

FRENCH SOCIAL REVOLT HAS PUT LABOR ON TOP

Rights Obtained in Six Months' Time That Workers in U.S. Took 50 Years to Secure --- Employers Organizing to Defend Interests

By RALPH HEINZEN
PARIS, Feb. 23.—French Labor has staged a bloodless social revolution and attained in six months the same legislation—including the legal right to strike and obligatory arbitration—which labor in the United States attained after half a century of trade union effort.

Social Revolution
The French government's recent pronouncement that every major strike originating from the application of its labor laws has been settled, and that only a few spasmodic, purely local strikes continue can be interpreted as marking the close of a dangerous phase of social revolution by French labor, now protected by law against almost any emergency.

The laws which have been inspired by Leon Blum's Socialist "Popular Front" government, working closely with Leon Jouhaux, head of the General Confederation of Workers, and voted by Parliament, provide French workers with the following:

- 1.—A 40-hour week.
- 2.—Collective labor contracts.
- 3.—Paid vacations.
- 4.—Ample damages for discharge.
- 5.—Compulsory arbitration in accordance with specified procedure under governmentally controlled arbitration machinery.
- 6.—A minimum scale of pay by category and region.
- 7.—Recognition of the legal right of workers to organize with the right to designate delegates in factories employing more than 10 workers, for the purpose of discussing wages, labor codes and working conditions.
- 8.—The right of workers to strike, written into the laws of the land.

A wholly separate phase of this social revolution is the nationalization of industries. Endowed by Parliament with full powers to decree the nationalization of industries working for national defense, the government already has nationalized certain important factories in the aircraft, automobile and munitions industries and is next prepared to go after the Schneider-Creusot group, the most powerful and richest single industrial amalgamation in France.

The Popular Front insists that this is only a start and that before their programme is fully applied they will demand nationalization of mines, railroads, shipping and insurance, as well as all munitions and heavy industries, particularly metallurgical.

Labor has gained much more than the employers in the French social revolution, although the employers have gained the theoretical assurance that sudden strikes cannot be called unless preliminary arbitration has been tried and failed. They also gained the point that occupation of factories by the workers during a strike is now legally forbidden.

Practically, however, there have been strikes and there has been occupation of factories since the laws were promulgated and the Blum government has done nothing beyond asking Jouhaux—the real labor leader in his role of general secretary—to intervene and urge the workers to

evacuate the factories and resume work during negotiations.

Under the new labor legislation, such a clash as the General Motors strike cannot occur—theoretically at least, although many believe that the cumbersome machinery will show defects when it meets the first serious test.

The French law in instances similar to the American automobile strikers would technically oblige the strikers to evacuate the factory, although thus far the French government never has used troops to force evacuation.

Then French law would compel General Motors to agree to meet the workers, because the compulsory arbitration law provides that labor conflicts must be submitted to conciliation and arbitration before any strike or lockout takes place.

Decisions of the arbitrators are final, but if they fail to reach an agreement a third arbitrator will be named by the government from among retired civil servants and any decision of these three becomes binding.

There have been many instances since the law was enacted in which the government has persuaded the strikers to return to work pending arbitration. Every major strike since Blum came to power has seen the government's direct intervention. Under the new legislation, the government's role is greatly increased, because it is the government's duty to see that the laws governing relations between capital and labor are enforced.

The government's role is made comparatively easy by the fact that it is really a labor government, although there is no real labor party in France. Blum depends for a Parliamentary majority on the Socialists, Communists and Radicals, all recruiting the major part of their strength among the workers.

It was French labor which was the first to revive in present generation the stay-in strike as a weapon. The earliest stay-in strike on labor records occurred at Lyons, France, in 1555, when journeymen bakers occupied the bakeries and barricaded access to the ovens.

There is an unconfirmed report in history of even an earlier stay-in and sit-down strike by members of the builders' companionship or the Rouen Cathedral between 1485 and 1507 refusing to climb down from the scaffolding of the finished gothic gem.

