

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 6.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1937.

5 Cents a Copy

Steel Barons Break Pact In Captive Mines

Mine Union's Demand For Added Assessment In Check-Off Vetoed

The steel barons made another move which they falsely hope will put a spike into the CIO drive to unionize the industry.

In the "captive mines," that is coal mines owned directly by the steel companies, the United Mine Workers has established the check-off method of collecting union dues and assessments. Last week a request was made by the union to raise the monthly assessment per worker from 50 cents to one dollar, in order to "replenish its reserves."

The steel companies immediately raised a hue and cry about being asked to assist in financing a drive against themselves. They maintained that while they did not object to unionization in their coal fields, they would not let it penetrate to the steel mills. This of course is sheer nonsense. The defiance of the union and their contract in this matter shows that this to be part of the whole open-shop movement, this time directed against the Mine Workers, backbone of the CIO. And of course these gentlemen accept unionization of the coalfields for the simple reason that the union is strong enough to force their "acceptance."

Twenty-five thousand miners are employed in these "captive mines." The union has declared that a violation of contract is involved which will not be taken lying down.

Three Hundred Million For Steel Expansion

Plans to greatly expand capital outlay were made by the steel industry for 1937, the American Iron and Steel Institute reports.

While the moguls of the industry spend millions on labor espionage and anti-union activities, they still find enough available money to increase the installation of equipment by 45% over last year, an estimated outlay of 300 million dollars.

They oppose the granting of decent wages and living conditions to the workers, but the orders are coming in and must be met. They fire men for belonging to the union, but they are installing new

GM Bolts Confab with Perkins; Union's Strike Strength Grows

Plan to Push Injunction

Workers In Open Plant Declare Solidarity With Auto Union

General Motors Corporation continued its rock-bound opposition to meeting with the representatives of the workers in its plants. Alfred P. Sloan conferred with Secretary Perkins, after the latter had denounced the attitude of GM and had demanded subpoena powers in industrial crises. The conference, however, was merely a strategical gesture, for while Mrs. Perkins believed a settlement was forthcoming, Sloan phoned from New York that there was nothing doing.

Increasing violence has marked GM's bitter anti-unionism, and it is now preparing to fight the sit-downers with force, backed of course by the "impartial" injunction method. Union organizers were slugged into unconsciousness in Anderson, Indiana, and elsewhere.

Troops have not yet been removed from Flint and so long as they remain the probabilities of an "incident" are inherent in the case.

The demand for subpoena powers for the Department of Labor comes apparently in a pro-labor guise, yet it contains within it too many dangers for it to be acceptable to the labor movement. Canada and many Scandinavian countries are cursed with like forms of compulsory arbitration and their labor movements are shackled because of it. It can only mean harm to the independence of the trade unions.

John L. Lewis, speaking at a dinner in New York, declared that the Morgans and the DuPonts are the real opponents of the CIO drive, being the financial masters of General Motors and the steel industry. "They can restore peace in Michigan and elsewhere tomorrow if they will, but they have preferred up to this time to pit their billions of dollars against the workers," he said.

blast furnaces, new open hearth furnaces, and many technical improvements.

Union Control Of Speed-Up, Better Wages Needed by All Auto Workers

By JOSEPH BROWN

The series of sit-down strikes that have occurred in several plants of the General Motors Corporation have practically crippled the output of its most important products. Over 100,000 workers are now out on strike, either by occupation of the plant as in the case of Fisher Bodies or by mass picketing in the case of Cadillac. This spreading of the strike wave, in so short a time and with such surprising rapidity, has left both the labor movement and the general public in a breathless state. It is perhaps the first time in the history of American labor that there has been such a mass response in the form of sit-downs. Perhaps the most outstanding fact is that the uprising has come somewhat spontaneously and not as a direct result of organization work. But the Auto Union did seize this opportunity to direct and give leadership to the thousands of workers who revolted against General Motors exploitation. These strikes that have occurred in Detroit, Lansing, Flint, and Cleveland will go down as great landmarks in the rise of militant industrial unionism against one of the decisive strongholds of monopoly, finance-capital.

High Profit Rate

The heroic struggles in Flint and the marvelous demonstration of courage and labor solidarity at the Briggs plant give one a sense of confidence in the outcome of this great struggle to organize the mass production industries. The workers have become aroused to a great sense of indignation against the policies of a corporation, which has been able to accumulate such a great mass of capital at the ex-

Tarrytown Auto Workers Answering Union's Call

Tarrytown, N.Y.—4,000 workers employed in the Chevrolet and Fisher Body plants here are responding to the call of the auto union despite severe intimidation from company and municipal officials. Plant officials are striving to organize a duplicate of the strike-breaking Flint alliance but nothing has come of this plan to date.

Attempting to kill the marked success of the Union in recruiting workers, plant officials "retaliated" by forcing workers to sign pledges against participation in strikes and "outside" unions. When workers showed reluctance to sign, the straw bosses exploded threateningly with, "It looks like you don't want to work here!" Plant reports boasted of 90% of the employees signing the pledges. This percentage was revealing in view of the fact that the Union did not ask workers to jeopardize their positions by refusing to sign.

pense of the living conditions of the automobile workers. This fact seems to be central throughout the strike: the glaring division between the vast returns to the employers and the slim wages of the employees. Behind the whole fight for collective bargaining is the realization that the workers have got to counter the strength of the bankers with an organization that can have something to say about a better distribution of the income of General Motors. While the average weekly wage, as stated by Mr. Knudsen, is \$22 and \$28 for the years of 1935 and 1936, respectively, for General Motors employees, the profit for General Motors in 1935 was \$167,000,000. It has been pointed out by the Research Department of the Automobile Union that General Motors could have paid its 211,100 employees "enough to bring their income for the year up to \$2,000 and still have had \$72,000,000 left to distribute as dividends to stockholders." For the year of 1936, it has been estimated that General Motors' profit per employee will be about \$1,000, which is an increase of 100,000%

(Continued on Page 2)

Soviet Union Doooms Plotters

The appeals for clemency made by thirteen self-confessed conspirators in Soviet Russia, were denied by the Central Committee. Four others, including Radek and Sokolnikov, have been spared from facing the firing squad. It is expected that Radek will be used as state's witness in future trials, which, it is rumored, are now being prepared.

