

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 18.

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DEMONSTRATE MAY FIRST!

No Pasaran!



May Day and American Labor

an editorial

MAY DAY—and in this lies its true significance—is no mere day of commemoration; the tradition of decades has made it the day on which the decisive events of the previous year of class struggle are reviewed in retrospect, the forces of the working class and of the other classes in society critically surveyed, and the prospects for the future realistically estimated. Utterly alien to the true spirit of May Day is the high-flown rhetoric, empty boasting and tawdry ballyhoo that only too often disfigure the occasion; the spirit of May Day is the spirit of militant realism, of responsible analysis and self-criticism, of the unconquerable determination to win!

* * *

The past twelve months have been truly a "wonderful year" in the annals of American labor, a year crucial in its far-reaching significance. For this year constituted one of those critical turning-points in history where the labor movement shifts abruptly to a new basis in order to meet new problems and fulfill new tasks. Such an historical turning point marked the transition from the Knights of Labor to the A. F. of L. fifty years ago; today it marks the rise of the C.I.O. as the dominant force in the labor movement. In the course of the last year, the C.I.O. emerged as the recognized leader and spokesman of labor in this country, marking out the channel in which the main stream of the labor movement will flow in the days to come.

Under the inspiration and leadership of the C.I.O., organized labor has stormed hitherto impregnable strongholds of big business. For the first time in our history, labor organization has reached the great basic industries of the country, the industries of mass-production and modern technology. A steel workers union with 300,000 members and recognition from United States Steel, an auto workers union with almost 300,000 members and recognition from General Motors and Chrysler, a powerful electrical workers union—it is not easy to appreciate what this means to a labor movement for decades limited to a few "sheltered" positions in the less developed sectors of the industrial front!

At bottom what the C.I.O. did in the past year was to help organized labor catch up, necessarily by forced marches, with the rapid progress of modern

industry. Business and government years ago adjusted themselves more or less thoroly to modern industrial conditions. Trusts, monopolies, and overhead control thru holding companies and other financial arrangements, are obviously the answer of the business interests to the new situation in industry. From the other side comes the New Deal, with its abandonment of the doctrine of "rugged individualism" in favor of a program of federal regulation of economic life. But until recently labor lagged far behind. The leaders of the A. F. of L. simply refused to see the handwriting on the wall; paralyzed in the grip of craft fetishism, they blindly opposed every effort to bring about the necessary changes in the organizational strategy and general philosophy of trade unionism. This is the immense task that has fallen to the C.I.O. as its great historical mission, and the past year has shown that the C.I.O. leadership is not only thoroly aware of its responsibility but is fully determined to live up to it.

The last twelvemonths witnessed an upsurge of labor in this country that is virtually without parallel. In practically every state and community, in practically every trade and industry, great masses of workers, hitherto indifferent or even hostile to the call of unionism, are awakening to the vital meaning of organization, are acquiring the first and most rudimentary elements of class consciousness, a new spirit of militancy and self-confidence is pervading the ranks of labor; new and more effective forms of struggle, such as the sit-down strike, are arising and spreading like wildfire. The air is electric, vibrant with hope and action—gone at last is the oppressively heavy, stagnant atmosphere of the first years of the economic crisis!

So mighty is this upsurge that it has flowed over into the political field as well. The past year witnessed what is exceedingly rare in our history: a simultaneous advance on the economic and political fronts. On the latter, progress has, of course, been much more elementary, uncertain and hesitating, but only the willfully blind can fail to see the great significance, as stages in the development of independent political action, of the emergence of Labor's Non-Partisan League and the American Labor Party of New York and even of labor's mobilization for court reform. Progress does not always take the

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Civil Rule in Madrid As Victories Relieve the City

Hard on the heels of unsubstantiated A.P. dispatches reporting widespread arrests and executions of anarchist opponents of the people's front policies in Madrid, comes a report now that General Miaja has been relieved of all authority in Madrid proper and a civilian municipal body composed of representatives of the parties of the people's front is being set up as the civilian government of Madrid.

This step is most probably intended to bolster the morale of the victorious anti-fascist militia and also to dramatize to the civilian population the fact that the military command considers Madrid as definitely relieved.

The fascists are trying desperately to rehabilitate a crumbling morale resulting from crushing de-

feats around Madrid and near Cordoba. Their answer has come in the form of a determined advance in the direction of Bilbao and in unrestrained bombardment of Madrid proper. Hundreds of civilians—women and children mainly—have been killed in the recent shelling.

The triumphant anti-fascist militia, encouraged by their victories and seeing the possible end of this bloody war in sight, are fighting with renewed heroism. Battling now in territory held by the fascists since the gates of Madrid were beleaguered, their progress is necessarily slow. The loyalists are also advancing on the Cordoba front and are about to close the pincers around Teruel.

The defense of Bilbao has been seriously hampered by the Franco-British blockade which has shut off the most necessary supplies.

MARCH WITH THE CPO ON MAY FIRST

The C.P.O. column of the United May Day Parade will form on 36th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. Friends and sympathisers are urged to turn out early.

C.P.O. members are asked to report at headquarters, 131 West 33rd Street, at 10 A.M. for special work.

Employer Terror Fails To Break Militant Strikes

A series of bitterly fought strikes are in process now in various sections of the country. The attempt to suppress the CIO supported strike of shoe workers in Maine by means of military rule is failing. If anything it has aroused the fighting spirit of the workers. A meeting of 5,000 strikers, with hundreds of others not admitted by troops, defied the injunction and the troops and pledged to continue the fight.

