

THE SOVIET

Published by Edmonton Local No. 1, Socialist Party of Canada

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS.
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The Strike and the Class Struggle

The late strike was forced upon the workers of Canada by the master class deliberately. Their purpose in this was twofold; first, to justify a continuation and, if possible, an intensification of present senseless and tyrannical legislation; second, by bringing on a clash prematurely to forestall our efforts to effect a more perfect class organization.

They are not much afraid of our present form of organization; they believe, and with too good reason, apparently, that they have a very practical method of checkmating harmonious and unanimous working-class action; and they know that our educative work is so productive of results, that from it will develop shortly an infinitely more scientific and result-producing organization.

While no intelligent man expects anything from strikes, as society is now constituted, in the way of economic improvement, we do know that education and intelligence, aye, and increased solidarity, come from all such experiences. "Hope, long deferred maketh the heart sick," is an old saying. It does not apply to us. Aching nerves, hunger and slums in the presence of the leisure and other good things that we have produced for others, but which we are not permitted to enjoy ourselves, make us a d—d sight sicker. We know, however, that in time these things are certain to provide the training to build up the will that will break down the inertia and the obstacles built up by long ages of tyranny and oppression.

Hence, we never hesitate, never decline the challenge of the master class on the main issue—the class struggle—no matter how futile may be the immediate object, so long as the conflict will stir the mental activities of the workers in the direction of an understanding, while the present system abides, of their slave position therein.

So the class struggle goes on; nothing can stop it short of the complete abatement of its cause. When a setback occurs the faint-hearted cry, "What's the use!" and the Bourbon-minded think that henceforth all will be well with class robbery and that exploitation will go on to the end of time.

Their respite, however, is only temporary—a lull in the storm—a trough in the waves—the negative arc in one of the minor cycles which, taken all together, make up the all-embracing onward sweep of evolution. The causes that underlie economic unrest are not to be minimized by temporary concessions; much less by coercion. The revolution in the economic life of civilized man is being compelled by the cosmic forces inherent in nature. It is not dependant on individuals nor governments; and only blind fools think that repressive laws against men or ideas can hinder it for the briefest moment.

The late disturbances have a special lesson for all workingmen, of which we hope to write later. Is it not time for the workers everywhere to wake up? Organized men especially; that we found out where our interests do really lie; that we took stock of ourselves; cleaned out the bats from our mental belfries—the vampires and other vermin—the vicious and unsound ideas that divide the working class and obscure the class struggle!

Our long range executive committees have betrayed us long enough. Many of our organizations have lost, if they ever had, their democratic character. The cure for the errors of democracy is now, as always, more democracy—a more complete, a more perfect democracy. And there is no real democracy to be found in anything except in immediate control by the rank and file.

Revolutionary Socialism in France

Frederick R. Kuh.

The evolution of French socialism was appreciably accelerated when Jean Longuet's faction, "les minoritaires," emerged from the

1918 party congress as 'les majoritaires.' To-day the ascendancy of Longuet is visibly threatened by the growing communist sentiment in the party's ranks. In his adherence to the Second International, Longuet alienated from his following many of the radicals, who at once cast their lot with Lorient—chef of the extreme left, who fought valiantly for French socialist affiliation with the Third International. But Longuet is far too sensitive to his comrades' tendencies to commit the error of his own predecessors. And though his faith is still with the Berne International, it is a vacillating faith, and Longuet regards this moderate programme as on trial; in case of its continued aloofness from Moscow, he is thoroughly prepared to link his destiny with Lenin's programme. The highly significant function of Lorient is to exert formidable pressure upon the "majority," which is consequently bending, with growing rapidity, toward the left. In view of this changing status, it would be false to consider French socialism irrevocably committed to the Second International. With Italian socialists firmly in accord with the Russian communist regime, we may reasonably anticipate a bouleversement d'idees among Longuet's element. A "senance extraordinaire" is already being spoken of as a possibility for reconsidering the official alliance with the moderate International.

Before the war, Lorient and his fellow-extremists in the socialist party, as he himself remarks, "simply did not count." To-day those socialists who acquiesce in his programme number—at a fair estimate—60 per cent. of the party.

"Against his own will, Longuet is continually being forced to our position," Lorient told me. "He is absorbing our 'minority' at the cost of adopting our plan of action intact."

Lorient, who is treasurer of the party, is, like MacLean, a school-teacher. Though he was recently removed from one of the foremost Parisian ecoles, the government (for Lorient is employed in a state institution) did not dare treat him with the impudence meted out to our Nearing's, but contented itself with relegating the Bolshevik educator to a more "quiet sector" of the city. Lorient has crystallized his programme in the following demands—which he offers "aux masses proletariennes, en les appelant a le realizer."

1. Complete acquisition of power by the proletariat;
2. Inauguration of obligatory work;
3. Socialization of the means of production and of exchange, land, industries, mines transportation under the direct administration of the peasants, workers, railwaymen, marine transport workers.
4. Distribution of produce through the media of co-operatives and municipal stores, operated under collective control;
5. Municipalization of dwelling houses and of hospital service;
6. Transformation of the present bureaucracy, by confiscation, to the direct control of the employees;
7. Universal disarmament, concomitant with the union of all proletarian republics in the Internationale Socialiste.

It is absurd to discuss the advance of socialism in France without contemplating the weight of French syndicalism, which, numerically and morally, is the determining factor between the tricolor and the drapeau rouge. We cannot consider the 72,000 members of the socialist party capable of inaugurating a proletarian dictatorship without the united co-operation of the 1,300,000 members of the Confederation Generale du Travail. It is, unquestionably, the C. G. T. which is paralyzing the advent of the revolution in France. Before the war, the Confederation was sovietiste in thought and intention. But the present guides of this organization have retained little from these former days except a revolutionary vocabulary. That the workers are far in advance of their trailing leaders is clearly indicated by the partial strikes, occurring frequently throughout France, despite contrary orders from Jouhaux, secretary of the C. G. T.

It is the chasm between the C. G. T. and the Socialist Party which heartens Clemenceau more than endless and fictitious reports of Bolshevik military reverses. Until the current conservatism of the C. G. T. is superseded by its former revolutionary spirit, the immediate prospects for a French Soviet Republic are, indeed, slight. Jouhaux, the C. G. T.'s leader, is an erstwhile anarcho-syndicalist, who completely abandoned his position at the outset of the war, when he wilfully subordinated his partisanship in the class conflict to the war of the bourgeoisie. When Jouhaux received a staggering blow from a Paris policeman during the May 1 riots, he regained his class-consciousness long enough to resign from one of his governmental posts. But the effects of the injury were not sufficiently internal, and to-day Jouhaux remains the primary obstacle in the path of a rapprochement between French syndicalists and socialists.

Pierre Monatte, exponent of the C. G. T.'s revolutionary traditions, aptly pigeon-holes Jouhaux as a chauvin, and lets it go at that. "Reformer" is the contemptuous characterization made of Jouhaux by Frossard, secretary of the Socialist Party. I asked Frossard whether Jouhaux might not justly be called a Gallic edition of Gompers. Frossard faced me with a gesture of remonstrance.