

"The idea becomes power when it penetrates the masses."
—Karl Marx.

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Calles Fights Farmers in Mexico By Bertram D. Wolfe

MEXICO CITY.—One of the phenomena that accompany the personal dictatorships disguised in democratic forms so typical of many Latin-American countries, is the rapid progressive disintegration of the political parties or groups to which the presidents of Mexico nominally belong.

This disintegration was covertly fomented both by Calles and Obregon, as it is the only alternative to his fortifying such groups and thus having to share with them his power and perhaps even submit to their discipline.

THIS constitutes the immediate political cause of the disintegration of the so-called "socialist" bloc in the present chamber of deputies which manifests itself in the form of a conflict between its constituent parties, the Agrarista and the Laborista (Agrarian and Labor parties.) Moreover, there are deeper-lying social causes which determine both the personal dictatorship and the conflict between the parties in question.

In Mexico, where every movement tends to take the form of a crystallization around a personal chieftain or caudillo with the consent of or in revolt against the "big chief" who is head of the army and president of the nation, the labor party cannot be explained without great emphasis upon its own caudillo and the particular presidents that it has supported or fought.

THE labor party, like the Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana on which it tries to base itself, grew up around the personality of Luis N. Morones and a little group of followers (about a half dozen.) At the same time, its name, "labor" and its pretended socialist program are explainable as filling certain vague aspirations of the masses.

The labor party first became a political force in the petty machinations that center around the president and the chambers while Carranza was the supreme chieftain of the nation. All of its leaders, including Morones, were then in the pay of Carranza. However, he elected to aid in its disintegration in favor of other parties and Morones joined forces with Obregon, Calles and De la Huerta who prepared a revolt which overthrew Carranza within one month after it started. Morones then became the representative of the Obregon government in the labor movement, being in the pay of Obregon as he had formerly been in that of Carranza.

THE political majority of the then parliament finding that Obregon and Calles elected to reinforce the labor and agrarian parties as the more easily controlled group, changed from support to hostility and engineered with the aid of the military and some support from English capital and Mexican landowners, the De la Huerta rebellion. The rebellion crushed, the labor and agrarian parties remained as the sole administration parties, and the forms of an election were gone thru on behalf of their candidate, Calles.

From the moment that Calles assumed power, it became obvious that he was going to eliminate the agrarian party from the political arena. His very cabinet appointments foreshadowed it. It had been a foregone conclusion that the agrarian party would have the ministry of agriculture and the labor party the ministry of commerce, industry and labor. Morones was the candidate for the latter position, Ramon P. De Negri for the former. De Negri was not appointed, and in his place was named a non-

member of the agrarian party, Luis Leon.