In Stockton, Cal. the strike of agricultural and cannery workers, during which the employers resorted to vigilante-terror resulting in the wounding of many strikers, has entered a new phase. Apparently yielding to employer demands, the State A. F. of L. has split up the strikers by chartering a separate organization of cannery workers.

The Brotherhood of Railway and

Steamship Clerks threatened a strike of 25,000 workers in New York. Federal intervention, it was expected, would delay strike action. In Richmond, Cal. the United Auto Workers succeeded in signing up the Ford plant which had been tied up by a sit-down. Guarantees against discrimination of union men and seniority rights were secured.

Contrary to the anti-union campaign of the entire capitalist press Oshawa auto workers consider the settlement of their strike as a victory for themselves and the CIO with which they are affiliated. At a mass meeting attended by several thousand workers a resolution pledging unqualified trust and confidence in the United Auto Workers Union and the CIO was unanimously carried. The meeting attacked the anti-labor press for its deliberate misrepresentation.

In the CPO Pre-Convention Discussion

The Major Issue Facing Our National Convention

By JAY LOVESTONE

WHEN our last convention was meeting, the corridors of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern had been scarcely swept, the full text of all the resolutions adopted was not yet available to us, and the new "general line" laid down for the various Communist Parties could only be seen in its contours. We did not hesitate to greet the signs of a break with leftist sectarianism. Likewise, we did not hesitate to point out the extremely serious dangers inherent in the new turn—to-

were so anxious to do everything in our power to check the ultra-right course and to do our share in aiding the Comintern to return finally to a sound Leninist strategic course that we spared no pain or effort, right after the Seventh Congress to seek communist unity on only one condition—the restoration of party democracy through the sections of the C.I. To our regret we must state frankly that events since the Seventh Congress have widened and not narrowed the gap between us and the Comintern. The very nature of the People's Front line, the manner in which the ultra-left line was dropped, the evolution of the un-communist outrageously reformist course replacing the theory and practice of social fascism and union-splitting, the increasingly harmful effect of the People's Front line on the new trade union policies of the CP, the combination of some of the most reprehensible features of the old line of ultra-leftism with the mania of people's frontism—are all important factors accounting for the sharpening of differences between us and the C.I. sections everywhere.

Here it is necessary to point out that, through the months which have elapsed since the Seventh Congress, we of the CPO have done everything possible to work together, in the most comradely manner, on a common constructive program in the mass organizations of labor—particularly in the trade unions. We hoped that such collaboration especially in the trade unions would help remove some of the bitterness that had been generated in the preceding years of faction conflict; we hoped thus to help the comrades of the C.P. learn how to discard their destructive methods of work, how to discontinue their attempts to transfer mechanically tactics from one country to another, to break with the practice of seeking to dominate and domineer mass organizations thru intrigue and manipulations. We do not regret a single step we have taken in this direction. Our convention should confirm this

Widening of Gap
It is in no small measure on this score that we sincerely warned against the line of the Seventh Congress being carried out to its logical conclusion as a break with the principles of communism in regard to the Marxist-Leninist teachings about the state and imperialist war. Moreover, it is because we

Fraternal Greetings
to American labor on May First in celebration of the great gains and far-reaching progress in organizing the unorganized and exploited toilers of this land.

DOLL AND TOY WORKERS UNION
LOCAL NO. 18230 A. F. of L.

●

A. ESPOSITO, Manager
E. DIANA, President

course and we should continue it with redoubled energy—despite the fact that all too often the CP has gone out of its way to make it impossible for such collaboration to materialize. In fact, it has been, generally speaking, only in those unions where the CPO forces were strong enough to insure collaboration that the CP has permitted or tolerated it to some satisfactory extent.

Trade Union Opportunism

In the auto situation, in the knitgoods workers' ranks, in the work among the unionized teachers, among some building trades sections, we have been treated to painful proof of the fact that the CP cannot for long continue to have a wrong political line without falling into a messy trade union situation. It would be neither palatable nor advisable to recite details in regard to the above-mentioned organizations and their problems. The workers who are members of these unions have painful knowledge of the truth of our contention. Carrying the line of the People's Front into the unions, CP members have desperately but systematically sought to form blocs with all sorts of unsavory elements, with rankstreak reactionaries—so long as they endorsed some party auxiliary or so long as they were ready to play ball in such a fashion as to aid CP members or followers win or get union posts. Only to the extent that the progressive forces have been strong enough, only in unions where we have had a sufficiently strong cadre of CPO forces with a highly experienced leadership have the CP members been drawn into some degree of effective collaboration on a sound program for union building. An example of this is the situation in Local 22. However, in those unions where the progressive forces, where the CPO ranks are weak, or where the CP members or followers already have the leadership of the unions, there we find a woefully different situation—either no effective collaboration or none at all.

I cannot emphasize too strongly that, nevertheless, none of these malpractices of the CP—malpractices which grow out of the very nature of the line of the party as well as the very nature of its inner organization regime—should make us waver for one moment from our course of seeking collaboration on the basis of a correct program of strengthening and building militant unionism with all forces in the unions regardless of the political belief or affiliation of the workers involved. This has been the policy of our group since its inception. This policy assumes additional importance especially because of the confusion of and gyrations by the CP in its attitude towards and evaluation of the CIO.

