, M. Varchinsky, declared :

“Production is overloaded with unproductive charges, although we have passed

into a period when the problem of economy [Read: the interests of capital.—Ed.] is beginning to dominate over all others. . . . Certain elements of the former period still remain to influence our life. I have in mind the incommensurable inflation of social legislation and labour protection.”

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF CAPITAL

The Fascist Government is meeting M. Varchinsky's demands halfway. It is issuing one law after another, is creating an entire system of labour legislation, the intention of which is to bind the workers hand and foot, to strangle any manifestation of the class struggle and simultaneously to set up the semblance of State protection of the worker in the form of arbitration courts, courts on labour affairs and so on, to set up a legend of the Fascist State as a super-class, dispassionate arbiter between capital and labour.

It was on the basis of one of the Fascist decrees that the manufacturers in September last published new regulations and tables of fines. These tables included fines for talking during work, for combing one's hair, for being in lavatories longer than three minutes or more than twice a day, and similar “misdemeanours.”

The publication of these tables of fines gave rise to the first September strike, which ended with the victory of the workers.

The situation in Lodz had been developing over a long period, and the Lodz organisation of the Polish C.P. had been preparing for months ahead.

RELATIVE STRENGTH OF TRADE UNIONS

The elections to the Sejm in March, 1928, had shown an enormous growth in the influence of the Communists, who in Lodz obtained 50,000 votes as against the 73,000 cast for the list of the united Polish and German compromisers (and against 14,000 Communist votes cast at the elections in 1922). They also showed the bankruptcy of the National Labour Party, once powerful in Lodz, and which controls the so-called “Polish” trade

unions, and also of the Christian-Democracy Party, which controls the "Christian" trade unions. This strengthening of the Communists and a parallel increase of the P.S.P. at the cost of the nationalists, greatly increased the relative importance of the class trade union of textile workers as compared with the national and Christian unions, in face of an absolute drop in the number of members of all three unions.

But from the leaders of this union, who were entirely composed of P.S.P. members and rotten throughout, it was impossible to expect that they would lead the workers into the struggle. No form of "pressure" merely of resolutions and demands could drive them into the proclamation of a strike. "We're not such fools as to work for the Communists," the secretary of the Lodz committee of the textile union once said.

The Lodz organisation, which had behind it the experience of the strike in March, 1927, ended by Governmental arbitration, immediately after the elections took a course for the independent organisation of a strike despite the leaders of the union and for the establishment of an enlarged strike committee, elected by the workers from the factories, as an organ for the revolutionary direction of the struggle.

The strike was proposed to begin in June. However, the unexpected worsening of the economic position of the industry in May and the reduction of the workers which continued throughout June caused the masses to waver. The compromisers exploited the lull to come to an agreement with the manufacturers for a rise of 6 per cent., but made no other demands concerning the length of the day, the rights of factory delegates, supplementary payment for minding a larger number of looms and so on.

Beginning with July the tension of the masses began again to increase, a number of partial conflicts broke out, the organisation developed an enormous explanatory and organisational work. The term of the collective agreement came to an end in September—the decisive moment was approaching.

THE STRIKE BREAKS OUT

Publication by the manufacturers of the table of fines hastened events. The Lodz organisation called upon the workers to strike, and in the very first day 40,000 workers took to the streets. The next day all Lodz was on strike. The trade union joined in the strike—after the event.

The organ of the Lodz industrialists, "Respublika," wrote on 23rd September:

"As is well known, the leaders of the trade union were not the initiators of the entire movement, rather they came in at the death, sanctioning merely the fact which had been consummated without their participation and even against their intentions."

Another newspaper wrote:

"The delegate meeting decided to declare a strike despite the view of the administration of the trade union, and to carry it on until the fines tables had been recalled.

"The chairman of the N.L.P. union stated that more than 40,000 workers left their work without the knowledge or agreement of the administration of the union."

