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EDITORIAL

THE PARISIAN POSTAL STRIKE.

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EUROPEAN exchanges, freshly arrived, are all full of information upon the recent strike of the Parisian Postal employes. The one that summarizes the event completest is the Berlin *Vorwaerts* in a letter of its correspondent from Paris. The letter will be found in English in this issue. Indeed, it was an event—a great event.

The facts, the essential ones in the case, are these: The Postal and Telegraphic employes are under civil service rules. This notwithstanding, promotions and other good things had been falling more and more under the influence of the politicians in the parliament. As these dictated or wire-pulled, operatives were in increasing numbers appointed, promoted, or depressed. The head of the offending was Symian, the cabinet postal arm. Against this abuse the employes organized and struck. The Government felt instinctively what that meant, even if the strikers were not themselves, or all of them, aware thereof. It meant the forging of a link connecting the economic organizations of the employes of private employers with the employes of the State employer. Seeing that the Socialist afflatus inspired both organizations, the event meant to the political Government that which, to an army in the field, the junction of two opposing armies portends. Translated into the language of sociology, the event was a whistle of approaching revolutionary gale. All this the French capitalist Government felt instinctively. It felt it as instinctively as our own capitalist Government in Washington feels instinctively irritated at the organizations of its own employes, and at the activity manifested by the leaders of these. What is done regularly here, as Roosevelt (our chief of Cabinet) did more than once, to wit, speedily discipline by speedy dismissal of the active leader virtually for “treason,” could not be done by Clemenceau, the chief of the French Cabinet. The Government at first frowned; it was a bluff. It then temporized; and

finally, covering itself with a cloud of words, capitulated. Symian has to resign. The soldiers employed as scabs were ordered away and filed out. The strikers, marching four abreast, their Union cards pinned on their breasts, resumed their places. All this—meetings, discussions with the Government, processions, etc.,—taking place under the loud plaudits of Socialists in and out of Parliament, and every step managed with denunciation of “sabotage” (the slum practices of individual theft and crime), together with a degree of self-restraint that spoke volumes for the self-imposed discipline of the men, and for the level-headedness of the leaders, contributed mightily to impress the Government, the world.

It is not merely by reason of these features that the Parisian Postal strike assumes rank as an event. It assumes rank as an event especially by reason of two terms that it gave birth, or, rather, prominence to—and both of which illumine its essence.

The two terms are—*la Republique Syndicale* (the Trades Union, or the Economically Organized Republic) and the *Etat Patron* (the Employers’ State).

The oncoming Socialist Republic does not carry in its folds a Government by Socialists in the shoes of the capitalist politicians of piebald names who now occupy the seats. The Socialist State is a government constructed of the representatives of the Unions (*syndicats*) of all the directly or indirectly productive, or useful service occupations. Such a State is an industrial Republic, a *Republique Syndicale*. The obverse of this spells the overthrow of the existing and opposite composition of government implied in the term Political Government, or Political State, and referred to contemptuously during the Parisian strike as the *Etat Patron*. The two terms ring with the well-tuned treble of *Revolution*.

No wonder the Parisian Postal strike is electrifying the European Socialist Movement. May it also electrify the American—with shame for its backwardness, with ardor to leap to the leading place that its opportunities devolve upon it the duty to assume.

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