Face the American Scene

As to our future relationship with the Comintern, as to our attitude towards the social democratic parties and their Second International, I believe the draft resolution adopted at our last national conference should be finally endorsed. The events in Spain and France, the debacle suffered by the class conscious forces of labor in our last presidential election have further confirmed its essential soundness. The main problem with which our convention will have to grapple is the new and evermore in the American labor movement. Here we will deal primarily with the international, as well as Amer-

TRADE UNION NOTES

by George F. Miles

THE drive against the Wagner Labor Relations Act has begun with amazing speed, along two lines: first to invalidate certain features which might operate in the interest of labor, and secondly, to so interpret other phases of the Act as to make it a burden upon labor. A number of small strikes have been enjoined because the unions could not prove to the satisfaction of an unwilling judge that they represent a numerical majority of the workers involved. In Maine, the Wagner Act has been used against labor and the CIO. The National Manufacturers Association has come out with a statement insisting that the Act does not outlaw "plant unions"—a nice name for company unions.

All trade unions by means of reports to the state authorities. This anti-labor bill was opposed by organized labor. An example of union "responsibility" was provided by the state of Michigan which issued incorporation papers to "The American Labor League, a so-called labor organization. The nature of this organization can best be seen by the following remark of its founder: "Capital has been responsible through the years; it is time that labor did something to bear its share." The founder of this company outfit, like Mr. William Green, is opposed to the sit-down and hates communism. In fact the sit-down, he said, gave him the idea of a responsible incorporated union. President Homer Martin of the UAW referred to this organization as "an implement in the hands of the employers and of anti-union groups to defeat the labor movement."

Hopes that the Wagner Act will automatically outlaw company unionism will prove as ill-founded as in the case of the NIRA. Under the interpretation of the N.A.M. Loft's has just established a company union through its chain and is recruiting energetically.

The executive council of the A. F. of L., in session in Washington has taken one more step to estrange itself from the decisive sections of American labor. It denounced the CIO to the manufacturers and the government as "steeped in the cesspool of illegality and irresponsibility," and laid plans for a conference in Cincinnati on May 18 where plans for a "stop the CIO drive" will be discussed.

Questioned about the admission into the A. F. of L. of the infamous "blue card" organization (a company mob) of mill and smelter workers in Galena, Kansas, Green backed water on a previous positive statement and pleaded ignorance. In the Times of April 20 Louis Stark dispels all doubt about the character of this organization by stating that the "union" is "alleged by conciliators of the Department of Labor to be a company union."

Even as Green was mouthing "unity" talk his man-Friday Dillon was busting up the Georgia Federation of Labor which in the majority supported the CIO at its state convention last week. The supporters of the A. F. of L. withdrew and set up a dual organization.

The state legislature this week defeated the Wadsworth Bill which called for financial accounting of

ican, import of the CIO as the foundation of a new stage in the growth of the consciousness, militancy, and prowess of our working class. Here there may be involved more than one challenge to one fetish or another which some or all of us have worshipped or been oppressed by at one time or another in the course of our activities in the labor movement. There is much to re-examine as well as examine.

Objective and critical in our theoretical approach, practical and flexible in our tactical practice, free from dogma, devoid of all blind loyalty to the fetishism of person or premise, we cannot but make ourselves more effective workers in helping lay a sound foundation for a vigorous labor movement. This is the big need of the entire American working class. This is the big job for those who want to be worthy of being (as well as being called by themselves and others) communists. Here is the pivotal point of our coming convention and of the future of our organization and movement.

Seventeen hospital workers, of a group involved in a sit-down, have been found guilty of "impairing the lives of patients," which sounds extremely humanitarian except for the fact that it dooms to a condition of involuntary servitude all workers engaged work in this or similar fields. Besides, it destroys their right to organize in the sense that it makes it difficult to make their organized strength effective by strike action.

The labor movement must be aroused against this ruling which may have far reaching effects also on other unions.

The press brings reports that in Maine Power, Hapgood, William Mackesy and Ernest Henry were arrested in the course of a shoe strike, and that John D. Nolan defied an injunction. The arrest of Hapgood is news neither for him nor for us. We know him of old as a courageous scrapper for labor's cause, but the sight of Mackesy and Henry in a jail cell is an interesting picture indeed. Unless the writer is very much mistaken this is the first time in the last three decades that the union leaders in question have shown a spark of militancy.

If the CIO was able to get these boys into a jail cell then it certainly ought to be able to put the shoe bosses in their place.

Senator Julius S. Berg arose in the state senate to defend his bill which would restrict the A.L.P., and argued that far from suppressing minority parties it would serve as a "protection to legitimate and honest minorities." Tammany in the role of a defender of minorities is something new, incongruous and rather humorous.

I.L.G.W.U. President Dubinsky and vice-president Nagler have opened negotiations with the employers for an agreement covering 45,000 cloak makers. Demands include: 20% wage increase and 30 hour week. . . . The New York Joint Council of the Boot and Shoe Workers Union, suspended by President Mara of the A. F. of L. affiliate, have now resorted to court action in an attempt to secure reinstatement. . . . Brooklyn union painters are celebrating the arrest of Bugsy Goldstein, gangster, racketeer, who has plagued them plenty.

TWOC Contracts Now Cover 15,000

New York.—As 50 organizers of the Textile Workers Organizing Committee left Atlanta, Ga., to open the southern unionization drive from North Carolina to the Gulf, T. W. O. C. headquarters in New York announced that over 15,000 textile workers have already been covered by T. W. O. C. contracts.

The 15,000 were included in contracts with the Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Co. of Amsterdam, N. Y., and Thompsonville, Tenn. (6,500); Rosedale Knitting Co. of Reading, Pa. (2,500); Schlegel Mfg. Co. of Rochester, N. Y., (800); Louisville (Ky.) Textile Co. (800); Oakbrook Hosiery Mills of Reading, Pa. (900); hat-band manufacturers, 18 New Jersey concerns employing 1,000; the American Association for Hosiery Dyers & Finishers of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, 23 concerns employing 3,500 workers; and others.

