

Whose Government Is It?

By JAY LOVESTONE.

A GREAT political drama is now being enacted in the house of congress. One should say, a political tragedy, to be more exact. The battle is being fought actually in the corn fields and in the cotton fields, but to all intents and purposes, the present act is being performed in the house of representatives.

Neither the Haugen bill or the Tincher bill affords substantial relief for the exploited American farmers. Of the two, the Haugen bill unquestionably affords a bit more than does the Tincher bill, which is simply a camouflaged piece of legislation aiming to put the farmer to sleep on the Coolidge bandwagon for 1926 and 1928.

Crisis Growing More Acute.

THE basic economic problem for American agriculture is as acute as ever. The divergence between prices for agricultural commodities and industrial commodities has been increasing within the last few months at a pace altogether too alarming for the most conscious leadership of our ruling class. The world war lent great impetus to the development of American agriculture to capacities far beyond the demands of the so-called normal world market. Besides, while industry is being operated more and more on a gigantic and collective, monopoly scale, agriculture is falling behind in development, when compared with the tremendous progress in technical and commercial avenues, within the last decade. In the main, American agriculture is still organized on the individual basis prevailing at the opening of this century.

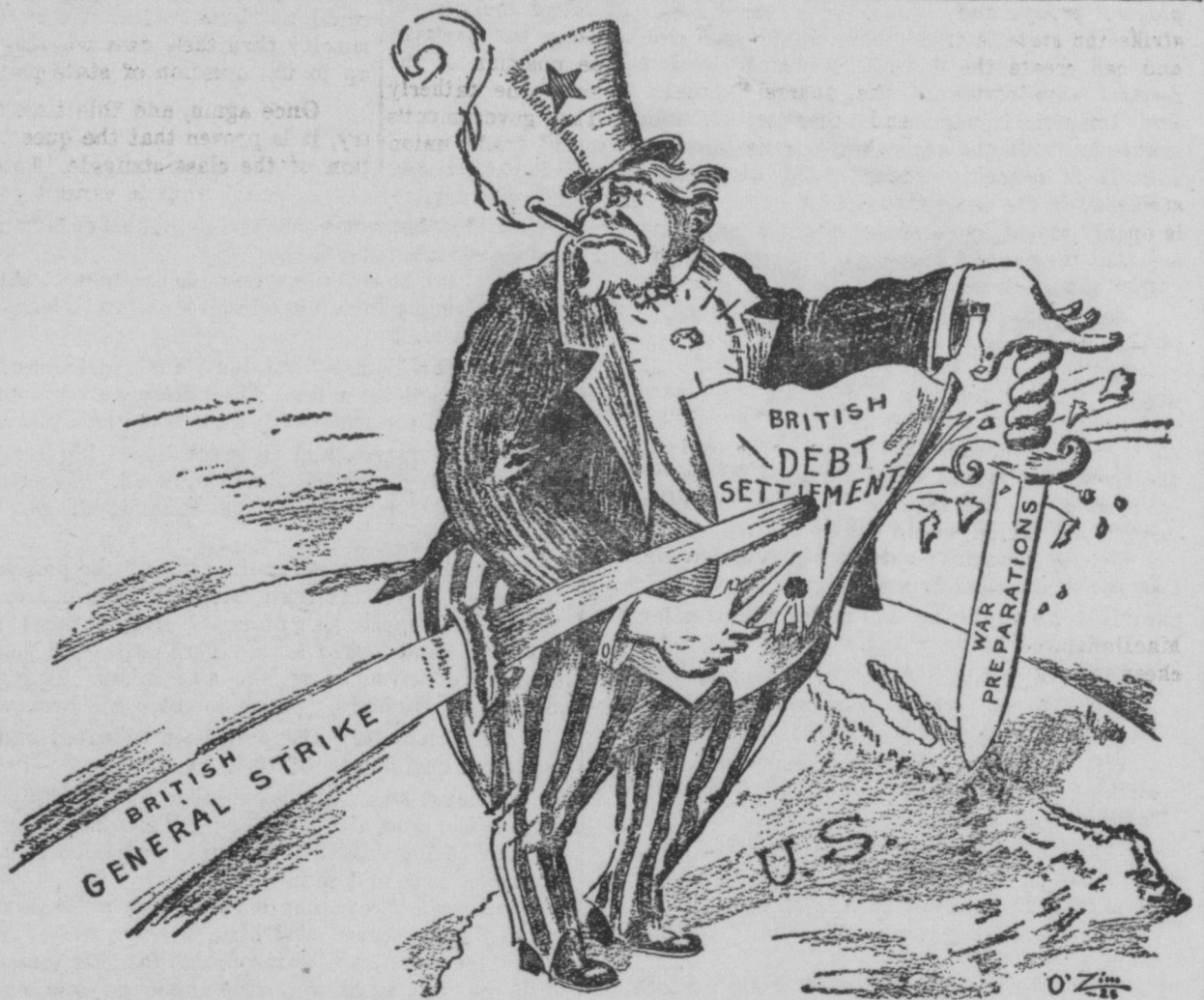
The deepening crisis in agriculture is having its political reflex in the class relationships in the United States. The economic difficulties in American agriculture are powerful forces for serious disruption of the capitalist class in this country. The new class lines have not yet become fixed. The divisions are not yet deep enough for frontal clear-cut mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie, the farmers, against the big bourgeoisie, as a class. But we already hear talk about the "solid middle-west."