The strike was directed not only against the manufacturers, but also against the Fascist law which had served as a basis for the fines tables. The Fascist Government and the manufacturers took fright at the dimensions of the movement, and its revolutionary character; they wished to play for time, and so the Ministry of Labour temporarily annulled the fines tables on the fourth day of the strike ostensibly owing to certain of their clauses being in contradiction to the law. The reformists hastened to liquidate the strike (22nd September). But they were then unable to stop the movement. The delegates' meeting put forward the demands: 20 per cent. rise in wages, an eight-hour day, the recognition of the inviolability of delegates in the collective agreement, payment for breakdowns, additional payment for minding an increased number of looms and so on.

The manufacturers were hoping that there

would not be a second strike over these demands, that (in the words of the "Respublika") "No legal trade union would risk a call to strike, since the leadership might too easily slip from the hands of the trade unions." Consequently they turned down all the workers' demands. But they were out in their reckoning. The hardened opportunists at the head of the union better estimated the mood of the workers; they realised that if they themselves did not declare a strike it would be declared by the Communists, and consequently they decided to put themselves at the head of the movement. A struggle began in which the whole of the textile workers participated; the struggle lasted three weeks, during which the workers demonstrated a marvellous steadiness and devotion, while the P.S.P. leaders revealed a mastery of subtle deception, hypocrisy and coldly calculated treachery.

LEADERSHIP OF THE STRIKE

In the realm of leadership the revolutionary wing of the trade union took a big step forward in comparison with the previous strike. At that time the directing organ was a committee composed of representatives of the three trade unions, *i.e.*, of bureaucrats; this time a general meeting of factory delegates threw up a strike committee from the rank and file workers, in which committee the revolutionary workers were in a majority.

This strike committee was the initiator of the general strike of solidarity throughout the Lodz district. The P.S.P. regional commission of trade unions could put up no opposition to it. But the Central Commission of Trade Unions in Warsaw was cunning enough not to find any time during the whole of the Lodz struggle to discuss the question of assistance to the textile workers, and, of course, remained deaf to the demands of the workers for a declaration of a general sympathetic strike throughout the country.

The general sympathetic strike which was carried out by the workers in Lodz and district with exceptional success, embracing the most backward sections of the proletariat—this general strike is a new phase of the

struggle against Fascism; it is a fresh, higher stage, reached by the workers' movement in Poland. While last year's strike of textile workers was the first mass economic movement of the workers under the Fascist dictatorship, the present movement has led to the first general strike under Fascism.

This strike heralded the highest point of the movement; it was this very tremendous outburst of the workers which was exploited by the traitors for the organisation of the betrayal. Under the pretence of enlarging the strike committee by including representatives of other spheres of industry, taking part in the general strike, the P.S.P. leaders introduced trade union bureaucrats from other unions into the committee, and thus ensured for themselves the majority of the enlarged committee.

PARALYSIS OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE

Thus the committee was paralysed and the organisational prerequisites for the betrayal were established. The regional commission of the trade unions now began to liquidate the general strike step by step, under various pretexts releasing more and more categories of workers, printers, provision workers and communal workers from the obligation to strike. Disorder, reciprocal suspicion, and vacillation were deliberately introduced into the army of strikers, and the united front began to break. The socialist Machiavellis prepared the final stab in the back.

We must take stock of all this subtle manoeuvring; it should serve as a lesson and a warning for future struggles.

What was the role of the Communist Party? Everywhere the Communists were at the head of the masses. The Communist deputies Bittner, Rosiak and Sipula spoke at innumerable street meetings, broken up by the police and again assembling. The Communists led the masses to the prison where revolutionary strugglers are confined; they organised street demonstrations; they led the pickets. From the first day of the strike they devoted themselves to unmasking the manoeuvres of the compromisers, they set up mass control over

the trade unions and over the strike committee, they forced the Sherkovskys to expose themselves by summoning the police against the demonstrators.

An enormous step forward was taken in Lodz towards the realisation of an independent organisational leadership of the struggle despite the compromisers. But the task was far from being achieved in its entirety. The heavy weight of dual authority lay on the organisational leadership of the strike. On the one hand was the legal administration of the trade union, availing itself of the press and the technical machinery, and supported by the Government, an administration the entire aim of which was the break-up of the movement; on the other hand was the semi-legal strike committee, directed by the illegal Communist Party, against which was directed the most frenetic persecution during the whole period of the strike.

