Political Mass Strikes in Spain.

By Federico Lopez (Madrid).

A few days ago a strike broke out among the oil workers of Seville, with the demand for higher wages and shorter working hours. The workers have forced the Strike Committee from their own ranks. The armed forces were immediately employed against the workers with the greatest brutality. On the occasion of strike meetings the police savagely fired on the workers, killing and wounding many. These fascist brutalities of the police evoked tremendous excitement among all the workers. The trade union organisations and fighting committees standing under the leadership of the Communists and the revolutionary trade unions proclaimed a general strike, which was completely followed by the whole of the workers and is still going on at the present time. Neither the fascist nor the tramcars are running; traffic in the harbour is completely at a standstill; the bakeries are closed. Under the revolutionary slogans of the Communist Party the workers are marching in powerful demonstrations through the town. Martial law has been proclaimed. Machine-guns have been posted at all the strategic points in the town.

At Bilbao the building workers have been on strike for over a week. All attempts of the reformist trade union bureaucracy to get the workers to resume work have proved vain in face of the determined attitude of the workers, who are following with the greatest discipline the instructions of the mass committees elected by large meetings of revolutionaries. Meetings are taking place among the various categories of workers for calling a solidarity strike of the miners and metal workers, and particularly of the workers in the smelting works. Bilbao also resembles a military camp.

From many parts of the country reports are arriving as to smaller and larger movements of the land workers and revolutionary actions of small peasants.

The latest happenings in Spain, especially, however, the general strike in Seville, show how exceedingly serious is the whole situation in this country. All attempts of the Berenguer government to bring about a normalisation of Spanish economy have failed. The economic and political crisis is becoming more acute every day. The Peseta is steadily sinking; exports are falling off at an alarming rate; the impoverishment of the workers is assuming enormous proportions; unemployment is increasing beyond measure; as a result of the agrarian crisis the small peasants and land workers are falling into deeper poverty. Under these conditions there is taking place a very rapid revolutionisation of the working people of Spain.

The bourgeoisie clearly perceives this development and is endeavouring to hold the growing revolutionary movement in check by means of fascist violence. In spite of the most rigorous censorship the press is no longer able to preserve silence regarding events and the growing influence of the Communist Party, which is leading an illegal existence. All the struggles of late, especially the general strike in Seville, were under the leadership of the Communist Party and of the revolutionary trade unions.

At the same time the bourgeoisie is making its preparations. The King is at present in Paris in order to negotiate with Santiago Alba, a liberal leader who was formerly expelled from Spain. Alba is regarded as the coming man who will form a Conservative-Liberal block government, which will unite all the forces of the bourgeoisie for a common fight against the revolutionary movement. There is no doubt that sooner or later Spain will experience serious revolutionary events. The effects of the steadily increasing internal difficulties and crises brought on by difficulties on the national market, are creating a state of affairs out of which a serious revolutionary situation is bound very soon to develop. The present events, especially the happenings in Seville and Bilbao, signalise the coming serious and decisive class struggles in Spain.

The coming government of the Liberal-Conservative block, in spite of some democratic phrases, will be a government of White Terror, as experience has shown. It will, just like the Berenguer government, enjoy the eager support of its agents in the camp of the working class: Republicans, Social-fascists, Anarchist-syndicalists and Anarchists. In addition to these traditional traitors and agents of the bourgeoisie in the camp of the working class, a number of Communist renegades are rendering assistance to the bourgeoisie. These are the Trotskyists, who also in Spain are fishing in troubled waters. Under the protection of the legality accorded them by the fascist government, they are seeking to discredit the Communist Party in the eyes of the workers. The Party must proceed ruthlessly against these dirty agents of the bourgeoisie of the type of Leninist.

The situation in Spain and the fights resulting there from, which are giving rise to a revolutionary situation, confront the Communist Party of Spain with tremendous tasks. There is every sign that the C.P. of Spain has profound influence among the masses. This will enable our Party to take over the entire leadership of the approaching big fights, and to prepare the ground for the victorious proletarian revolution.

AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

More Oppression for the African Masses.

The Riotous Assemblies Act.

By Verschraegen.

One more law adorns the statute book of South Africa already overcrowded with slave legislation.