The trials ended last week with the accused denouncing Trotskyism and pleading for a chance to work honestly for the Soviets. However, that feature of the Zinoviev-Kamenev trials, last minute adulation of Stalin, was not present.

Large demonstrations were held in Russia against the conspirators.

Hitler Renews Offer of Anti-Soviet Front

Reiterates Demands For Colonies and Upholds Aid to Franco

The fourth year of Hitler's reign of terror over the German workers, peasants and lower middle classes was marked by a speech in which Der Fuehrer returned some of the courtesies extended to him by the democratic Mr. Eden of Great Britain and the socialist premier Leon Blum of France.

While "everybody" found the speech "conciliatory," one day's reflection sufficed for Frederick Birchall, writing in the New York Times, to state: "Thus all questions are not only not settled but are practically as far from settlement as they ever were."

What is "conciliatory" is the attitude of the democratic capitalist powers, who listen with ever more interest to Hitler's proposals for an anti-Soviet bloc. Conciliation is greatly expedited by the money which Great Britain is pumping into the Reich's tottering financial organism, and the promises of such aid which may cover already existing secret deals, given to Hitler by Blum, last week.

Hitler changed nothing. His aid to the Spanish fascist insurgents is glorified, the struggle for colonies is no longer merely an agitation shriek but is referred to in a suspiciously business-like manner, suggesting some assurances. Now that the Rhineland is reoccupied, he promises no more "surprises!"

The brutal oppression of the labor movement continues in Nazi Germany and for it there is no conciliation.

Yvon Delbos, foreign minister of people's front France, accepted everything Hitler said at face value. He made a short reference to co-operation with Soviet Russia as a kind of reassurance—which in view of past performance cannot be taken too seriously. As for Spain and peace, Delbos now made the startling discovery that Hitler and France have the same viewpoint on both questions. Different promises lead them to the same conclusion as regards Spain (!) and they merely practice different tactics to prevent war. Thus the "bitter antagonism" between democracy and fascism expresses itself in world politics.

REFEREE DECLARES MOONEY TRIAL JUST!

Despite the turnabout and exposed perjury of many witnesses, the introduction of new evidence proving much testimony against him to be false, and even the publication of a hitherto unknown photograph which substantiated his contentions of innocence, Tom Mooney's trial was declared to have been fair, and his recent introduction of evidence not material, by a California State Supreme Court Referee.

The next step will be hearings for legal arguments on the basis of the referee's findings and then formal court decision.

The way is then opened to bring the case before the United States

Supreme Court, which had previously refused Mooney's plea for habeas corpus on the grounds that all roads in the state courts had not been exhausted.

A new movement has recently been set on foot in the California State assembly for a "legislative pardon." Mooney of course will not accept parole, which would imply admittance of guilt.

"PORTRAIT OF MEXICO" [Rivera Murals slides]

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

FRIDAY EVENING at 8:30 P. M.

NEW WORKERS SCHOOL

131 West 33rd Street — Elevator to 7th Floor

Admission 25 Cents

WEST COAST STRIKE NEARS SETTLEMENT

After a 3 months strike, the West Coast Maritime Federation is approaching a settlement with the shipping bosses. The duration of the strike has not been due as much to difficulties in obtaining demands, but because the workers acted in sympathy with the strikers in the Atlantic and Gulf Ports. Last week these strikes were called off, after the strikers battled not only the

shipowners and the police, but also reactionary officialdom of the various maritime crafts unions.

As we go to press, increased wages and better working conditions (especially cash for overtime) have been won by all but two of the unions comprising the maritime federation. Union control of hiring-halls, a bitterly disputed question, has been settled in the strikers' favor. The Cooks and the Marine Firemen propose to return to work and arbitrate the matter of hours and wages. The strike committee will hold a referendum among the unions on the terms reached, and acceptance is certain.

Flint Alliance Shown To Be Company Stooze

Because of claims of the General Motors Corporation that it has no connection with the Flint Alliance and of George Boyesen, president of the Flint Alliance, that his organization is a spontaneous movement of workers, Homer Martin, president of the UAWA, issued the following statement of facts.

1. Foremen, supervisors, and company union representatives acted as agents for Boyesen in circulating the "Back to Work" petitions and "Flint Alliance" cards in the plants which after being signed were turned over to Governor Murphy by Boyesen. Coercion and intimidation, such as threats of their jobs and that they would not be eligible for company loans, were used to make workers sign the petitions.

2. The Alliance has high priced men working for it but no visible means of support. Floyd Williamson, high priced staff member from the Lawrence Witt Advertising Agency, was sent from New York to handle the organization's press relations.

The meeting of the Flint Alliance on Friday, Jan. 15, was held in I.M.A. (Industrial Mutual Association) Hall. The I.M.A. is notoriously known as a company outfit, dominated by company officials. Its "I.M.A. News," supposedly representative of all Flint workers, has been as viciously anti-union as the "Flint Journal". Although I.M.A. Hall has been used by the Flint Alliance for its meetings, its use was denied to the union for its meeting Sunday, Jan. 17, and has been denied as well on previous occasions.

