

The Mexican Strike

THE New York Times never fails us. This week, for instance, its Mexican correspondent quotes *La Prensa* at great length as giving the frankest analysis of the strike of three thousand workers against the Mexican Light and Power Company. *La Prensa*'s "frankness" consists in attacking President Cardenas for not halting the strike. The Times correspondent forgot to add that *La Prensa* speaks for the clerical-feudal reaction in Mexico. It has a long and dishonorable record as an agitator against progress and socialist education and aids the advocates of U.S. intervention.

The strike has been sustained as "legal" by the federal authorities. There is even talk of the government impounding the British-controlled company if it refuses to settle, and turning the plant over to the workers. While no United States capital is involved in this case, it seems that The Times does not like this idea. We find it rather appealing.

Paying Landon's Way

IF YOU still doubt that the Republican Party works hand in glove with Wall Street and the Liberty League, consider the list of campaign contributions made public by the Republican National Committee. In the first two months of 1936,

three Morgan men donated a total of \$15,000 to the Hearst-Landon war chest. They were Junius Morgan, son of America's No. 1 banker; H. P. Davison, partner in the Morgan firm; and George F. Baker of the First National Bank, a Morgan outfit.

The du Ponts contributed \$5,000; so did Alfred P. Sloan, Jr., head of General Motors. Other donors were W. L. Mellon of Gulf Oil; Lester Armour of Armour Meat Products; Earl F. Reed of Weirton Steel, notorious anti-labor company; Harold S. Vanderbilt, director of thirty railway companies, and H. E. Mansville of the Johns-Mansville Company. None of these gave less than \$2,000 each.

Spain Defends Democracy

FACED with a democratic shakeup in the army, fascist and monarchist officers stationed in Morocco have launched an attempt to destroy the Spanish Republic. The long-drawn-out Rightist campaign of civil disturbance and economic sabotage has thus culminated in a counter-revolutionary putsch. In defiance of the people's will, Gil Robles and General Franco have set out to erect a military dictatorship. They seek not only to substitute fascist violence for existing civil rights, but to plunge the country back socially into the feudal-clerical abyss of the past. For months the fascists have protested their peaceful intent; they have poured out venomous accusations of violence and dictatorship against the partisans of the People's Bloc. Now Gil Robles and his fascist plotters have at last come out into the open, giving the world another object lesson in fascist integrity.

It is significant that the reaction has been obliged to base its hopes on the Moroccan troops, a body of men remote geographically, as well as every other way, from the mass of the Spanish people. Speculating upon the allegiance of these mercenary forces, and upon possible wavering among the more conservative supporters of the Republican government, the fascists apparently envisaged a march on Madrid in the manner of the bloodcurdling assault of General Doval's "Tercios" upon the revolutionary miners' battal-

ions in Asturias during October, 1934.

But the reaction appears to have badly overplayed its hand. Its efforts to drive a wedge in the People's Front by intimidating middle-class Republicans, have so far proven of little avail. For, once confronted with the fascist bid for power, middle-class Republicans and labor have closed ranks as never before, in defense of democracy. Revolutionary workers and simple upholders of Republican order have formed united combat squads. The People's Front, arming the populace for anti-fascist defense, drawing together in fighting formation the forward-looking elements of the entire people, is prov-

ing under duress to be the only effective barrier to fascism.

Nor has the reaction counted on the unity and revolutionary consciousness of a proletariat which came to know the lash of fascist inquisition in October, 1934. The fascist attempt has evoked a mobile and united army of Socialist, Communist and Syndicalist workers, many hundred thousand strong, a living barricade to the reaction, ready to emulate the miners of Asturias. Within the army itself the support which the fascists apparently expected on the mainland has, at this writing, not materialized to any significant extent. It would thus seem that the anti-fascist mood of the people has prevailed among the soldier mass as against the intrigues of the officer caste.

If the Republican government is victorious, as now seems probable, a more rapid pace in the application of the People's Bloc program may be expected of it, particularly in respect to disarming and incapacitating the reaction and forcing employers to comply with social legislation. A sharper leftward trend may be expected as a result of the greater unity and influence which the working class is now acquiring.

How stirringly the United Front goes forward in defense of the people against the trickery and terror of the fascist reaction, teaching the great lesson of our time: that the workers and their middle-class allies can by united action reap a bright future in a decaying world.



Helios Gomez

Wolves in the Fold

BACK in the quiet of their own homes, the 14,000 men and women who attended the Townsend convention in Cleveland last week can take stock. They have much to think about. Their first reaction, it seems to us, should be one of thankfulness that their cause has not been delivered over, lock, stock, and barrel, to Lemke and the Liberty League. But their relief should be tempered by anxiety, for the menace has not been removed. An unscrupulous priest and a loud-mouthed fascist adventurer came close to robbing them of everything for which they have been striving.