Strikes were reported to have closed the Industrial Rayon Co. of Covington, Va., with 1,600 workers out, and Ballston Stillwater Knitting Co. of Ballston Spa, N. Y., with 1,000 out.

Sidney Hillman, director of the T.W.O.C., was scheduled to make the first of his planned visits of inspection to the various textile areas on April 11, when he will leave for New England.

UNIONS HIT HARVEY FOR STRIKE RULING

The hostile labor attitude adopted by Supreme Court Justice Mitchell May and Queens Borough President George U. Harvey in recent rulings and utterances in the strike of the American Newspaper Guild and the Etched Products, Inc., were strongly censured in resolutions adopted by the Provisional Labor Committee, an initiative group of six labor unions formed to protect labor's rights in the two boroughs.

A general call for all Brooklyn and Queens labor unions to participate in their work has been issued for May 22nd. The meeting will be held at 765 Broadway, Brooklyn.

MAY DAY GREETINGS
FROM UNITS OF THE C.P.O.

STRAWBERRY MANSION UNIT
Phila., Pa.

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Downtown Unit No. 1
New York **BOSTON, MASS.**

Downtown Unit No. 2
New York **MICHIGAN DISTRICT**

MILITANT TRADITIONS OF 1886 REVIVED BY C.I.O.

By GEORGE F. MILES

WRITING on this day—May First—our thoughts persist in drifting back to the first May First ever to be celebrated anywhere and by means of a general strike, too! No, it wasn't in England, nor in France, certainly not in "darkest Russia of the Czars," tho one would think so to hear our reactionaries tell about it. No, it all began right here in the good old U.S.A. even tho the labor's leaders later frowned on it and sought to deny it.

The first convention of the National Labor Union (1866) under the leadership of the far-seeing William H. Sylvius, adopted a resolution which said in part: "The first and great necessity of the present, to free labor of this country from capitalist slavery, is the passing of a law by which 8 hours shall be the normal working day in all states in the American union. We are resolved to put forth our strength until this glorious result is attained."

But Sylvius died long before this resolution became a potent force in the first great upsurge of American labor—the fighting days of 1886. It remained to the astute Sam Gompers to realize the power of this weapon, dormant almost twenty years. At the convention of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada (the forerunner of the A. F. of L.) in 1884, the Sylvius resolution was revived in the following form:

"Resolved by the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, that eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from May First 1886, and that we recommend to labor organizations throughout their jurisdiction that they so direct their laws as to conform to this resolution by the time named."

This daring step by an organization numbering a mere 50,000 was the making of the A. F. of L. and the final undoing of the Knights of Labor. For, while the former, under Gompers, sensed the rising wave of working class revolt, saw the constantly increasing number of strikes, and also the increasing number of workers involved in these widespread movements of protest against intolerable long hours, the latter (the Knights), with a membership of

almost 250,000, was extremely suspicious of the eight-hour day movement because it originated with Gompers' organization and was rather lukewarm in its response. Gompers was too keen not to see his advantage and under his pressure the Knights of Labor finally endorsed the May First general strike publicly, but sabotaged it privately with great energy.

The resulting general strike, in which participated some 500,000 workers, many of whom actually did win the eight-hour day, ultimately was decisive in establishing the prestige of the A. F. of L. and in leading to the downfall of the Knights of Labor.

Which brings us to the present situation in our own labor movement. Now as then, the main drive of labor is not for wage increases, altho in the present situation these have not been rare as attempts to stave off unionization. Where the 8-hour day was the main issue then, the legalization of the trade unions and collective bargaining are the bones of contention today. Both movements came after an economic crisis with unemployment severe—chronic in the present case. The treachery of the Knights of Labor in the general strike of 1886 finds a striking historical counterpart in the A.F.L.'s knifing the sit-down strikes used by the Committee for Industrial Organization, and conspiring with the class enemy in the course of the major strikes conducted by the CIO.

of L. increased its membership manifold but also the Knights of Labor grew. During the year of 1886 the membership of the Knights of Labor jumped from 200,000 to 700,000. But it was no sign of health. It was rather like the flush of a consumptive, a harbinger of an early doom. The Knights began a precipitate decline from which they never recovered, altho they lingered upon the labor scene for some years.

So it is today. The CIO has breathed life into hitherto lifeless organisms such as the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin, which numbers 300,000, has made a robust and fighting union, 300,000 strong, out of the sickly and insignificant auto workers union inherited from the Dillon days of A. F. of L. rule. In short, it has already organized about one and a half million workers in mass production industries and is bettering its hold among the initial unions which numbered over a million when suspended from the A. F. of L.

The A. F. of L. also claims growth and it probably did grow, even if its claims are rather immodest. But the coming few years will tell the story, just as it did in the case of the Knights. The A. F. of L. has grown in the past—remember the war period growth—but it could not hold the masses. Organized as it is today it cannot be the medium for the retention of any large groups of workers from mass production industries. It is particularly in this field—where the largest and most decisive sections of American labor are located—that the CIO is showing its greatest capacities for leadership.

Even in minor details the present situation in the labor movement recalls some interesting sidelights during the days of 1886. The Wolls and Greens and Freys have leveled the charge against Lewis that he has opened wide the doors of the CIO for radicals of all sorts. It is not without interest that the Green's of another day could have made the same charge against Sam Gompers with much greater justification. Sam was not above harnessing the most extreme radicals of his day behind his program when he thought he had something to gain thereby. He says in his autobiography:

"As plans for the 8-hour movement developed we were constantly realizing how we could widen our purpose. As the time of the meeting of the International Working-

MAY DAY GREETINGS
from the
Lithuanian Workers Society
National Committee
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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men's Congress (Socialist International—GFM) in Paris approached, it occurred to me that we could aid our movement by an expression of world-wide sympathy from that congress."