Not contented with the already existing oppressive legislation against the Africans, Pass Laws, Master and Servant Laws, land robbery, Colour Bar Acts, cruel taxation, urban areas etc., etc., the South African bourgeoisie led by Hertzog, Pirov & Co., representing the backward agrarian element, inspired by Smuts and the South African Party, and assisted by Creswell and the Labour Party got the Riotous Assemblies (Amendment) Act passed which in effect means that not only must the Africans remain slaves as hitherto and be further enslaved, but should they or anyone else dare even to protest in a constitutional manner against any oppression, a criminal offence is committed punishable by imprisonment, banishment from certain centres or deportation. Before analysing the contents of the new monster in detail, a few words may not be out of place in connection with the origin of and circumstances which led up to the Principal Act passed in 1914.

During the years 1913—14 South Africa was convulsed by a wave of strikes and street riots. It was essentially the strikes in the country, mining, engineering, railway etc., culminating in the shooting of a score or more of defenceless workers on the Market Square, Johannesburg, and the illegal deportation of a number of strike leaders.

As its provisions clearly show the act was designed principally to afford the utmost protection to big business and industrialists, and to make unlawful actions which are inevitably connected with the conduct of strike.

The following became criminal offences punishable by long terms of imprisonment and deportation:

a) the least interference with scabs (e.g. calling a scab "scab");

b) compelling a non-union worker to join his union even by ordinary trade union methods;

c) blacklisting scabs;

d) picketing even if peaceful.

In addition the Minister of Justice is given special powers to prohibit meetings, and a section is included, providing for special tribunals without jury—a kind of courts martial to try offenders under this law.

In the subsequent years different provisions of the Act have been rigorously applied against workers and workers' organisations and many were severely punished for contraventions thereof. In 1927 the infamous Native Administration Act was passed in spite of widespread opposition and a clause inserted making it a criminal offence to promote feelings of hostility between Europeans and Africans, etc. It is really farcical that the Hertzogs, the Smuts, the Creswells and the other oppressors who are the chief promoters of hostility between Africans and Europeans by oppressing the former, by the issue of public manifestos calling on the whites to rally against the
black menace should pass such laws, but of course it was directed against the Communist Party and no one else.

Some time later Comrade Bunting, the chairman of the Party, was convicted under this clause, "promoting hostility", but on appeal the Supreme Court held that the section did not apply to the Communist doctrines as such and the conviction was set aside. Immediately Smuts, that darling of British Imperialism and Mac-Donald's Labour Party, raised the matter in the Union Parliament pointing out the seriousness of the situation resulting from the Supreme Court judgment, and urging that legislation be passed instantly curtling the activities of the Communist agitators. Pirow, the Minister of Justice, the representative of coffee-drinking, pipe-smoking, parasitical feudal landlordism, joyfully accepted the opposition leaders' war cry and promised to introduce legislation to that effect, and another votive curbing the activities of the agitators amongst natives, and the outcome was the present amendment of the Act which is law now. The new Act is not only a fiendish outrage on the very meagre rights of the Africans, but has even "outraged" liberal bourgeois opinion in and outside South Africa, assigning as it does all powers of obtaining evidence, trying, convicting and punishing of offenders exclusively to the Minister.

He is vested under the new Act with wider powers regarding the prohibition of meetings, prohibiting certain persons from attending meetings. He may in addition prohibit any book, foreign magazine, pamphlet, manifesto, foreign newspaper, handbill or poster, article, advertisement or cartoon, picture or drawing.

He may further exclude any person from any area, and deport any foreign-born person who is convicted of any contravention of this Act.

He and he alone decides who is guilty, and he passes sentence, he is responsible to no one except himself, and even the courts have no say in matters.

It was this that so much upset the liver of the Liberals. Suppress working class papers? Banish and depo't working class leaders? Prohibit meetings? By all means, but take the authority away from the courts of law, transgress the sacred constitutional principle of the supremacy of the law, terrible! Outrageous! The bourgeois elements, however, were really upset about the transgression of a constitutional tradition. The most important question to them is the subjection and exploitation of the Africans and, although they desire to do it in a more "fair" manner, they are fully aware that good old British imperialist not way of merciless exploitation is still the best way, making the slaves believe that they are absolutely free citizens of the British Empire and subjects of His Majesty, they readily fell in with Pirow's uncouth and rather crude method.

