

THE FINAL ARGUMENT IN THE NEW ORDER.

The case of Syria is one more instance to show that we are still far from that new international order which gives first place to self-determination. Neither England nor France seems primarily concerned with what the Syrians think about Syria. France bases her claim on the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916. But a year earlier there had been a treaty drawn between England, France and Russia, for a settlement in Asia Minor. England's present claim seems to be that the collapse of Russian imperialism makes both agreements invalid. This point of law France can not admit. But England has a better case than that. On her side it is the one argument which more than any other wrote the territorial terms of the Peace Treaty. It was her troops that conquered Asia Minor.—"New Republic."

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES.

The season is approaching for educational classes. Everyone should begin now to read up. The general sciences and in particular philosophy, history and political economy should be studied by every Socialist. The problems of the present order are not so simple as they at first appear, are in fact complex, and baffling when attacked with little understanding. Therefore let us educate ourselves and the members of our class so that they may move wisely into the new order. Can we, throughout the Dominion, co-ordinate our efforts in a standardized educational program. A page in the "Red Flag" given to questions and answers on points raised in the classes might be a great help, especially if the course of the studies were under a regulation common to all. Send in your suggestions.

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French Politics

THE following extracts are from an article on French politics in the August 20, "New Republic." The writer of it is very desirous of a peaceful way out of the present crisis in French affairs, but seems doubtful after considering various factors. He points out that the state of mind of the rank and file of both army and navy are by no means reassuring to a government which counts on force to repress popular movements and gives many instances of revolts in those forces. And in addition to this, he shows the economic, financial and labor situation as continually growing worse. We also might point out that France probably possesses, in the financial oligarchy which dominates French bourgeois policies, the most reactionary ruling class in the capitalist world. A not very favorable factor for peaceful progress.

For some time, *Le Matin*, the paper with the second largest circulation in France, has carried on a violent campaign against Clemenceau, and in favor of Briand. Important radical papers, such as *L'Oeuvre* and *Bonsoir*, though not Socialist, have anathematized the government incessantly. And naturally the Socialists have continually harassed it.

In the face of such failures and such opposition, in the face of repeated predictions of an early collapse, in the face of a grave economic and financial crisis, of high prices and popular unrest, it is surprising the government still endures. Clemenceau's position has for four months been very weak, and it appeared that only his relation to the Peace Conference kept him in office. One has only to see an important session of the Chamber of Deputies to realize that the government is actually unpopular. Then why does he remain now that peace is signed? Very likely because the deputies are afraid of endangering their position with the electorate; they lie low, play politics, wait for the election and in the meantime dance to the tune of the government fiddle—all but the ninety or one hundred of the extreme left.

And who will replace the government when it goes? Barring a revolution, it will not be these ninety or one hundred Socialists. They expect their members to increase to one hundred and fifty or two hundred in the next election, and in the mean-

A TESTIMONY TO BOLSHEVIK STRENGTH.

Meantime, it is interesting to learn from Mr. Wm. T. Goode, the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* on the Estonian front, who has succeeded in penetrating the Bolshevik lines and travelling through Pskoff to within 290 miles of Moscow, that:

The story that the peasants refuse to work the land is in this sector quite untrue. The crops are vast in excellent order, and nearly ripe. . . "The railways are well-managed and the permanent way and stations are in good order. . . It is a triumph of organization, pointing to able and constructive administration, both of the railways and the military. The private shops in Ostrov are largely closed, but there are two stores of the Soviet, formerly co-operative stores. A bath costs nothing. The theatre is open and is packed with townfolk.

The whole appearance of this countryside is so different from the fantastic descriptions given in the west that the shock of disillusion is great. The general impression I gained is that the governing administration is a strongly organized communistic system, changing according to force of circumstances. The weak points are the land question and the unwilling conscripts, but the ring of enemies only stiffens the internal resistance and helps Bolshevism.

"Petrograd will never be taken by the North Russian Corps, nor Moscow by Kolchak or Denikin."

time will participate in no ministry not predominantly Socialist.

For the next government the betting is on M. Briand, who headed a ministry for some time during the war, as well as before it, and again burst into prominence some months ago with a vigorous speech on electoral reform. Since then he has hovered in the background, with the chances strong that he might assume the reins of government at any time. He is an astute politician of the Lloyd George type, willing to cater to whatever element of the Chamber supports him.

But even in the event of a new ministry, no violent general change of policy is to be expected. There are circumstances which make a peaceful change of government seem likely, and tend to counterbalance a more revolutionary trend. We must remember that France has come out of the war victorious, even though the victory be pyrrhic, even though the government's activity has consisted chiefly in giving anaesthetics—not in curing the patient,—an activity illustrated by the 14th of July "Fete de la Victoire," when four million francs were spent in festooning Paris and impairing the natural beauty of the Champs Elysees by a double row of ornamental poles draped with flags and electric lights. So are the people encouraged to think only of the magnificent triumph of France, "the state on the frontier of civilization, guarding the liberty of the world," as the reactionary press glibly asserts.

Along with this sedulously encouraged intoxication of victory goes the natural reaction which follows war; the psychology of a "patriotism" that represses liberal thinking, and takes the form of branding as "pro-German" and "Bolshevist" every attempt to remove the fetters of a reactionary win-the-war cabinet, or to improve the condition of the workers.

But more important and permanent than these factors, is France's large peasant population, patriotic, fundamentally conservative, owning its own land, prosperous during the war, and prosperous now under the regime of high prices. So traditionally conservative are they that most of the troops used to quell popular disturbances in Paris are from the farming districts. Yet of these factors which might counteract the revolutionary situation, the only tolerably stable one is the contented peasant on the land. For before long the glamor of victory will wear off, "patriotism" will fade as the people begin to realize their frightful economic and financial position, and as the government more and more conclusively manifests its helplessness before the crisis. Taxes will become heavier, the cost of living higher.

The high cost of living—this chief cause of popular revolt, and prime condition of revolution—has already had ominous results in France. The present situation is so serious that there have already been riots in Paris, shops broken into by exasperated women. This tense situation has only been aggravated by the strikes for shorter hours and higher wages, which have given reason to employers for putting up the prices of their goods. Realizing this vicious circle of increased pay and increased prices, the Confederation Generale du Travail some weeks ago made a considerable advance in its theories, and concluded that its aim should be, not simply increased pay and shorter hours, but "the total reorganization of the system of production and distribution."

"Total reorganization"—a people's bitter discontent smouldering in France today, may easily turn "total reorganization" to revolution. The cities, as in all such cases, are the most restless. The seaports, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Brest and Toulon, are hot beds of radicalism. Today it is no longer a case of "Paris against the rest of France," but of industrial centres such as Paris, Lyons, Lille, taking the lead and the others following.