And how can we close a discussion on May First 1886 without remembering those indomitable and heroic figures—the Chicago anarchists Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel—who died upon the gallows for a crime committed by police provocateurs. The victims of the Haymarket Affair were in the forefront of the struggle for the 8-hour day and were framed on the bombing charge for this very reason. The movement for the 8-hour day had to be halted. The bomb outrage was the means of fanning into flames a veritable lynch campaign against militant labor. Unfortunately it succeeded. The leaders of labor, including Sam Gompers, refused to lift a finger in their behalf and permitted them to be hung without their protest.

May First this year will walk boldly into many a town and village where it dared not show its face in years gone by. For in these company havens the thug, the deputy and the stool-pigeon ruled supreme, and the worker walked the streets slightly bent forward, hardly daring to take a deep breath. Into these terrorized working class communities has come the CIO, smashing the company unions, driving the rats into their holes, organizing the masses of toilers. With a new courage the workers proudly walk the streets, displaying their union buttons, conscious of their collective strength. May First dawn upon the American workers on the march after so many years of deep if restless sleep. The workers everywhere are marching forward increasingly conscious of the need of independent political as well as economic action, fired by a feeling of invincibility and determined to win a better day for themselves.

WE GREET WORKERS AGE

the outstanding voice of progressive labor thought in this country. May First, 1937, finds the working class in this country marching forward towards progressivism.

We know that the WORKERS AGE will, in the future, as it has in the past, continue to educate and assist the working class in their forward march.

Furriers Progressive League

Greetings to the
WORKERS AGE
A Group of Workers of Local 9, I.L.G.W.U.

WORKERS AGE

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MAY DAY AND AMERICAN LABOR

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course we may map out for it in advance in our own minds, nor does it always proceed straight to its goal; it is often necessary to probe a little beneath the surface to detect the inner meaning, the objective logic of events and tendencies.

In so provincial a country as ours, it is surely worth noting the increased interest in and understanding of world problems manifested in the ranks of labor in recent times. John L. Lewis's great address at the anti-Nazi meeting in New York is of far more than individual significance; it is the reflection of a movement. Nor can we ignore the splendid manner in which the more advanced sections of the labor movement in this country responded to the call of underground Germany, to the appeal of the masses of workers and peasants locked in a death struggle with fascism in Spain. Slowly but surely, American labor is rising to its own proper stature!

The past year has been one of vigorous offensive on the part of the working class, sweeping away all obstacles before it. But now the counter-offensive of the employing class is beginning to form. It would be a gross and suicidal error to imagine that big business has already been defeated, or even that it is in full retreat. The American bourgeoisie is still the most powerful and most firmly entrenched ruling class in the world, while labor is only beginning to gather its forces and equip itself for effective struggle. A series of major encounters have indeed been won and a number of very important positions occupied—but the big battles are still ahead!

The growing counter-offensive of capital is apparently assuming a number of different forms. But most menacing is surely the drive for the governmental regulation of unions. Under the shabby, fraudulent slogan of union "responsibility," a concerted and well-planned campaign is now beginning to get under way in the states and in Washington to bring about the legal strangulation of the labor movement in some form or other, thru incorporation, financial control, registration, restriction of the right to strike or picket, even compulsory arbitration. It is hardly necessary to point out that such legislation, essentially an aspect of fascist "coordination," would lead to the destruction of the class independence of the unions and their emasculation as economic organizations of the workers. If labor is to beat back this grave menace, it must not make the least concession to the idea of government control or regulation; it must mobilize its forces for determined resistance now, without delay!

It is of great importance to note that the counter-offensive of the employing class bids fair to take form under cover of the Wagner Act. This piece of legislation is far from the new "magna carta" of labor that it is sometimes pictured as being. If properly utilized by a vigilant, aggressive and self-reliant labor movement, it may be made to yield considerable advantage; at the same time, however, it bears within itself serious dangers which we can ignore only at our peril. On the very day (April 12) that the Supreme Court validated the Wagner Act, Earl F. Reed, counsel for the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation, somewhat maliciously pointed out that "the decision cuts both ways. Where the union is the minority group, it will have no rights to bargain, even for its own members." This was not only a forecast; it was also a program. Four days later, in St. Louis, United States District Judge Moore granted a temporary injunction, later set aside, to restrain the clerks, cooks and waiters unions from picketing the Kresge and McCrory stores, on the ground that, since (in his opinion) these unions did not have a majority of the workers in their ranks, such picketing was a violation of the Wagner Act! Less than two weeks later, on April 20, in Maine, Supreme Court Justice Harry Manser invoked the Wagner Act as ground for issuing a temporary injunction declaring "illegal" the strike of the United Shoe Workers against certain firms at Lewiston and Auburn. And this is only the beginning! Need we recall that the NRA, with its Section 7a, soon became the "National Run-Around" for the steel, auto and textile workers?

Another, even more subtle danger lurks in the (Continued on Page 7)

THE UNITED FRONT IN GREAT BRITAIN

By JIM CORK

THE history, character and tactical wisdom of the formation of the united front in England between the Communist Party, Independent Labor Party and the Socialist League are questions of importance for workers elsewhere. The matter uncovers basic issues which have periodically agitated the left wing in England ever since the formation of the Communist Party of England in the days following the war.

The united front has now been in existence for about three months. Its declared general purpose was to hasten working class unity around a forthright program of struggle against the Tory National Government. The joint manifesto which was issued stressed: "... unity of struggle against fascism, reaction and war, and against the National Government, unity in the struggle for immediate demands and the return of a Labour Government as the next stage in the advance to working class power." It was specifically stressed that the unity desired was "... unity inside the Labor Party."