We are now being introduced to "corn-belt committees." An attempt is being made to secure the passage of the Haugen bill thru an alliance of the representatives of the farmers of the middle west and the representatives of the cotton growers of the south.

Such an alliance has its difficulties, but such an alliance stands much more chance of being consummated in the house of representatives than in the senate. In the latter body, the elements representing big Southern capitalist interests would very likely line up with the industrial magnates of the North so well represented by the senate. The gulf between the big economic interests of the South and the North is being bridged. Simultaneously, however, there is being created a chasm between the big bourgeoisie and the small bourgeoisie of the South. In the house of representatives, the small bourgeoisie of the South have some substantial representation. In the senate, they have considerably less.

Political Differences Evident.

SOME sort of an agreement between the representatives of the Western and Southern small and middle farmers has been arrived at thru the arrangement to appropriate \$100,000,000 out of the \$375,000,000 provided for indirect farm-relief in the Haugen bill, to meet losses in cotton marketing operations. The spokesmen of the big financial interests, located primarily in the East, are exerting every possible pressure they can on the Southern representatives, in order to break up this combination. The bill, introduced by the reactionary congressman, Aswell of Louisiana, notorious for his attempt to secure the enactment of wholesale deportation legislation, is an example of the efforts of the Southern big capitalist interests to win away the Southern agricultural, the smaller cotton interests, from the camp of the middle western congressmen.



The British General Strike throws a fright into Uncle Sam Capitalism, who is only too ready to use the sword to assist British capitalism. The morality of capitalist society is that the workers must receive no aid from brother workers abroad, but British capital will expect to receive the aid of the United States fleet ultimately to subdue the British workers when, some day, the British fleet raises the red flag.

Class Divisions Still Formative.

THE extent to which confusion has crept into the camps of the bourgeoisie in their efforts to meet the agricultural crisis is shown clearly by the fact that in the house agricultural committee, consisting of twenty-one members, neither a political, nor even a numerical, majority could be secured for any of the three major agricultural bills now before the house. Of course, since it was impossible to secure a majority in a committee of twenty-one, the likelihood of securing a majority in a larger committee—the house of representatives, consisting of 435 members—is even slimmer. Come what may, no matter what bill will be passed or rejected by the house in its closing deliberations, the hold of the republican party on the agricultural sections will be further considerably weakened.

Government Openly Against Farmers.