4. Boyesen says that he formed the Alliance after requests from a number of workers. Yet there was no public request that such an organization be formed and no one knew about it until Boyesen himself announced its formation. Boyesen's leadership was assumed by himself; there has never been an election of officers.

5. General Motors press agents are constantly seen in conference with Boyesen at the Hotel Durant. Included among these are Sam Fucian and Frank Webb, regularly employed by Arthur Kudner, who handles publicity for Buick. Fucian and Webb actively assist in taking care of the Alliance's publicity.

6. Boyesen claims that the Alliance represents Flint workers, yet he, its president, is not a worker but is manager of CVS Manufacturing Co., makers of spark plugs. He has further stated to the press that "business and professional men have provided the necessary financial support." From his own re-

marks it is quite evident that the Alliance has no active support from Flint workers.

7. The 200 business and professional men that Boyesen speaks of, it will be remembered, met to endorse the Alliance and to demand "action" last week, a few hours before the police attack on strikers in Fisher Body No. 2. Shortly after their meeting, heat in the plant was turned off and the other events leading up to the attack followed in quick succession.

8. Dexter Conklin, announced by the Flint Journal as being one of the leaders of the Alliance, is a former city treasurer of Flint convicted a few months ago of embezzlement, sentenced to prison, and released shortly after on parole. After strikers and union representatives publicly pointed this out, Dexter Conklin withdrew from Alliance activities.

9. The Alliance is in no sense representative of the employees of General Motors. One does not have to be even a worker, much less a worker at General Motors, to become a member. Business men, professional men, even school children, are admitted. Such an organization could not possibly act as a collective bargaining agent for General Motors workers.

Control Of Speed-Up Major Need Of All Auto Workers

(Continued from Page 1)
over 1932 and compares with an increase of about 15% in the annual wages of the workers for the same period. These facts tell in cold figures the story behind the uprising of the Corporation's workers.

Seek to Control Speed-up
In addition to the general relationship between profits and wages, there is the factor of labor displacement and the resulting benefits that accrue to the Corporation at the expense of the workers. The statistics show that during the period from 1932 to 1936, the number of cars produced per employee has increased from 4.85 to 9.66. This accounts in great part for the constant rise in profits per car—General Motors in this respect has gone up from \$76.00 in 1934 to \$113.00 in 1936.

The cause for this increasing productivity is the introduction of labor-saving machinery and the constant speeding up of production. It is the latter fact which has caused, perhaps, the greatest number of grievances. The workers have come to look with dread on the backbreaking toil that goes with the speed-up system. It is the inability to have any control or regulation of the speed of the production line that has been an outstanding factor in the organization of the automobile worker. Here, more than in any other industry is the importance of collective bargaining to be stressed. The control over wages and hours, in a sense, is subsidiary to the question of control over the speed of the line. At present the workers exercise no power in this direction. They hope, and are fighting to make that a



The company union is a GAG and BLINDERS for the worker, attempting to prevent him from seeing the truth and stifling the expression of his interests.

BOOKS of the AGE

SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE JEWS. By Robert Gessner. Farrar and Rinehart. \$3.

This book is the most devastating annihilation of Zionism this reviewer has read. Two favored routes to the "promised land," for Jewry, assimilation and evacuation, are shown to be naught but blind alleys, leading God's step-children back into the horrors of anti-Semitism from which they fled so blindly.

Gessner's quest for the answer to anti-Semitism led him to England, Germany, France, Poland, Palestine and the Soviet Union. What is revealed in a brilliant series of sketches and bits of particularly pertinent documentation are: the economic conditions of Jewry; repressive economic and social activities; who fosters anti-Semitism and why; how Zionism has inflamed the Arabic-speaking peoples against the Jews; how Zionism has poured many millions into Hitler's coffers in exchange for the rescue of a few wealthy Jews and the purchase of machinery of questionable worth from the Nazis at exorbitant prices. Zionism is the shepherd of the flock of sacrificial lambs which it leads to the slaughter, so that the wealthy Jews may retain their favored economic positions.

From the rotting carcasses of Germany, England, France and Poland, Bob Gessner went off to explore the holy land. In a masterly chapter, Zionism in Palestine is pictured as an economic flop, an aggravator of racial discord, an easy prey for John Bull and Herr Hitler.

But, on the Crimean steppes he witnessed Socialism's triumph over anti-Semitism and poverty. Here, where the East meets the West, a Jewish community commingled in comradeship with many other "races." Here Gessner found the only solution.

Gessner's conclusion is that only a basic social surgery can forever banish anti-Semitism and the poverty which gave it birth. Only the proletarian Jewish masses in alliance with other minority groups and the labor movement can serve as the scalpel.

Despite Gessner's yearning for a "drop of Indian blood," his infatuation with the People's Front, (because Leon Blum is a Jew?), and a very weak chapter on anti-Semitism in America, his book transcends these weaknesses. The best evidence of its power, logic and literary excellence are the howls of rage from the Ghetto, where Messers Ludwig Lewisohn, Rabbi Stephen Wise and their ilk have already buried themselves as the first furies of national anti-Semitism appear on the American scene.