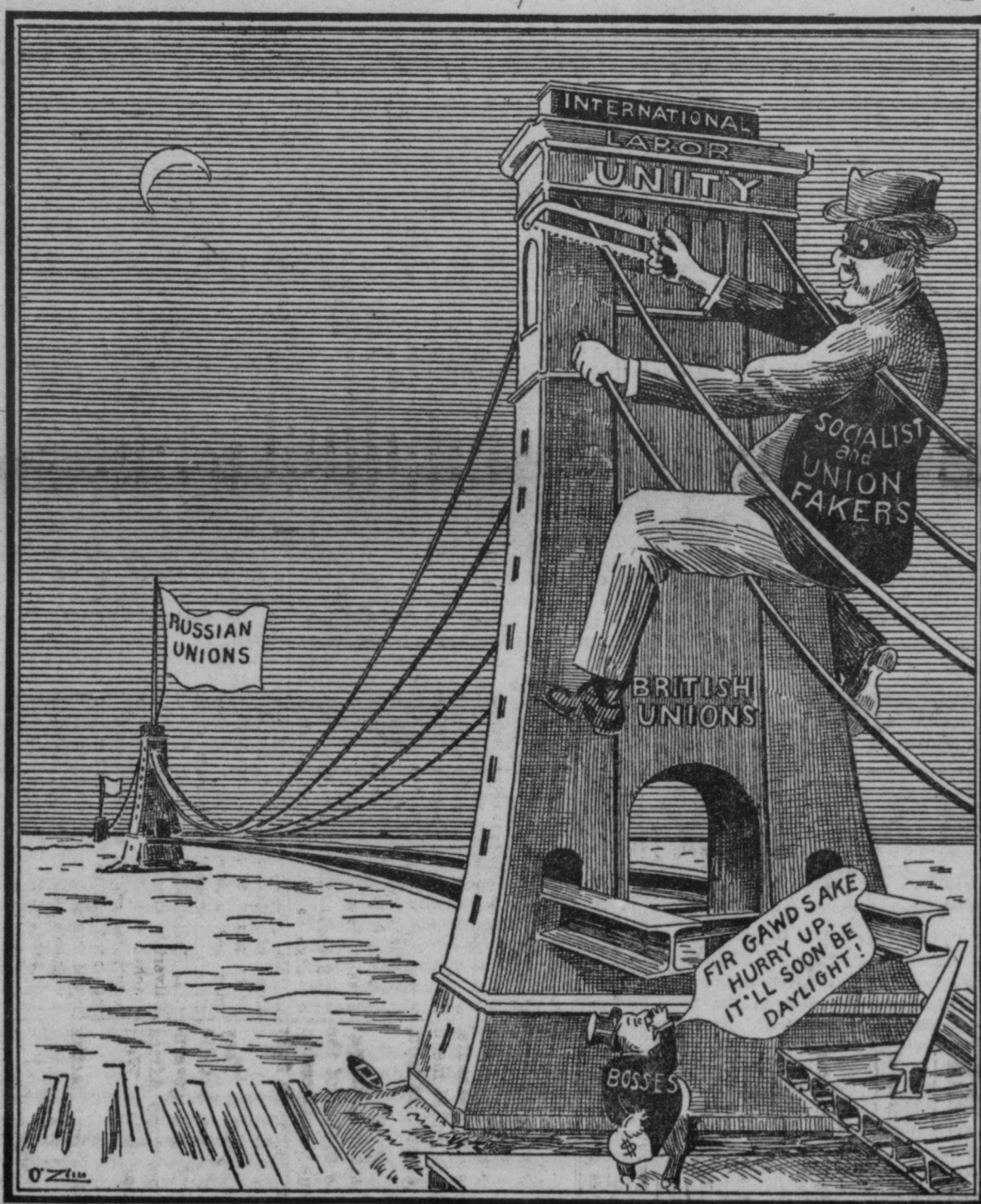
THE agrarian party had come to be an inconvenience. Calles did not intend to prosecute his land program actively "for reasons of economy." An uncomfortable left wing was developing in the agrarian party which was preserving some contact with the Communists. And the rank and file of the peasants were far to the left wing of the political organization. More-

agrarian congress in the state of Zacatecas. From then on, the friction has grown continually, until an open rupture has become inevitable. Conciliation commissions have been named, but the labor party remains inflexible in insisting that the Mexican Federation of Labor (C. R. O. M., which has the same leaders as the labor party altho the majority of its masses are without political affiliation) should be the only organization to organize workers and peasants on

The left wing of the agrarian party is disintegrating along with the rest, a few of its elements gravitating toward the Communists but the rest, strangely enough, preparing to ally themselves with the next reactionary revolt that comes along.

THE dissolution of the agrarian party, the frankly anti-land-seizure policy of the labor party and the

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over, there was a manifest tendency on the part of the peasants (supported in this by the Communists) to form non-political organizations of economic attack and defense. (Non-political in the sense that they existed to get land, not to make deputies.)

THE agrarian party presented the additional disadvantage of organizing both political locals and peasants' leagues, and using its control of the local agrarian committees of the government to distribute land in such a way as to strengthen its political influence.

In April, matters came to a head when Morones, in the presence of the president and no doubt with his approval, attacked the agrarian party,

its policies and its "politicians" in an the economic field, whereas the labor and agrarian parties are to limit their activities to the parliamentary field. The negotiations continue, but the labor party continues seeking new allies in the agrarian field.

IN the meanwhile, the agrarian party is disintegrating rapidly as does every organization here that has lived from the government treasury when the government withdraws support. The fate of the labor party would be similar but much more rapid if Calles withdrew his support from it, for it has less masses, less social root and has done nothing for its members except distribute jobs.

Federation of Labor leaves the peasants with only one leader, the Communist Party of Mexico. This already has control of the two most powerful and best organized peasant leagues and is actively pushing its program of a national peasant economic organization not subordinated to any political party, the securing of land as its central objective. The national organizing committee and the League of Vera Cruz which is its backbone are affiliated with the Peasant International at Moscow. Its president is Uruslo Galvan, member of the executive of the Peasant International and member of the Communist Party of Mexico. reading.