In the period of negotiations prior to the definite formation of the joint action bloc, the C.P. characteristically tried to place the entire movement on a people's front basis, throwing forth the slogans of:

1. Defense of democracy against the fascist war instigators.
2. For democratization of the army.
3. For collaboration with the liberals.

These proposed slogans were due chiefly to the opposition of the I.L.P. All references to peoples front directives were stricken out and a program stressing united front activity around immediate working class demands was adopted. It was agreed that the contracting parties have the right to stress their own specific program, including the right to criticize the others (tho the C.P. originally proposed a non-aggression pact type of agreement). After these matters were jointly agreed upon, they were approved by the three organizations; unanimously, by the Central Committee of the C.P.; 56 to 38 by a delegated conference of the Socialist League; and by the I.L.P. with the following two reservations as a condition of I.L.P. participation:

1. "The I.L.P. has not been prepared to affiliate to the Labor Party until democratization of its constitution and structure has taken place."
 2. "The I.L.P. maintains its opposition to working class reliance upon the League of Nations, the collective system of peace and military pacts between capitalist government, and its disagreement with the policy of the Soviet Government in these respects..."
- These reservations were accepted by the other two parties.

The reaction of the official bureaucracy of the Labor Party was quite in the traditional style. The Socialist League the only one of the three parties affiliated to the Labor Party was expelled on the technical ground of violation of Labor Party decisions ament cooperation with "enemy" organizations, i.e., C.P. and I.L.P. A policy of support and collaboration with the imperialist masters is more palatable to the Attlees, Daltons, Bevins, Citrines, than collaboration with the left wing of the working class. Sir (!) Walter Citrine can speak on the same platform with the Tory, Winston Churchill, in support of the rearmament plans of British Imperialism, but to speak on the same platform with the I.L.P. or C.P. merits expulsion!

The expulsion of the Socialist League was, of course, praised by all the Tory newspapers and politicians. The labor bureaucrats were patted on the back for preserving the front of the "... moderate democratic element in British labor" against the naughty extremists. On the other side, the unity campaign has found support amongst many local labor parties, trade unions, central bodies, outstanding trade unionists and left wing intellectuals.

In spite of this fact, it is the opinion of the writer that, from a tactical point of view, the launching of the unity campaign, at this time and in this manner, was definitely wrong.

Questionable Tactic

There can be no short cut to prosperity for the English working class. The main base of the English proletariat is the Labor Party. Until the majority of the Labor Party is won for revolutionary action it will be impossible to win the majority of the English working class and therefore revolution will be impossible. In view of the peculiar character of the Labor Party, an organization containing the trade unions and other working class organizations on a federated basis, it is not only permissible but necessary for left wing political organizations to fight for affiliation with freedom to criticize and to pursue their own independent policies. That was the perspective of Lenin in 1920. That perspective is just as correct today. That the bureaucrats will resist with all the means at their command is to be expected. A successful fight against them will undoubtedly be a slow painful process. The self-experience of the masses gained under the impact of world developments will decide in the end. Until such time, the revolutionists must maintain tenaciously what base they have inside and seek to extend it further. Only this can reduce to a minimum the time until the battle is won.

The left wing organizations undoubtedly had correct ends in view in launching their unity campaign, (Continued on Page 7)

Lambda

EUROPE TODAY

English "Observers" Watch Italian Troop Go By; Repression In France

BY this time it is quite clear that England and France's double-dealings in Spain will continue, unchanged, even in case Mussolini sends additional troops. Mussolini was merely given to understand that he has to render his support to Franco a bit more discreetly so that the position of British and French governments does not become too difficult in the eyes of their respective "public opinions"—in other words: so that the betrayal of the English and the French masses can be continued with impunity. Grandi's behavior on the London Committee is explicable only if we surmise that England's consent to Italian intervention in Spain was part of the Anglo-Italian "gentlemen's agreement."

The crisis in the Catalan Government is still unsettled at the moment of this writing. It was obviously produced by the resistance of the anarcho-syndicalists against the steady gains of the counter-revolution, and its purpose is to clear this resistance out of the way. Whether this can be accomplished remains to be seen. In any event the anarcho-syndicalists are becoming much more persistent in their demand that a stop be put to these everlasting concessions to the bourgeois republicans and the reformists.

THE NEW PHASE OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN FRANCE

1) The government is conducting raids and confiscations among the Anarchists and Trotskyites, etc., and the Socialist Party of France has taken measures to suppress opposition in its own ranks. Publication of the newspaper of the (left) Socialist Youth, "The Young Guard" has been suspended by order of the party.

2) The district leaders of the SPF have given instructions to curb all public demonstrations of any kind. This means that the workers renounce the exercise of their democratic rights, while, on the other hand, the fascists can carry on without any interference. One is justified in describing this as the self-abolition of bourgeois democracy.

3) The Senate, before going into its Easter adjournment, pigeon-holed a string of social-political bills on its agenda.

Thus a new technique in cheating the masses has been introduced. The Chamber passes bills and thinks nothing of it if the Senate sabotages them, or vice-versa. And it looks as though this new technique in cheating the people were founding quite a school.

Incidentally this practice will cause further contempt for the parliamentary form of government.