Another renaissance of the stay-in strike occurred at Lyons in 1730 and in the Lille textile factories in 1750.

More than a century ago, English workers occupied the northern textile factories in 1817 and burned the buildings when troops appeared to chase them off.

Just before the world war, Hungarian miners stayed down in their pits. These strikes have been revived in recent years in Central Europe.

In the current revival of the French stay-in strike, at one time last year 2,000,000 French men and women workers were sitting, sleeping and eating at their work benches. The strikes were unusually orderly and there was almost no bloodshed because the Sar-

HEALTH

A HEALTH SERVICE OF THE CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES IN CANADA

DISCHARGE FROM THE EAR —JUST A NUISANCE?

"Why worry about a discharge from the ear? If the other ear is kept clean and a piece of absorbent cotton put in it for a cork, one can forget about it. It is true the ear may be deaf but if the other ear is all right one can hear enough for practical purposes. Just put up with the discharge as long as you have no pain."

But possibly the discharge is important—maybe we shouldn't disregard it. If we find water seeping through a wall into our house, do we keep mopping it up and covering the wet spot with a picture or piece of furniture? In haste a plumber is sent for. We want to have the leak found and fixed even if it is necessary to tear down the wall.

With few exceptions a discharge from the ear accompanied by some loss of hearing in that ear, means deep-seated disease. This disease may appear very innocent but when least expected it may flare up with disastrous results.

Not long ago, John, who had been apparently in excellent health, complained of a headache and not feeling up to the mark. Simple remedies were tried, but the headache got worse and John became very ill indeed. The doctor was called in but could find nothing to account for John's illness, except a discharging ear of long standing. In desperation the patient was sent to hospital where the doctor's fears of Meningitis were confirmed. Heroic measures were attempted, the ear was operated on, transfusions given and the most up-to-date serum treatment was tried without effect. John died in agony. The surgeon had done his best but the deadly bacteria had already infected the brain coverings—"the doors were closed, after the horse had fled."

One might well ask: "Is this the fate of all patients with discharging ears?" Of course not, but wouldn't it be wise to find out if your bad ear is dangerous? The discharging ear should be examined by a competent surgeon. He is able by various methods of examination to diagnose the true nature of the trouble. He is able to say whether simple treatment is sufficient or whether operation is necessary. Operation does not always stop the discharge, but it will reveal the true nature of the infection and should prevent the dreaded Meningitis.

One has ample time usually, to seek advice and help for the discharging ear but to procrastinate is often fatal.

WINE AND CHILDREN

ROME, Feb. 23.—"Raise more children and glorify the race" and "drink more wine and stimulate agriculture" are familiar admonitions in Italy.

Il Giornale d'Italia recently published Senator Arturo Marescalchi's conclusions that "where wine drinking is neglected, the birthrate falls off." Il Giornale, one of Italy's most important newspapers, seldom has been accused of whimsicality but it gave the senator's studies front-page space.

A grudge, which has existed for many months will be settled one and for all when George Dazzler Clark Scotland, and Steve Crusher Casey, Ireland, grip at Boston Garden.

raut and Blum governments refused to use force to evacuate the workers.

Rapidly paralyzing national effort, the French workers won a technical victory. By throwing the spotlight on bad working conditions among unorganized French labor, Jouhaux, Blum and their cohorts succeeded within six months in eliminating low salaries, long hours and unsanitary working conditions providing capital and labor with a flexible code which they have every hope will work out.

Gains For Syndicalists
The net result of the social revolution appears to neutral observers to be tremendous gains for the labor syndical movement, which for the first time is playing a dominant role in French politics.

However, the slight wages increases obtained under the Matignon accords have been more than absorbed by rapidly-rising living costs, due to the 40-hour week and increased overhead. Thus, while their position has been improved and they have the machinery to better their lot, organized labor is for the moment in no better position financially than before.