S. H.

men of the community has of course, been very neatly ignored by the self-righteous barons and the prostitute editorial writers of the capitalist newspapers. There can be no question concerning the fact that the majority of the workers in General Motors, whether they be in the union, on strike, or employed, are in sympathy with this movement to unionize General Motors. This does not mean that the majority are already in the union, although this point is fast being reached in General Motors. But it does mean that the overwhelming sentiment of the employees is with the strikers and with the general attempt to win union recognition. Those who have been terrorized either into signing company statements or into an avoidance of the union have demonstrated their silent approval of the strikers' actions by nods of the head, properly placed remarks concerning Flint, Briggs and other scuffles, and a generally friendly approach to union workers. Although the union does not yet number a majority of the employees, there is no doubt that out of the present strike struggles will come a union representing a great proportion of the auto workers.

Collective Bargaining
Out of this intense dispute over the question of collective bargaining has come the controversy over the recognition of the United Automobile Workers as the "sole representative of the employees." The corporation has introduced the obvious fraud concerning the so-called unorganized workers and the company organized outfits, like the Flint Alliance. Another complicating factor was the scab statement of the machinists and the metal trades department of the A. F. of L. General Motors grabbed at this straw to further claim that the Auto Union was unjustified in claiming to be the only organization to be recognized. That the A. F. of L. has a negligible membership in the industry and that the Flint Alliance is inspired by the corporation and the business

Victory Ahead
As this is being written, the conflict is more or less at a stalemate with the representatives of both sides in Washington. There is no doubt that the administration would like to see the thing settled. Gov. Murphy, in whom the workers have placed a great trust, has gone to Washington to confer with the president. Out of this move there may come an attempt by Roosevelt to settle the dispute through conciliation. The administration realizes full well the necessity of clearing up these labor disputes at such an early stage of his second term. He will bring pressure to bear on both sides but will find that this time no auto labor boards or phony systems of arbitration will be acceptable to the union. The CIO is well aware of the dangers and pitfalls of the old settlement under the strikebreaking care of Leo Wolman (who now writes vicious articles in the Detroit press against the CIO and in defense of his governmental boards of arbitration). The Union has got to avoid any dependence upon the good graces of the administration and concentrate on its own organization and the holding up of the workers' morale, in addition to spreading their influence amongst the unorganized.

The building of an independent, class organization of auto workers, without any reliance on a government crutch, will insure the ultimate victory, not only against General Motors but against the magnates of the entire automobile industry.

What About Those Federationist Ads?

At the Atlantic City convention of the American Federation of Labor the following resolution was passed without a dissenting voice:

"Resolved that the American Federationist is hereby prohibited from the acceptance of advertisements or paid printing of any character from concerns which do not generally recognize and practice legitimate bargaining with labor organizations of labor. The executive council is hereby expressly directed to execute this policy."

The current issue of the American Federationist bears a full page advertisement from the General Motors Corporation, a full page ad on the inside from the Bendix Corporation, an ad from Consolidated Edison of New York and Westinghouse Electric, and a half page from The Texas Co., producers of Texaco Oil and Gas.

These companies either were or are being struck, or have been shown to employ detective agencies for the purpose of labor espionage and union-smashing.

THE MOSCOW TRIAL IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

We publish below an article presenting an original and thought-provoking viewpoint on the Moscow trial. For a number of reasons the writer must remain anonymous. We urgently invite our readers to comment on the questions raised in this article. In a forthcoming issue, Comrade Lovestone will deal with these questions in the light of recent events in the U.S.S.R. —The Editor.

THE MEREST glance at the official proceedings of the Moscow trial is enough to convince any candid person that some, at least, of the charges and allegations therein contained, even the "confirmed" by the confessions of the defendants, cannot hold water for a moment since they are full of gross contradictions, material and psychological. This much seems to me hardly open to question. But, having said this, exactly what have we said? What are the political implications of this conclusion?

I think that we can approach this difficult question with better perspective if we examine the problem as it has appeared in the past, in the great French Revolution, for example, which we can now study with a measure of dispassionate objectivity still impossible in the case of the Soviet Union. Any conclusions we may draw from such an examination will surely be of service in arriving at an understanding of the political significance of the Moscow trial.

The Clash Of Factions In The French Revolution
In the summer of 1793, following the great insurrection of May 30 of the party of the Mountain, headed by Robespierre, Marat and Danton, came to power, elevated and supported by the awakened might of the plebeian masses of Paris and other big cities. The group whom the Jacobins thus displaced as ruling party, the Girondins, had been outstanding revolutionists in their day, eager champions of the republic, implacable enemies of despotism in France and in Europe. But now they had developed into a conservative force, convinced that the revolution had gone "far enough" and determined to prevent it from going any further, from reaching the point where it might endanger "social order and property"; they therefore became the natural point of concentration for all conservative and even reactionary elements, especially among the upper middle classes. In direct contradiction, the Jacobins stood for thoroughgoing democracy, for ruthless terror against "aristocrats" and "suspects" and for certain social and economic measures in the interest of the petty bourgeois masses upon whom they depended for support. Between the two, no compromise was possible; there simply was not room enough in France politically for them to co-exist.