It is interesting, although not surprising to note that Creswell, the leader of that stinking corpse commonly known as the S.A. Labour Party, Ministry of Defence and Labour, and Sampson an old trade union leader and until lately President of the South African Typographican Union, and their followers, except two, have supported Pirow's Act and voted in its favour. A motion at the annual conference of the same body protesting feebly against the measure was not even discussed. The Trades Union Congress and many of its affiliated unions have sent strong protests, and a special meeting of joint executives also adopted a strong resolution against the new law, but Pirow's reply was very curt and blunt. He was not prepared to give any consideration to Trade Union representation except on purely trade union matters.

In Parliament the only opposition came from two members of the National Council Section of the Labour Party - South African Party members opposed the methods, but wholeheartedly supported the principle—a united front of the white imperialists to crush the African masses.

The Communist Party organised mass demonstrations against the Bill in various centres. In Cape Town a march on Parliament resulted in several windows being broken and a number of persons being arrested. In the Pirow's Party the workers were to down tools as a protest against the enigmatic measure received no response. The African masses, however, are gradually awakening from their slumber. Their yoke is becoming unbearable, and when they rise, British Imperialism and white domination will have to answer a long list of foul crimes against Africa.

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**SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION IN THE SOVIET UNION**

How the Working Class Builds for Itself.

By Mirov (Stalingrad).

When the American engineer Calder, who superintended a section of the building of the "Tractorstroi" machine works, was asked his opinion of the Russian workers, he answered:

"When they want to work, they work better than anybody else. For the Tractorstroi they wanted to . . ."

The engineer Calder, who had the opportunity of observing the working of the Soviet Union, straightforwardly placed a fact on record. Today, at the moment when the "Tractorstroi", the greatest tractor works in the world, erected in only 8½ months, and with a yearly productive capacity of 50,000 tractors, has completed its first tractor, the news of a fresh victory arrives, the news of the completion of the "Selmashstroi"; and it is only six weeks since the Soviet Union celebrated the opening of the Turkish Railway. Every day brings fresh reports of victories won by the workers of the Soviet Union in the various sections of the work of building up socialism. Therefore we can add to the words of the engineer Calder that work is being carried on in the whole of the Soviet Union with the greatest enthusiasm, and not only in the "Tractorstroi", and that this enthusiasm is working miracles.

They are real miracles! On 25th September the first gang of building workers set to work. The autumn was already upon them. One went on 24 hours a day ... and on an area of 540 hectares a giant has sprung up overnight, ready to compete with its like in any part of the world.

It is especially remarkable that the terms set for the completion of the building all proved too long. Four times the engineers had to shorten them. As it happened, the first final term was fixed for 15th October 1931, then 15th April 1931, then 15th November 1930, August 1930, and finally, thanks to the heroic efforts of the working class, the 17th June 1930, the day crowning the work.

The Titanic will of the Soviet proletariat has been victorious, has realised Lenin's legacy, his dream of 1919, that one day 'one hundred thousand first-class tractors' should flow in a broad stream over the fields of Russia. The dream is more than fulfilled: from the gates of this one Stalingrad factory alone 50,000 tractors will roll yearly.

Today the workers exchange reminiscences of the days of the building fever. Solnyshkin, a foreman, and the joiner Kolesnikov, remember how they were first sent to the then perfectly desert site, in order to measure the boundary lines of the factory. How then later on thousands of workers took part in the building work, how the mighty undertaking roused the enthusiasm of even the most backward, and conquered the unbelief of those of little faith. Out of the midst of the masses there came workers filled with ardent enthusiasm, who took up the work at a frenzied speed. These were champions of the revolution. The masses followed their example. Wherever they lent a hand, the work seemed to melt under their fingers.

There were many who did not know how to work. They learnt it. They learnt feverishly. The foreman Solnyshkin was one of the workers allotted to the American engineer. Solnyshkin did not understand a word of English, the engineer not one of Russian. But a way out of the difficulty was found. Solnyshkin made a drawing, putting notes of interrogation at the points which the engineer gave his explanations in the form of rapid sketches.

One day a workman called Grizenko was engaged. The engineer proposed that he should begin work the next day. Grizenko had no great confidence in his own capabilities. He wanted to get an idea of the work first. He went to the building to see the matter for himself . . . and came to the conclusion that the work was being done "from the wrong end". Without considering long, he went to the engineer and demanded an "American crane". The engineer looked at the workman attentively, thought it over, and replied: "Alright, you shall have it!" And what happened? Within a few days, Grizenko had carried out a perfect revolution in the working