Labor moved faster and organized ahead of the employers and is today the upper dog. The employers, however, are burying commercial jealousies and are rapidly organizing. With a combined capital of many billions of francs, they can fight for their interests against the left front government.

Thus it cannot be said yet that the labor problem in France is by any means solved.

WELL WORN PHRASE REVERTS TO EARLY INFLATION DAYS

"Not Worth a Continental" Had Its Origination When Printing Press Money Was Outlawed in United States

(By Frederic J. Haskin)
WASHINGTON—There remain a good many Americans, especially in New England and the western states originally populated by New Englanders, who describe some worthless thing as "not worth a continental." Perhaps not all of them realize the full significance of the opprobrious term nor appreciate how its origin might conceivably be related to affairs of the near future.

The continental referred to was a piece of paper currency, issued at the time of the revolutionary war under authority of the Continental Congress. The lesson which the long life of the derogatory epithet holds for Americans today is that an inflated currency always brings misery in its train. It was Daniel Webster who declared that "of all the contrivances for cheating the laboring classes of mankind, none has been more effective than that which deludes them with paper money." He might well have added that the harm is not confined to the laboring classes. Indeed, it is probable that those who depend for their living upon annuities and the income from investments and savings are the greatest sufferers. The savings of a lifetime which, normally, would supply a competent livelihood, in time of inflation might not supply sufficient income to buy a single meal.

The treachery of inflation is that it almost invariably is slipped into unwittingly. The term "almost" is used because there actually are persons who see no reason why the printing presses should not be employed to turn out unlimited quantities of paper currency. Such deliberate inflationists come to suffer as well as those who stumbled over the brink against their planning.

There was probably more reason for the continental currency than almost any other inflated issue; certainly more than for any American issue to date. A country with latent but undeveloped resources was fighting with its back to the wall for independence, and was forced to turn to the printing press to create a sort of synthetic money with which to pay troops and buy war supplies. But it is an impressive fact that no matter how high and patriotic the moral reason for the issue was, the effects were just the same as though the scheme had been mischievously embarked upon.

The progress of that revolutionary inflation was rapid. It was upon receipt of the news of Bunker Hill that the Continental Congress authorized the first issue of continentals. A genuine effort was made to keep the new currency under control, for there were those who knew the dangers of inflation. The first act limited the issue to the value of 2,000,000 Spanish milled dollars. Printing press money is like morphia or other heroic drugs. The person who begins taking the drug thinks he can control or suppress any tendency toward addiction. He soon finds that he must increase his doses to obtain relief. In like manner a nation, employing inflated currency, finds that, with each issue, the demand for an ensuing and larger issue becomes imperative.

Before the continental currency was a year old, so much had been issued and its value had depreciated so far that Congress found it necessary to pass an act declaring that

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the state began chartering banks with the note-issuing privilege. The federal government with Jackson's approval, deposited public funds in many of them. At one time these state banks had \$50,000,000 of federal money a vast sum for those days.

Because of the wildcat organization and unskillful or unscrupulous management or both, they were constantly failing. Their notes then became worthless. But even before failure, these unsecured currency notes almost always were below par. Some state banks bore better reputations than others, and the greatest confusion existed. One would find in his pocket a \$10 bill which would be worth as much as \$9 in Virginia but, upon travelling to Ohio, he could get

but \$4 for it. With many such banks issuing notes, there was no uniformity, either from the point of view of geography or of time. A man might sell a horse for \$200 today and find his money worth only \$100 tomorrow.

State banks were organized by speculators for the express purpose of issuing money to be used in purchase of public lands. Land bought for speculation was paid for in state bank notes, which the United States Treasury found depreciated or useless. Jackson was compelled to stop the practice. The money dropped still lower, and this inflationary gesture ended in a business depression and financial panic which set the country back years and utterly bankrupted thousands of families.

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