It did not take long before the Girondin deputies were expelled from the Convention and, together with a number of other Girondin leaders, arrested and placed on trial for their lives. The affair was obviously a thoroughly political one, yet significantly enough the trial was prepared largely as a criminal case. Only to a minor degree did the fundamental political issues appear either in the indictment or in the proceedings: charges were chiefly criminal in character, some-

times irrelevant, often clearly without basis in fact. Eugene Newton Curtis, in his recent biography of Saint-Just, which in its general tone is exceedingly friendly to the Robespierrists, makes the point quite plain:

"Saint-Just's speeches, particularly his denunciations, rarely follow a logical outline. In this case, he launched forth at once with the monstrous and unprovable charge that the Girondins had a scheme, organized by General Dillon, to restore the dauphin, a calamity from which the country had been saved only by their arrest."
"It seems difficult to deny that the attack (of Saint-Just) shrivels into insignificance when confronted by the defense (of the Girondins). Brissot, in particular, has proved his case, even tho in a few instances he went too far. The truth is that the Girondins were not monarchist in 1793 and the charge was *thoroughly distasteful*. It was easily demolished by bringing out *discrepancies in fact and date*, as Brissot did. Probably it was because he realized the weakness of his argument from a legal standpoint that Saint-Just enveloped it in purposeful obscurity. The vague, inconsistent statements, the innuendo, were all intended to throw dust in his opponents eyes. It is significant that most of his denunciations are in just this vein. The fact is that the real case against the Girondins, as at a later date, the real case against Danton, was purely political. These men must not, because they were traitors or guilty of conspiracy. They had to go, partly because they were personal enemies of their accusers and partly because these latter conscientiously believed that the safety of the state required it. . . . The legal justification for their action was largely eye-witness and they knew it, no doubt, as well as anyone. . . . The report is weak in fact; it was strong in effect, because the logic of events was on its side."

Against The Left And The Right
The Girondins were convicted, of course; some were executed and others imprisoned. But within the party of the Mountain itself, new enemies arose. At the left were the Extremists, led by Hebert and Chaumette who championed an "extravagant" program of economic, social and political reforms, corresponding to the obscure, inarticulate but intense aspirations of the lowest sections of the city plebs, including the embryo proletariat. During the early winter of 1793-1794, the Extremists, or "Ultras" as they were called, had their way, more or less, because Robespierre needed their support in order to consolidate the Jacobin dictatorship against the threat from the right. But towards the beginning of March, the break came. Again the issue was entirely political but again the Robespierrists disguised it as a wretched criminal plot, as a vicious conspiracy, fomented by the foreign enemy, to undermine the foundations of the republic.

"Beginning with an exposition of the familiar foreign plot theory," Curtis narrates, "he (Saint-Just) developed the idea that the foreigner, alarmed at the decree depriving the revolution's enemies of their property, felt the need of moving more rapidly. The new plan was to cause a food shortage and use it to arouse the people against the government. . . . He then described the famine plot in more detail. Here foodstuffs were buried, there arrivals of grain intercepted, elsewhere the citizens embittered by seditious speeches. The prime

Here and in other quotations the emphasis is my own.

author of the scheme was the English government. At this point he opens the second and longest part of his oration, a definite attack on the Extremists. His term for them is le parti de l'etranger (the party of the foreigner)."

"From the critical standpoint, the unfairness of the accusation is none the less apparent. The Hebertists were not traitors, they were unwise and extravagant, less balanced and able than the Robespierrists. . . . The impossibility of any foreign government's buying out two whole political factions is matched by the absurdity that their leaders, who had so deeply damned themselves in royalist eyes by regicide and terrorism, should wish or dare to restore the Bourbon throne."

In his work on the French Revolution, Kropotkin presents us with another feature of the trial of the Hebertists, of particular significance in the present connection: "The Hebertists were sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Committees had the baseless to make up what was known then as an 'amalgam.' In the same batch were included bankers and German agents, together with Momoro, who since 1790 had become known for his communist ideas and who had given absolutely everything he possessed to the revolution; with Leclerc, the friend of Chaler, and Anacharsis Cloots, 'the orator of mankind.'"

And so, on March 24, 1794, after a trial of a character that may be imagined, the Hebertists were executed!

Now Robespierre turned against the right. For around Danton and his friends had gathered a new conservative concentration composed of elements agitating for peace (the "pacifists"), demanding the cessation or relaxation of the Terror (the "Indulgents") and protesting against the radical economic and social measures of the Mountain (the "friends of order and property"). Against this "Citra" faction, Robespierre loosed all his thunder and, in doing so, was forced to adopt a good deal of the program of the Hebertists whom he had only recently despatched to the guillotine. Again the revolutionary trials, again the fantastic accusations of monarchism and plotting with the foreign enemy, again the "amalgams," again the convictions:

"Phlegmatic, in sententious tones," writes Curtis, "(Saint-Just) recited (against the Dantonists) the most singular and monstrous indictment ever dreamed of. . . . The real issue was political, not juridical, as in all the great crimes of the Revolution. . . . The charges of conspiracy and black-hearted crime were made in every one of these cases with monotonous regularity and with as little foundation in one as in another. The fundamental differences between Danton and the Robespierrists were matters of temperament and policy. . . . The verdict on Saint-Just's denunciatory reports must be the same in almost every instance. They rarely prove their case from a juridical standpoint. They are generally justified from the political standpoint."

Closely associated with Danton was Fabre d'Eglantine, a deputy of considerable importance. Against him Robespierre's Committees launched the charge of "forgery! Here is how Kropotkin tells the story:

"The Committees decided to strike a blow and to terrify the camp of their detractors by ordering Fabre d'Eglantine to be arrested. The pretext was an accusation for forgery and it was announced loudly that the Committees had succeeded in discovering a

Agrarian Problems Of Catalonia

The following material on the agrarian problems in Catalonia and Spain is taken from "THE SPANISH REVOLUTION," English bulletin of the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.).

When one leaves the large towns of Catalonia (Barcelona, Lerida, Gerona) still burning with revolutionary fever, one passes thru villages where everywhere floats the red flag of the Marxist organizations or the red and black flag of the C.N.T. Peasants guard the entrances, gun on shoulder and revolver at their side. One can measure then, with a feeling of security, the depth of the movement. The country is aligned with the town. The revolution indeed reigns everywhere.