STRIKE AND GOVERNMENT

But despite all these exceptional difficulties of leadership, for three weeks the P.S.P. were unsuccessful in their efforts to smash the strike. More than that: the Government did not dare to announce a compulsory arbitration decision, as they had done in other cases. The strike committee and the delegate meeting rejected Government arbitration. This decision of the committee was a great step forward. It shows that the strike was directed against the basis of Fascist stabilisation and against the Fascist dictatorship not only for objective reasons, but because the masses consciously came out against the Fascist Government, as against an enemy and associate of the capitalists. The stubbornly propagated legend of the super-class nature of the State was dispersed in the fire of the class struggle. The political nature of the movement is witnessed to also by the decision of the strike committee to appeal for help to the Profintern (R.I.L.U.), despite the decision of the trade union administration. In Fascist Poland such an appeal is regarded by the bourgeoisie and their lackeys as high treason. Appeals against war and in favour of the U.S.S.R.

were made at every meeting, at every demonstration of the strikers.

STRIKE BETRAYED

After three weeks of heroic struggle, of martyrdom to hunger, of police terror, of newspaper slander, the textile workers allowed themselves to be duped. The packed strike committee secretly resolved by a majority of votes to end the strike, without submitting its decision to the factory delegates' meeting for confirmation. The union administration, which for a whole week had been secretly carrying on negotiations with the manufacturers behind the workers' backs, put into circulation the false rumour that the majority of the demands would be satisfied in the collective agreement and called on the workers to return to work. Only on going to the factories did the workers become convinced that they had been shamefully duped and betrayed. The new collective agreement provides for a total rise of 5 per cent. and small supplementary payments for minding a larger number of looms, but does not guarantee the rights of factory delegates and does not even safeguard the return of all the strikers to work. The indignation of the workers knew no bounds; in a number of factories they continued the strike for two or three days, but the great movement was broken.

POLITICAL ASPECT

What is the political result? The P.S.P. does not dare to face the workers, but at every appearance of the Communist delegate and Lodz weaver, Rosiak, in the street crowds of workers gather around him. The authority of our Party has grown; the P.S.P. has once more unmasked itself on a grand scale. Before the revolutionary Lodz workers is the task of still better preparation for the following struggle, of passing from dual authority in strike leadership to undivided revolutionary leadership. Before the whole Party lies the task of raising the movement to the next stage on an all-Polish scale.

Lodz was not victorious. But Lodz has

shown that Polish stabilisation is based on such exploitation, on such elimination of working-class rights, as will inevitably feed and intensify the class struggle, will steadily lead to more powerful and more extensive attacks of the proletariat. Lodz has flung down a challenge to Polish Fascism, Lodz has given an example of heroic struggle, Lodz has provided a pattern of how to organise the struggle of the masses against capital and Fascism despite the compromisers. Lodz has shown that the proletariat has accumulated a treasure of devotion, courage, class solidarity

and hatred for the class enemy. Lodz has shown that the Communist advance-guard is growing in the struggle, and is leading after it tens and hundreds of thousands of proletarians.

And so the Lodz events are a guarantee that the plans of world imperialism, preparing to move its regiments against the U.S.S.R. and to crush the working class under the iron heel of Fascism ; that these plans will be shattered.

Lodz has been beaten, but—hurrah for Lodz !



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“The Union is the Workers’ Business Agency for Industrial Efficiency”

—William Green

A Review of the “American Federationist,” Official Organ of the American Federation of Labour

By Joseph Zack

THE above quotation from the January, 1928, issue of the “American Federationist,” New Year’s editorial of Wm. Green, President of the American Federation of Labour, shows more clearly than anything else the policy of the American trade union bureaucracy.

This “new frontier” of labour, as Green calls it, embodied in the above quotation, seeks to realise new “ideals” of labour, which are to convert the capitalists to the idea that labour can become a factor in intensifying its own exploitation, and that the bureaucracy can act as an effective salesman of labour, if only the employers would be pleased to recognise them.

