Mexican Oil Crisis

By ELLEN WARD

(*Continued from the last issue*)

THERE is no question but that the pressure applied by both imperialist countries is tremendous. They have caused a deep-going crisis thruout Mexico. And, for the moment, no solution seems in sight. for it is obvious that the seizure of foreign oil properties has not solved the petroleum problem for the Mexican workers. It is true that, at the convention of the American Communist Party, at the June 2 session (Daily Worker, June 3, 1938), Hernan Laborde, secretary of the Mexican Communist Party, stated that "the development of the nationalized oil industry will not be along capitalist lines. It will be under the administration of the government and the workers, with the complete exclusion of private capital. . . . It is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Mexican revolution that it is now introducing a new type of large enterprise not under the control of finance capital, in which the working class plays a main role."

Attitude Of C.T.M.

It is interesting to compare the above with the analysis made by the C.T.M. official paper, El Futuro. May 1938. The leaders of the C.T.M., having their following of hundreds of thousands of workers in mind, cannot afford to be as reckless as Laborde. In a very sober editorial, El Futuro warns the working class that the "expropriation decree has not solved the problem of the workers. It has merely shifted the activities of battle from one plane to another." It tells the workers that complete national and social liberation can come only under the system of socialism. Despite the expropriation, Mexico remains a semi-colonial land. Its basic relations with the economics of imperialism will not be fundamentally modified by this new step. Mexico's oil must be exported and the only real customers are the imperialist powers themselves—"and we shall have to come to terms with them. The stupidity of Great Britain will force us to tie up more closely with the United States. . . Many Mexican workers have a blind faith in Roosevelt, but his recent attitude on silver purchases from Mexico shows that after all, he is the head of an imperialist state."

"It goes without saying," El Futuro continues, "that in Mexico, despite expropriation, capitalist economic laws continue to rule our lives. Even tho we may recognize that our government is a bourgeois-democratic regime of a revolutionary character, we must insist on stressing to the workers the fact that it is not a socialist government and the benefits which the workers might stand to gain from expropriation will very easily redound to our own bourgeoisie because of our present economic set-up. And we must bear this fact in mind constantly. Therefore, as soon as Mexico has been able to arrange for the export of her oil, the workers must become especially vigilant and fight for the betterment of their own conditions and insist that the gains to be made from expropriation be invested in social-welfare provisions from which if the workers are not on guard, the only ones to benefit will be our own bourgeoisie—the working class will become an administrator for our own capitalist interests and not a defender of the interests of the proletariat. This is the view of the oil workers of the C.T.M. and they wish to give warning to any leader or group of leaders who depart from this line that the masses of workers will repudiate them without hesitation."

Present Crisis In Mexico

On the present Mexican crisis, El Futuro offers the following comment (June 1938):

"Altho Mexico is still industrially underdeveloped, it is already beginning to feel the effects of capitalist industrial crises in other lands. But the Mexican bourgeoisie pretends and tries to make others believe that our present economic crisis is due principally to the oil-expropriation decree and the slowing up of Mexican oil exports. They attribute to this also the fluctuations in the rate of exchange of the Mexican peso and are attempting to create an alarmist psychology thruout the land so that they can fish more easily in troubled waters. In recent weeks, in addition to raising commodity prices, the bourgeoisie has begun salary slashes and ordered dismissals especially in the textile industry. Under the hypocritical slogan that the workers must make patriotic contributions to the fatherland, they have been getting away with

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many of these acts. They are, of course, highly conscious of what they are doing.

"But we know that our very backwardness as a capitalist land is our strength in the present crisis, contradictory as that may appear. Our bourgeois industrial set-up has still a long way to travel. We can still continue to expand, altho in modest degree; we can still employ more workers and increase the extent of consumption of commodities in our own home market. Of this the capitalists are perfectly aware. They also know that in a new war our own petroleum would find an immediate market. But that does not prevent them from taking advantage of the present moment.

"What must be the revolutionary attitude of organized labor so poorly paid and so miserably exploited?

"First: Working-class unity. No concessions of any kind on wages and hours and decrease in personnel.

Second: The workers must maintain all economic conquests and not permit themselves to be provoked by being forced to go out on strike at this time.

"Third: The workers must not permit themselves to be misled by employing-class maneuvers couched in demagogic appeals to nationalism, patriotism or loyalty to the fatherland.

"Fourth: Since it is impossible to fight against the inevitable, that is against industrial concentration and the elimination of small plants, we must insist upon the employment in the larger new plants of those left jobless by the closing down of the smaller plants.

"Fifth: There must be an active, organized campaign against the rise in prices."

All of this theoretical presentation by the C.T.M. sounds good, but we know that there is an insurmountable gap at the present time between these theories and the actual practise of the C.T.M. The C.T.M. leadership is tied so closely to the Cardenas regime that it is in no position to make any energetic move in the direction of its own program.

The oil question cannot be solved by Mexico alone, or by the Mexican workers alone. The Mexican workers need the active assistance of the labor movements of the whole world.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC. REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF MARCH 3, 1933.

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State of New York
County of New York.

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Robert Macklin who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Workers Age and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations.

1. That the names and address of publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher: Workers Age Publishing Association, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Editor: Will Herberg, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Managing Editor: Jay Lovestone, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Business Manager: Robert Macklin, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City.

2. That the owner is: Workers Age Publishing Association, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Jay Lovestone, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Will Herberg, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City; Robert Macklin, 131 W. 33rd St., New York City.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any