All problems, however, are not solved. Far from it. Perplexities, even anxieties, still persist. But one knows that from now on the peasants are in the movement. They themselves are convinced of the importance of their role: "The key to the revolution is in the country," said the secretary of the peasants' union (affiliated with the C.N.T.), in an assembly of day laborers. And, in succession, all speakers who followed him repeated this formula.

Property Question in Catalonia

In Catalonia the land question presents a completely different picture from that of the rest of Spain. Some provinces have experienced the expulsion of the Moors and Spanish reconquest, accompanied by the creation of great fiefs; Catalonia, on the contrary,

great plot, the aim of which was to discredit the nation's representatives. It is now known that the accusation which served as a pretext for the arrest of Fabre—that of having falsified a decree of the Convention to the advantage of the powerful India Company—was false. The decree dealing with the India Company had indeed been falsified but by Delaunay, another member of the Convention. . . . But at the time of Fabre's arrest, Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor of the Revolutionary Tribunal and of the Committee of Public Safety, did not allow the document to be produced either before or during the trial in court and Fabre perished as a forger because the government simply wanted to get rid of a dangerous foe."

The "batch" for the guillotine was made up in the usual way: "The Committees again made an 'amalgam,'" Kropotkin tells us, "in order to bewilder public opinion and sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal Danton, together with Desmoulins; Basire; Fabre, accused of forgery; Lacroix, accused of robbery; Chabot, who acknowledged that he had received (without having spent) a hundred thousand francs from the royalists for some unknown affair; the forger, Delaunay; and the go-between of de Bats's conspiracy, Julien. . . . The proceedings before the tribunal were suppressed."

This was in April 1794. Towards the end of July of the same year (9 Thermidor, Year II), Robespierre himself fell at the hands of the Thermidorian reaction!

(Concluded in next issue)

This was the same Camille Desmoulins who, when the Girondins were under fire, "aroused the applause of the Jacobins by his historical de Brissotins, a stinging pamphlet in which, on the flimsiest grounds, he represented the Girondins as the hired agents of England and Prussia" (Mathiez).

(Continued on Page 4)

has remained a country of small and medium sized properties. In contrast to Andalusia and Estremadura, where vast untilled domains spread everywhere, used only as pasture for cattle or as hunting grounds for their proprietors, in Catalonia almost all the soil is under cultivation. The smallness of certain holdings and the poverty of the cultivators explains the insufficiency of equipment and the use, for example, of wooden plows in certain regions. It is not here a question of putting the soil under cultivation, which must be the first consideration in the rest of Spain; in Catalonia the problem reduces itself simply to a question of rationalization and modernization.

In these parcelled out districts live some small proprietors who cultivate their own property themselves, some day laborers (in few large estates), a certain number of farmers, particularly in the Barcelona region and along the coast, and above all, there is a large mass of tenant farmers called "rabassaires," a few of whom have come into possession of a small piece of land which is far from sufficient to assure them a livelihood.

The rabassaire is the man who has cultivated, planted and worked the ground belonging to another, receiving in return a quarter, a third or even a half of the annual harvest, which is ordinarily paid in kind. Thus the ground belongs to the proprietor and the crop to the rabassaire until the harvest. From that moment on the rabassaire becomes merely a tenant who can be evicted at will. The last half of the nineteenth century was filled with the struggle between land owners and tenants, the former seeking to despoil the rabassaires of their rights, the latter clinging to their contracts in order to have a minimum of security. The destruction of the grape vines by phylloxera was a boon to the proprietors and deprived a great many tenants of their security. During the first years of the century the struggle continued under conditions very difficult for the tenants.

Peasant Organizations
A good part of the peasants of Europe are still unorganized. However, compared to the rest of Spain, and still better, compared to a country like France, Catalonia is certainly the country where the greatest proportions of peasants are affiliated to organizations. These organizations are five in number but of varying importance. The Union of Rabassaires and Workers, confined to Catalonia, is by far the most important. It has 35,000 members, that means in fact 35,000 responsible farmers or heads of families. It is not limited only to rabassaires but accepts other types of farm labor.

The Federation of Land Workers, affiliated to the U.G.T. (Socialist trade unions), has a membership of 500,000 agricultural workers in all Spain, but is of little importance in Catalonia. The Provincial Agrarian Union of Lerida and the Union of Land Workers of Gerona are local organizations, influenced especially by the P.O.U.M., are now negotiating a merger with the Union of Rabassaires.

The history of the Union of Rabassaires is fused with the struggle and progress of the Catalonian peasantry for the last 15 years. It was founded by the

(Continued on Page 4)

The International Class Struggle
Theoretical quarterly of the International Communist Opposition
WINTER ISSUE NOW OUT
On sale at stands
Single copy 25c
One year \$1.00
Write to:
INTERNATIONAL CLASS STRUGGLE
131 W. 33 St.
New York, N. Y.

WORKERS AGE

Organ of the National Committee, Communist Party U. S. A. (Opposition)
131 West 33rd St. New York, N. Y.
Published every Saturday by the Workers Age Publishing Association. Subscriptions: \$1.00 per year; \$6.00 for six months; 5c a copy. Foreign Rates: \$1.50 per year.

Entered as second class matter Nov. 5, 1934, at the Post Office New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. 6, No. 6. Saturday, February 6, 1937.