Thus Green solemnly declares :

“It is in the interests of labour to co-operate with the unorganised in the elimination of industrial waste, and in the finding of better production methods.”

In another part of the article he states :

“Greater economies in human labour power will make higher standards for workers; machines displace workers, but they can raise the standards of the workers that remain in employment.”

EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVED CONDITIONS

Green, of course, does not care what becomes of those that do not remain employed and are thrown out of industry by technical progress. But for those who remain efficiency can improve their conditions. Yes, it can, but not under capitalism, as Mr. Green very well knows. We need but mention a few industries such as the automobile, coal, textile, oil, shoe, etc., where machinery has been improving production, but the wages, nevertheless, have fallen and hours increased.

Mr. Green now speaks in his new capacity

of production expert, raising hell with the coal capitalists for their wasteful methods, and offering his services :

“The mine operators have inflicted upon this country a policy of waste and disorganisation. Not only have they expanded mine operations in a most uneconomical manner and authorised most wasteful mining practices, but they added wasteful extravagance in labour policies that bring conflict and additional waste.”

Then, complaining that they have not listened to his loyal advice, and launched a war against the Miners’ Union, he offers to take their difficulties into consideration by stating :

“Whatever difficulties the mine operators [owners] may submit to in refusing wage increases, they have absolutely no cause for their efforts to destroy the Miners’ Union.”

Mr. Green knows well that not only do the coal capitalists flatly refuse wage increases, but they demand a wage reduction. To state this fact, however, would expose Mr. Green’s effusions on the progress that is being made by the policy and “ideals” of class collaboration.

CONVINCING THE CAPITALIST

Mr. Green then proceeds to debate with an open-shop machine-tool manufacturer, who, in a production conference, mentioned everything but left out labour. He states :

“When the management realises that workers really have a share in industry, and that it is a very practical idea to organise industry so that workers may co-operate constructively with the management, industrial relations assume a new potentiality.”

In plain English this means that Green in

his capacity of production expert, points out more effective methods of exploitation of labour, and insists that capitalism "reform" its wasteful methods of dealing with labour, by recognising the good services of Green and Co. He argues the matter in detail, and says :

"The workers have experience of the details of production that can be put to use in effecting economies and developing improved methods. *It is for such co-operative purposes that our trade unions have been offering their services*, and the unions are the only agency through which co-operation can come."

Thus Mr. Green offers to sell the "moral element" to act as a decoy to lead the mass to the slaughter. He considers that, as the representative of "free trade unions," he can create among the workers illusions strong enough to make them voluntarily assist rationalisation, and to ensure the continued exploitation of the workers as the result of a monopoly granted by the employers to represent labour by company unions led by Green and Co. This is the goal, the "ideal" of Green and Co.

A NEW GOSPEL

Mr. Green keeps on reiterating his new gospel in every issue of the journal, and in the May issue, 1928, he states it thus :

"Collective bargaining and co-operation with management open up to trade unions unlimited opportunities to bring discussion of workers' experiences and ideas into problems and councils where they have never before gotten a hearing. Co-operation opens the way to higher planes of organisation for industry."

Further on he states :

"It requires discipline and study for a wage earner to stand up in industrial conferences among technicians and highly advanced representatives of capital and management, and point out that labour represents an essential function in industry."

Yes, and we know that a part of this service that Mr. Green offers is spying on "radicals," who are a dangerous element in the "orderly" pursuit of capitalist production, and it has not been only once that "reds" have been discharged through this kind of services, not only in unionised enterprises but in unorganised as

well. In fact, many of the Federation's officials are on the pay-roll of the capitalist for this specific purpose.