THE EXPULSION OF CRIPPS

The first reaction to the Socialist League's campaign for a united front was that the leadership of the Labour Party expelled the Socialist League as a fraction from its ranks. Partisans of the Socialist League, however, were allowed to remain in the Labour Party as individual members. After this initial step, the leadership of the Labour Party sat back and watched the effect. And now it has boldly proceeded and expelled from the Labour Party Sir Stafford Cripps, the leader of the Socialist League, even as an individual member. A move which proves that the endeavor of the CP, the ILP, and the Socialist League to form a united front was a futile undertaking and left the rank and file of the Labour Party and trade unions quite cold. The campaign was an artificial one and started off on the wrong foot. Necessary preparations among the trade unions had been neglected.

THE ITALO-JUGOSLAV TREATY

This pact receives a peculiarly contradictory evaluation from the English and the French press. The English press approves of it unanimously. The French press partly claims that the treaty is breaking up the Little Entente, or else it finds it innocuous. This contradiction is explained by the fact that the treaty came about under the prominent guidance of English Diplomacy and complies with all its wishes. Under English pressure Mussolini had to make important concessions to Jugoslavia.

THE PAPAL ENCYCLICAL

Following the encyclical against communism the Vatican issued an encyclical against the violation of the concordat by the Nazis. This second encyclical, (Continued on Page 7)

THE SPIRIT OF MAY FIRST, 1937

Unionization of the Mass Production Industries

PHILIP MURRAY, a leader of the miners who did a remarkable job in organizing steel workers and signing up steel firms.



Right: John L. Lewis the man behind the great drive to organize America's unorganized millions. Left: Homer Martin, president of the powerful United Automobile Workers. Below: A meeting of 200,000 auto workers in Cadillac Square, Detroit, pledging to fight for their union.



JOHN BROPHY, Director of the CIO. Calmly he goes about building the foundation for a new, militant trade union movement.



SIDNEY HILLMAN, transfers his activity from the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of which he is president, to the Textile Workers Organization Committee which he now heads.



DAVID DUBINSKY, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, is ready with a helping hand, be it steel, textile, the labor party, or the cry of the Spanish workers for help.



Left to right: JULIUS HOCHMAN, head of N. Y. Dress Joint Board and member of SWOC. A. PHILIP RANDOLPH, president of Sleeping Car Porters, one of the youngest of international unions. CHARLES ZIMMERMAN, Manager Local 22 ILGWU and representative to Textile Workers Organizing Committee.



Below: Part of a huge crowd of workers enjoying their lunch while "sitting down." The sit-down proved to be a most valuable instrument in the drive of the mass production workers for unionization and union recognition.



The Law under arms in Flint. How the workers made them run!



HARVEY FREMMING, heads the drive in the oil industry meeting stiff opposition from bosses and A. F. of L.



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Local 22's Progressive Role Hailed by Dubinsky

An enthusiastic tribute was paid by President David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union to Dressmakers Union Local 22 before 6,000 dressmakers attending the huge installation meeting of the Local at the Hippodrome on Monday evening, April 19. In the course of a spirited address, in which he recounted the past achievements and the present struggles of the I.L.G.W.U., Mr. Dubinsky declared amidst thunderous applause:

"Local 22 is the true mirror of our International Union. If our Union represents aggressiveness, if our Union represents militancy, it is represented in Local 22. If our Union represents high standards, it is again represented in Local 22. If our Union represents efficient management, proper care for the needs of the membership, proper attention to complaints, it is represented in Local 22. If our Union represents no distinction between race or creed, no discrimination, equality of all groups and nations, it is truly represented in Local 22. If our Union represents interest in independent political action, and not only interest but initiative and activity and service, it is represented in Local 22. If our Union represents interest in the field of education so as to advance our membership to greater militancy and consciousness, a more developed membership and a more experienced leadership, if our Union is interested in classes, recreational activities, social activities, it is represented in Local 22 more than in any other local. If our Union is interested in new slogans, new ideas, you don't have to go anywhere else—you will find it in Local 22. If our Union is interested in organizing the workers in the steel industry, in the automobile industry, you don't have to go anywhere for greater interest than in Local 22. If our Union is interested in aiding the victims of fascism, the victims of Nazism, if our Union is interested in helping those who fight for labor and sacrifice their lives, you will find this interest in our Union but you will find it in Local 22. In Local 22 you have everything our Union stands for. You may have other locals that are in the same situation, some to a greater degree, some to a smaller degree—Local

22 is devoted to the whole program with all their hearts and souls. It is, therefore, a great pleasure to me to have this occasion to greet the administration of Local 22, to greet the membership of this splendid, energetic, loyal, devoted and faithful local of our International Union!"

Just before the official installation of the new administration at the hands of President Dubinsky, Julius Hochman, general manager of the Dressmakers Joint Board, impressively described the upsurge of labor organization thruout the country and the active role that the dressmakers union was playing in this great movement.

Charles S. Zimmerman, reelected manager of the Union, made the keynote address. He called attention to the effective manner in which the pledges made at the last installation meeting in 1935 had been carried out in the two years following—the achievement of some of the main demands of the Union in the new collective agreement without the necessity of a strike, the unification of the ranks of the Union as expressed in the newly elected administration, and the increasingly active role of the Union as a force for progressivism in the trade union movement.

Zimmerman then examined the new tasks facing the dressmakers in the coming period in their own trade as well as in the general labor movement. He paused with special emphasis on the necessity of rallying behind the C.I.O. and its wonderful work of organizing the mass-production industries, as well as on the duty of American labor to come to the aid of the Spanish people in their heroic struggle against the hordes of fascism. "Our immediate task right now," he declared, "is to help our Spanish fellow-workers who are fighting in the trenches against fascism. We have had several campaigns in our Union to raise funds to help the fighting Spanish fellow-workers beat the hordes of Mussolini, Hitler and Franco. The war is still on. Today the army of the working class is marching on; Franco is suffering one defeat after the other. This was made possible as a result of the help given to them by the international working class. Our dressmakers and the International

POUM and the Middle Class

This article is reprinted from the "Spanish Revolution," English organ of the POUM. In view of the slogan "Win the Middle Class," utilized by the reformists to renounce the program of the proletarian revolution, this discussion is of great importance.