KEY TO MEXICO'S POLITICAL MAZE

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE

FOR internal support every candidate for the Mexican presidency since 1910 has had to choose between popular peasant-worker support, and that of the landowners and their ideological apparatus, the Catholic clergy. The peasants are the most numerous class in Mexico, but large sections of them still follow the leadership of the landowners and the church. The working class elements are so immature and lacking in independent organization and consciousness that they do not form an important separate force. Thus the two camps, the popular and the landowner-clerical, are nearly equal in balance and strength. What the landowners lack in numbers they make up with their economic power, which enables them to put large numbers of armed and mounted men in the field. This deadlock of class forces makes the government military-bureaucratic apparatus relatively independent of class control and capable of developing and fostering vested interests of its own. The opposing pulls of the radical peasants and workers on the one hand, and the backward landowner-church peasant combination on the other, are so nearly equal that the government is always in unstable equilibrium and easily upset by some shift of support or the pressure of some outside force. Such an outside force, pressing constantly upon it, is that of foreign capital.

The World War prepared the basis for a more stable regime by ending the mutual counter-pulls of British and American interests. There was a definite growth in the influence of the United States in Mexico and a definite recession of the power of England. At this juncture Obregon, who made himself president by a coup d'etat in 1920, struck out boldly on the basis of what seemed to him the strongest combination of forces: the peasant-worker bloc as the internal, and American capital as the external support of his regime. A circus performer riding bareback on two horses at once has an easy time in comparison; for Obregon's two high-spirited horses were not trained to run together!

He would have to make solid concessions to American capital without alienating the nationalist-minded, anti-imperialist masses; make concessions to the masses without alienating suspicious, conservative American capital. He would have to contrive to blow hot and cold, if not in a single breath, at least in successive ones. Only a man of audacious vision would have attempted it; only a major statesman could have gotten away with it.

The Obregon Pattern

Obregon soon discovered a rough mathematical formula for his pattern: the masses could generally be kept contented with a maximum of radical phrases and gestures and a minimum of actual deeds; on the other hand the hard-boiled financiers were not too exigent as to phraseology but fearfully exacting as to actions.

How to convince American interests made jittery by Russian Bolshevism that his revolutionary phrases should not be taken too literally, that he must have free play for demagoguery if he was to remain in power at all? How to convince the masses that his government was really revolutionary; that if it tried to go farther or faster there would be American intervention? How to measure out the crumblike concessions that would keep the regime from getting unpopular, and yet surround each tiny crumb with a shining ruby mist of socialistic phraseology so that few would perceive how little was the crumb after all? How to keep the partially awakened masses, stirred by a decade of civil strife, under sure and subtle control? These were no minor problems of statecraft. They were brilliantly and consciously solved by Obregon, and his methods of solution were consciously adopted and extended by the two succeeding bosses of Mexico, Calles and Cardenas. They are working better than ever today.

The Real Issues

Obregon and Lamont were men

Therein lies the explanation of the constant tacking and veering of the Mexican ship of state: therein the missing background to reconcile the apparently contradictory policies and principles that have left observers so bewildered and helpless to make up their minds as to the nature of the Mexican regime. This explains why on one day Obregon nullifies the oil sections of Article Twenty-Seven of the Constitution, granting every demand to the American oil companies, and the next day makes one of the most radical pronouncements as to governmental theory ever heard outside of the Soviet Union; why with one hand (figuratively of course, for he lost his left arm in a battle against Villa at Calaya) he gives land in homestead doses to the peasants, and with the other gives away the land as a whole to oil and mining companies; why one decree deports the papal delegate as a "pernicious foreigner" and the next expels a foreign-born leader of the Mexican Communist Party on a similar charge; why the government assures the victory of a strike in which neither American interests nor those of the native governing group are involved, and smashes the next strike which happens to be directed against American interests; why the very administration which institutes "Socialist" education can also devise secret plans for military cooperation with its imperialist overlord, the United States, in the next war.

The House of Morgan Steps In

The Obregon revolt occurred in April 1920; yet the leading article in the May number of *The American*, published by the National City Bank of New York, declared: "Now that events in Mexico are moving towards final settlement, there is every reason to believe that the plans repeatedly made and postponed may be put into execution, and trade relations established between the business men of this country and the merchants of Mexico that will be permanent and profitable to both groups. . . . In spite of troubles that may come during the next few months and outward appearances that make it appear that Mexico is merely keeping up its favorite pastime of revolution and civil war, there is sound reason for believing that construc-

ive influences are at work and that a happier and more prosperous epoch is nearly at hand." The National City Bank is not given to empty optimistic prediction in such matters.

Yet there were a number of minor obstacles in the way of the new course and Obregon spent much of his four years removing them. Chief of these were the pressure of accumulated and more than justified anti-United States sentiment in Mexico on the one hand, and the pinheadedness of the American state department and diplomatic apparatus on the other. Ambassadors like Lane Wilson and Fletcher and Sheffield and pedantic and unrealistic Secretaries of State like Hughes and Kellogg were frightened into epileptic fits by the radical phrases so lightly uttered and more lightly taken in Mexican political circles. Hughes would not hear of face-saving and radical phrase-saving in Mexico. He wanted Obregon openly to sign away Mexico's sovereignty and publicly abjure radicalism as a condition of recognition; whereas the latter was proffering a tacit engagement to nullify the land and oil provisions of the Constitution simultaneously with or immediately after recognition. More than that, he was offering an administration that could deliver what it promised, thanks to the retention of popular support.

At last the American bankers, disgusted with the needless delay and pedantic quarrels about abstract formulas, simply thrust the diplomatic messenger and office boys aside and Thomas W. Lamont, Morgan partner, stepped into the situation in person. The effect was magical.

who could understand each other. So, at a later stage in the same development, were Calles and Morrow. The Bankers' Committee which Lamont represented knew exactly what it was after and had the good sense to know that they must leave the Mexican government in a position to deliver it without being overthrown by popular indignation. They wanted Mexico to settle the claims of American enterprises damaged during the years of revolution. They wanted the railways returned to private control on the basis of a guaranteed dividend yield. They wanted the existing government to recognize the loans made by Diaz, even those contracted after revolution had broken out against him. They wanted recognition of the loans made to Huerta. They wanted all loans consolidated, funded, guaranteed by some sure source of government income, and provisions made for the resumption of interest payments. They wanted the cancellation of the oil provisions of Article Twenty-Seven of the Constitution.