The Townsendites are not a political party. They are American men and women seeking security for the years when they can no longer work. Let them not be diverted from that goal by charlatans and demagogues who would use their numerical strength to build up a movement of the blackest

reaction—in which there will be security neither for the old nor the young. Coughlin, without a glimmer of sympathy for the aim of the Townsendites, once branded their plan as “economic insanity.” The antics of Coughlin and Gerald Smith at Cleveland were no more than an audacious attempt to make the Townsendites forget pensions and throw their support to Lemke and his reactionary Union Party. Support of Lemke is support of Landon. And if there is one sure way of knifing old-age pensions and social security of any kind, it is to send to the White House Alf M. Landon, the man who thinks \$1.08 per week is enough for a family on relief.

The Townsendites are to be congratulated for refusing to surrender themselves to reaction. Dr. Townsend himself wavered badly. He permitted the sly G. L. K. Smith to change the name of his group from Old Age Re-

volving Pensions to the Townsend Recovery Plan, thus shifting the emphasis of the group's purpose. He fought every move to make the Townsendites a democratic movement. And finally, despite the convention keynote: “We are not going to lose with Lemke! We are going to triumph with Townsend!” the Doctor himself agreed to take the stump for Lemke.

What Townsend does concerning the Union Party is his affair. It should not be the affair of the Townsend rank and file. Let them recall that their convention refused to endorse Lemke. And let them read the forthright commitments for old-age pensions in the platform of the Communist Party and in the program of the Farmer-Labor candidates throughout the country. That is the way to deal with the wolves in sheep's clothing who came to Cleveland to kill Townsend and then feast on his following.

Whither Townsendism?

CELESTE STRACK

CLEVELAND.

SITTING among the elderly delegates of the Townsend convention here in Cleveland, I have been watching the white-haired California school-teacher who formally heads the movement, and the plump Father Coughlin and the energetic Gerald K. Smith, Huey Long's political son and heir. And it has begun to dawn on me that this convention has implications beyond the present election campaign. The Detroit priest and the Louisiana Bible-thumpers have made it abundantly clear that their connection with the Townsend movement is no mere political flirtation. It is rather a marriage designed to produce a bouncing nine-pound fascist movement in America. The alliance of the Townsendites, the Coughlinites, and the Smith forces around Lemke is a step toward the election of Landon; the election of Landon would be a step toward fascism. Any doubts I may have had on this score were dissipated by the Reverend Gerald K. Smith himself. This burly disciple of Huey Long towers over the frail Dr. Townsend; he dominates the convention platform in Cleveland's Public Auditorium; he dominates the publicity; he hopes to dominate the Townsend

old-age revolving pension movement.

The Reverend Gerald K. Smith spent a great deal of time with the reporters at the press table. I called him outside into a little alcove behind the platform and interviewed him for THE NEW MASSES. The Reverend Doctor bubbled over with energy. He was jumpy but talkative.

“The convention,” I began, “has voted against endorsing any political party. But aren't you and Dr. Townsend trying to put the Townsend movement behind the Union Party?”

“Dr. Townsend and I will do everything we can as leaders to back Lemke,” Dr. Smith replied.

“As leaders? You mean you will endorse Lemke not as individuals but as the leaders of a movement?”

“Yes, as leaders of a movement.” He emphasized each word.

“Doesn't that mean that your resolution not to endorse any political party was only a blind?”

The Reverend Gerald K. Smith shrugged his shoulders.

“There has been a lot of talk at this con-

vention,” I said, “about great men, specifically about yourself, Dr. Townsend, and Father Coughlin. Isn't your idea of leadership like the conception of the Führer?”

“I never discuss American events in European terms.”

“How would you describe your idea of leadership?”

“It's a new kind of leadership. A man arises and says ‘follow me,’ and if the people follow, that's how we know him as a leader.”

“Do you mean that the democratic method of choosing leaders isn't worth while?”

“It's a lot of baloney,” Dr. Smith said sharply. “It doesn't really mean anything. We can tell what they're thinking without taking a vote.”

I wanted to ask Dr. Smith about his reported connections with Hearst. Before I had uttered two words, he was pouring out his answer.

“I never saw Hearst, never met Hearst, never talked to him. It's all a lie.” The Reverend Doctor smiled sweetly.

“Many people in this convention,” I said, “consider Hearst democracy's greatest menace today. You say you want to maintain