The "American Federationist," although professedly a labour journal, is filled with writings of capitalist efficiency experts and bourgeois writers. One Otto S. Beyer, efficiency expert, is taken by Green as a Crown witness in the January issue to testify to the correctness of the A.F. of L. policy. Beyer thus comments on the benefit to the capitalists of the new "ideals" of the A.F. of L. He states :

"The union-management co-operative movement in America is not quite ten years old, although it was not until 1923 (after the defeat of the railroad shopmen's strike) that the first intensive experiment in co-operation was started by the union of mechanics employed in the repair and manufacture of rolling stock on the Baltimore-Ohio Railroad. Fully 75,000 workers are now working under this co-operation programme. These workers are pledged to take an active part in saving materials, increasing the output and improving workmanship. Joint union-management conferences are held to give practical effect to this desire to co-operate. The workers are expected to be alert for new ideas for the purpose of improving some process, or making some saving in time or material, and they are also expected to call, through their representatives, the attention of the management to wasteful practices. [Note: This means the workers are expected to spy on each other.] Experience has shown that the co-operative efforts among the workers can be developed to a high degree, and the results have been gratifying. It has been clearly shown, for example, that the workers, individually and collectively, will stimulate one another as well as the management to improve production in the plant and industry."

MR. GREEN COMPLAINS

In the April, 1928, issue, Green continues to complain about the stubbornness of the coal capitalists in refusing his services. He states :

"The strike, which began nearly a year ago, has become practically civil war, and has built up hostility between groups that will handicap the industry for years. Can any industry

escape responsibility for its rehabilitation when it has failed to keep pace with industrial progress?"

In other words, if the capitalists would efficiently rationalise coal production they could continue to pay the present wage scale. To achieve this the union offers its services. Green points out the advantage of rationalisation by showing that effective rationalisation would eliminate 200,000 miners from the payroll. Mr. Green, in his capacity of production expert and labour salesman, adopts a superior attitude towards these stupid antics of the employers who provoke civil strife and waste human energy, when under Mr. Green's plan things could be done so much better.

WHAT WILL RESULT?

For a long, long time the A.F. and L. had as its political policy the selling of the labour vote to one or another of the capitalist politicians of the Republican or Democratic Parties. From this to the policy of attempting actually to sell the labour power of the workers "collectively" (co-operatively, as Green calls it) is not far, but while political class collaboration was relatively easy in the days of free land and a booming industry based on a growing home market, the collective selling of labour power in the interests of capital in the days of no free land and of intense competition on the world market is not quite so easy, as Mr. Green has already had ample opportunity to find out.

A small number of skilled workers will undoubtedly benefit from the A.F. of L. policy, and during prosperity booms class collaboration illusions may be revived amongst large sections of workers by Green and Co. The fact, however, remains that American capitalists as a whole (at least for the present) do not take Green and Co.'s ideals seriously. For the last two years Mr. Green has been careering about the country, speaking at conferences and banquets of bankers, directors and managers, offering, like a loyal poodle dog, his "production efficiency unionism," and yet we have to-day the most ruthless war going on against the unions in the United States. There was never in American history such an epidemic of injunctions abolishing by arbi-

trary court decisions the traditional and established rights of the workers to strike, picket or organise. There was never such police terror against the most elementary attempts of the workers to struggle against wage-cuts and longer hours or for improved conditions.

In the January issue Green is forced to admit this by saying :

"Mine operators are seeking to accomplish through equity procedure [injunctions] results they are unable to accomplish by economic action or by law."

In the May issue Green states :

"The number and flagrancy of injunctions are a revelation to the public."

In plain English this means that the capitalists are violating their own laws, which formally permit organisation, picketing and strikes, that they do not rely solely on the economic power they possess, which in itself is enormous, but avail themselves ruthlessly of the armed forces of the State, and violate their own laws through their judicial flunkeys.

If Mr. Green had real and growing mass support in the important industries, his servile arguments would be more convincing to the capitalists, but in proportion that the A.F. of L. membership drops (there has been a loss of 2,000,000 since the world war), in that proportion capitalism turns a deaf ear, no matter how big and intense the solicitations and crocodile tears of Mr. Green and Co. may be. The capitalists have too much experience to be fooled by such "ideals" as Green's, knowing only too well that the antagonism between profit, short hours and high wages cannot be overcome by the smooth "ideals" of Green and Co. They rely more on their own dictatorship in industry than on Green's ability to cajole the workers permanently.