IN our struggle for the revolution a factor of the utmost importance is to win the so-called middle class to our cause. In every country the conquest of this intermediate and oscillating class is attempted in the struggle between the capitalists and the workers. This is especially true in the concrete case of Spain, where the middle class is of great specific importance, where it is of a greater size than the working class. And it can be said in general, that the working class cannot triumph completely if it fails to win the middle class to its cause. That is, then, the problem in Spain. Nevertheless, how can we win over the middle class, how can we succeed in attracting them to our camp, how can we utilize them as an auxiliary force without falling under their domination?

The middle class is incapable of realizing an independent policy as can the capitalists and the working class. Their role in history has been reduced to that of an auxiliary agent, although an agent of primary importance. So they are either following the workers or supporting the capitalists. All their intentions of working as an independent force, all their attempts to restore a liberalism where free competition would guide economic policies and all their attempts to conciliate the two fundamental classes now disputing for power have been crowned with more and more open disaster.

Capitalism Must Be Smashed

The most characteristic feature of the middle class is its repug-

are again beginning a campaign to raise funds for hospitals and food for our Spanish fellow-workers. At tonight's installation meeting many of the chairmen were notified that we would prefer that, instead of sending flowers, they should better send a contribution for our Spanish brothers and sisters. As a result of this, although no published appeal was made, at tonight's meeting we have already received an amount close to \$2,500. The new administration not only wants to raise funds for Spain but we want to raise enough money to establish a Local 22 unit for a hospital in Spain so that we can help the Spanish workers beat fascism." Zimmerman's remarks were thruout interrupted by enthusiastic applause.

The meeting was presided over by Pearl Halpern, chairman of the outgoing Executive Board. The new chairman elected is Minnie Lurye, an active young dressmaker, representative of the best forces among the newer membership of the Union.

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nance of any events of a social character which might be called disorderly or disturbing. All its policies can be reduced to the clamour for a state of order where there would be no signs of class conflict. The middle class does not understand that all of these disorders and disturbances are always the direct consequences of the economic chaos which reigns in our present society, that is to say, an immediate reflection of the anarchy of the capitalist system. For this reason one of the most immediate objectives of the revolutionary proletariat is to bring this class to see that as capitalism is a state of extreme chaos and economic disorganization, only socialism represents order. The order of socialism must be described as one based on a preconceived, planned economy, one where the established plan corresponds at any given moment to the necessities of the community, but not to those of a group or groups of capitalists who work solely for their private gain.

We must, then, win to our cause, to the cause of the revolution, the so-called middle class. How? We must make them see that faced with all kinds of solutions, more or less utopian, the working class has concrete methods for solving each and every one of these problems. They must be made to understand that the solution to their problems, that the order and social peace to which they aspire, can only be found through a change in the present economic structure, that is to say, by the way of the revolution. We must demonstrate to them that we, the revolutionary working class, are not going against their present interests, against their present ways of life, against their small shop or industry. The transition to socialism cannot be made suddenly, avoiding the necessary intermediate steps. For this reason the working class in power cannot precipitate an inopportune socialization without studying the problem, but at the first can take over only the most easily socialized and important industries. At this moment it can only go—and this is a more than sufficient guarantee of the revolution—as far as the socialization of the heavy industry, transportation, the large commercial enterprises and, above all, banking. Socialization of the small industries and shops does not interest us because it would result in economic damage and occasion much waste. Since it would cost more to socialize these small industries than to let them remain as private property, it would be better to incorporate them into the socialized sector when the time arrives by means of agreement and by the example of a better way

Railway Trainmen Support Sit-Downs

Cleveland, Ohio.—A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, in a telegram to President Roosevelt urged him to ignore attacks against sit-down strikes, especially the expressions of Lowell "and other reactionary Bostonians."

"Lowell never condemned lawless employers who maintain arsenals, spies and thugs to destroy labor's legal democratic rights," Mr. Whitney's telegram reads. "He did not protest lawlessness when employers' lawyers brazenly told employers to ignore the Wagner Labor Act."

Whitney denied that sit-down strikes have involved violence and bloodshed. "Those are the very things these strikes avoid."

of living.

Stating the problem in its essence and in the light of Marxism, it would not be difficult to realize an authentically revolutionary policy which would attract the middle class to our cause. So far so good, but it is one thing to attract the middle class to the revolution, and another to form a coalition with them in the interests of the capitalists. That is why we were against the Popular Bloc and against the Republican parties, which, in general, have done little from April 1931 up to the present but betray the interests of the middle class itself. We oppose giving the middle class a decisive role as a governing force which would allow then to act as the agents of the capitalists, but we uphold their economic claims and the solution of their interests within the framework of the revolution. In this statement there is not the slightest equivocation or the least duplicity. And we interpret in this manner, not only the classical policies of Lenin, but also the sentiments of the working class in the interests of the revolution.

From this explanation which we have given of our policy respecting the middle class our objectives can be deduced: socialization of the heavy industry and the large commercial enterprises, of transportation and especially banking.

All political liberties are nothing, and are doomed to disappear, if they are not guaranteed by social emancipation and economic guidance. For this reason the question of power appears again a stark necessity. Only a government of the workers, surging from their own revolutionary depths, can forge an adequate instrument; only this kind of a government can emancipate the working class and the middle class and only such a government can lead us to victory and to socialism. Only one government: a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

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