WHAT may the farmers expect from the United States government? Perhaps the best answer to this question is to be found in the recent action of the senate committee on interstate commerce in its dealings with the railroads. The railroads owe the United States \$304,000,000 which were lent to them during the war period by the United States treasury. This money was lent to the railroad interests at the rate of six per cent. Only the other day the senate committee on interstate commerce reported favorably a bill for the reduction of the rate of interest from six to four and one-half per cent on the amount owed the government by the railroads. This reduced rate of interest means an annual loss to the United States government of more than \$6,000,000.

At the same time, the senate is refusing to enact legislation to give money to the land banks for use in helping the farmers in the Piedmont regions of Georgia and South Carolina to meet the emergency caused by the severe drought, which is the worst experienced by the farmers in this territory in many years. A futile effort has been made to secure an appropriation of \$5,000,000 in order to enable these farmers to make loans at the local banks for the purpose of meeting interest on overdue debts.

These South Carolina and Georgia farmers are being compelled to borrow from local banks at exorbitant

interest rates or forced to lose their property. At the same time, the railroads are being saved millions of dollars by the government. While the railroads are enjoying a most prosperous year, many sections of these states have had their whole cotton crop destroyed. Nearly one-half of the counties of South Carolina have been so hard hit that their entire crop has been wiped out.

Thru the land banks, the farmers of these territories owe the government approximately \$100,000,000. The farmers being bankrupt cannot meet these obligations. They are thus forced to give a second mortgage on their farms or to mortgage other property they may happen to have at the local banks. These banks charge the farmers a minimum interest of nine per cent. The government consequently is compelling these farmers to pay the loan sharks at least nine per cent in order to meet the interest maturing on the mortgages controlled by the land banks of the Washington administration.

Washington Friend of Railroads— Foe of Farmers.

IF anyone wants to know whose government is now being run at Washington, all he has to do is to examine the above facts. When the railroads fail to meet their financial obligations, the government rewards them by reducing their obligations. But when the farmers are driven into bankruptcy by the monopolist capitalists and by the forces of nature, then the government penalizes them. Instead of reducing the obligations of the farmers in dire straits, the government drives the farmer still further into debt and bondage to the big capitalist interests which controls every wheel of the governmental machinery in the national and state capitals.

Here we have an answer not only to the question: "Whose government is this?" but also to the problem of what the agricultural interests, the farmers, may and will get from the United States government.

Government Will Help Fascist— Not Farmers.

THE American capitalists are ready to give practically a moratorium on debts to railroads, to the fascist government of Italy and to all capitalist cliques in Europe and elsewhere but

the United States government is too poor to help the farmers in distress. Senator Nye of North Dakota doesn't stand one chance in a million to get even the slightest consideration for his bill to have the United States government accord the same treatment to the bankrupt farmers which it has accorded to the fascist government of Italy.

In the meanwhile, the workers in the industrial centers can glean increasing signs of developing hostility on the part of small farmers to the big capitalist interests. When the spokesmen of the corn belt committees, representatives that are very conservative and ultra cautious, can make a declaration of the following character, then we surely have an increasing mass protest in the ranks of the farmers that will cause deep-going class realignments in the near future.

Class Conflicts in the Making.

WE quote from the statement made by the corn belt committee on May 5th:

"The strategy of the opposition to farm relief legislation is simple and easily understood. It is to organize an 'industrial bloc,' arouse Eastern consumer fears, and form an alliance with certain ultra-conservatives from the South. It is a move that is shot thru with sectionalism and class prejudice and constitutes an assemblage of inflammable material that may wreck political parties and bring about new groupings in our national life... A solid combination of the east invites a similar combination in the west and south with the results of a clash of these two 'solid combinations' a long way in the future with much political and other wreckage along the way."

The class conscious proletariat of the United States has a distinct and imperative duty in its relations to the agricultural masses. It is the task of the working class to win over as many of the agricultural masses as possible to its banner and leadership in the fight against the big bourgeoisie. The contradictions in American agricultural economy are too inherent and ingrained to be met by the half-hearted efforts of our capitalists. Herein is a real opportunity for Communist inspiration and leadership.