MR. GREEN'S POLICY NOT ACCEPTED

The capitalists of the United States do not accept Green's production experts on labour, as they do not want any kind of unionism which permits the workers collectively to gather and discuss even their most elementary needs. Green and Co.'s service to capitalism at this time does not consist in capital accepting Green's production efficiency brand of "company unionism," but in demoralising and

disorganising the two million workers still within the ranks of the A.F. of L.

It is a tragedy that at a time when capitalism in the United States is delivering its hardest blows against organised labour the only programme of action besides their whining class collaboration pleas to capitalists that the leadership of the A.F. of L. can offer is contained in the following proposal (January New Year editorial, 1928) seriously advanced in the "American Federationist" by Green himself :

"In many cities the local Chamber of Commerce greets newcomers with placards of welcome at the railroad station and in other conspicuous public places. The newcomer is invited to become one of them, and is told the way to clubs, rooms and offices. There is much in this technique the unions should adopt. The central labour union, like the Chamber of Commerce, is an agency that helps to build up the community. Why, then, should not the central labour union greet incoming wage-earners at the station, invite them to the union offices and provide them with information and services that convince them of the benefits of union membership."

There is a saying in America that best expresses the meaning of Green's proposal—"Catch the sucker while he is Green." Green and Co.'s high initiation fee sharks have the solution for organising the unorganised and building up the labour movement.

CORRUPTION AND "HIGH CHARACTER"

At a time when the State power is being used most ruthlessly against the workers the only counter-action politically that Green proposed (in the presidential elections) to the workers is contained (May issue, 1928) in the following :

"If a worthy president is to be elected in November, good candidates must be selected in the primaries. Recent revelations have disclosed to us the degradations to which political institutions may be reduced when corrupt politicians control. We have had an amazing and shocking succession of revelations which have in the immediate past disclosed connections which well might serve to show the treasonable conduct of men in places of public confidence."

Thus we have here an admission of the most thorough-going corruption in governmental offices, and the two capitalist parties "Democratic" and "Republican," that control them. As already shown, Green and Co. admit that the State power is being used unscrupulously against the workers through injunctions, etc. Yet the only thing that Green and Co. can propose as a solution is that the workers influence the selection of men of high character through the capitalist party machinery. He states it thus :

"The coming primaries are the strategic opportunity for assuring a president and a Congress of high order. If one party nominates a man of high character it is a challenge which the other party must match. Wage-earners should be active in promoting the nomination of candidates of high character."

It is indeed extremely difficult to understand what Mr. Green means by high character, considering that the A.F. of L. leadership is itself corrupt to the core. One only needs to look at the facts given in Foster's book, "Misleaders of Labour," which they never dared to challenge as to accuracy and facts, to see that the A.F. of L. machinery is as corrupt as, if not more so than, the capitalist parties. This is but natural, considering that the capitalist politicians on the whole represent the class interests of the bourgeoisie, while the American trade union bureaucracy systematically betrays the interests of the class it claims to represent, and expels and persecutes those workers that really dare to champion the interest of the working class.

Indeed, this treacherous policy of Green and Co. is not only a "New Frontier" of labour, but it is the last possible frontier as far as this brand of leadership is concerned. For the workers their leadership is not only absolutely worthless but a grave menace. Since the class struggle will not stop at the convenience of Green and Co., it will go on in spite of them. This has been the case already for the last two years, when every struggle of the workers, organised and unorganised, that had any leadership at all, was led by the Communists and the Left-Wing.

This is the character of American trade unionism as reflected through its official organ

by Green, Woll, Hutchinson, McMahan, Sigman and Hillman. In these days even the A.F. of L., child of imperialist capital, is being put out in the cold. If European social democracy, that casts envious eyes upon this new "ideal" type of unionism, can succeed in

marking this as socialism and successfully palm it off to the European workers, then indeed their services ought to be even more greatly appreciated than at present by Poincaré, Hindenburg and Baldwin.