But Lamont could see in an instant what phrase-frightened diplomats living in a rarefied atmosphere of abstractions and phrase-fetters of their own making, seemed incapable of seeing in a decade: that it was useless to get a government of Mexico to yield openly and publicly on this issue, since any government frankly proposing to abolish Articles Twenty-Seven and One Hundred and Twenty-Three of the Constitution would not last long enough to make the first deliveries of the promised goods. The same hard-boiled economic realism that permitted financiers to back Mussolini in Italy, radical phrases and all, and subsequently Hitler in Germany, was ap-

plied by the clear-headed Lamont and his successor Morrow to Mexico. But Morrow's follow-up has been overpublicized and Lamont's pathfinding role scarcely noticed by American commentators.

The Bankers' Committee was formed in 1919, while Obregon was preparing his coup d'etat, while Ambassador Fletcher was compiling an inflammatory list of 217 Americans killed between 1911 and 1919, while Albert B. Fall, oil senator and chairman of a Senate subcommittee on Foreign Affairs was still recommending the use of military force to compel Mexico to change her Constitution or publicly exempt American interests from its operation.

In the late summer of 1921 Thomas W. Lamont, Chairman of the Bankers' Committee, went in person to Mexico on a trip "combining business and pleasure." (They have a tendency to overlap in a man like Lamont and in a land like Mexico.) There was a pleasant exchange of courtesies with President Obregon and his Secretary of the Treasury, Adolfo de la Huerta. Within a month thereafter, Mexico had assumed the Diaz and Huerta debts; had agreed to the installation of a new "American-model" banking system; had entered into a debt-finding, annual-payment-with-increase-to-the-Dawes-arrangement similar to the Dawes-Young Plan; to the putting of the railroads on a paying basis by government subsidy, purchase of new rolling stock, slashing of wages and smashing of the railway unions; to the return of the railroads to private control under the management of a bondholders' committee headed by J. P. Morgan and Company; and to the settling of the oil dispute with a committee

(Continued on Page 5)

Agrarian Problems Of Catalonia

(Continued from Page 3)

lawyer Francesc Layret and was continued, after his execution under the dictatorship of Martinez Anido, by Luis Companys. It had for its immediate aim a reduction of ground rents and, as its final goal, access to the property of the farmers and peasants according to their slogan "the land belongs to the users." It was therefore an organization for the defense of peasant rights, without a really revolutionary character.

The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera brought its activity almost to a standstill, but it began to regain influence with the Republic of April, 1931. The Republic reduced the rate of ground rent to 4% of the fiscal value of the land. But keen disappointment awaited the rabassaires, for the authorities and the courts sabotaged this law by automatically favoring the proprietors every time a case was brought up.

No Aid from Republic

A compromise was made in September 1932 which was to serve as the forerunner for an agrarian law. The law hung fire in the midst of new conflicts. In 1933 a reduction in the ground rent was declared. In 1934 finally a rather weak preliminary law laid the basis for the stabilization of the situation of the rabassaires, allowing ownership to those who had worked a domain for 18 years and again decreed the reduction of rents to four percent. The proprietors were furious and began a campaign which obtained a repudiation of this law from the court of constitutional guarantees. Finally in 1934, a definitive law was promulgated, even more conservative than the preceding one.

Throughout this period, because of the personal influence of Luis Companys, the great majority of the Union of Rabassaires, remained under the influence of the Catalan Left Republicans. At this time it attained a membership of about 25,000.

The events of October made a clean sweep of those few hard won successes. The peasants whose ground rent had been cut were obliged to pay up the back installments, not only for the year 1934, but even for the preceding years. Those who were not able to pay were seized, evicted, thrown into prison. In 1935 the Madrid parliament voted a law favorable to the proprietors which was productive of mass evictions—more than 1,500 in Catalonia alone.

In face of the weakness of the Generalitat at the time of the October events, and weighed down with accumulated disappointments, the Union of Rabassaires little by little turned away from the Catalan Left Republicans and began to acquire a character of its own. In the February elections it presented two candidates (both of them were elected) within the framework of the Popular Front, upon this limited and clear cut platform: (1) Renactment of the two agrarian laws of 1933 and 1934. (2) Restitution of damages suffered by evicted peasants, etc.

But the newly elected government of the Generalitat seemed to be in no hurry to satisfy these demands. On the eve of the 19th of July, the second point had become a dead letter. At the same time the revolutionary opposition was growing within the ranks of the organization. Since its Congress in May (1936) the Union of Rabassaires has unanimously proclaimed itself a class organization and has undertaken the formulation of a program with socialist tendencies. In the country impatience was mounting and in some places the peasants had spontaneously occupied the land.

The Revolution and Its Work

The July days therefore found the peasants ready for action. The response to the events in Barcelona was immediate. In all the villages the property of the reactionaries was confiscated; fascists,

priests and usurers were hunted out, imprisoned or executed. Where no peasant union existed, the Militia committees or Anti-fascist committees of the place took the affair into their hands. As for rents and dues, they were simply done away with. In a few days the place had been swept clean, ready for the work of organization and construction to begin. The Union of Rabassaires approves of these spontaneous actions and has raised slogans to this effect throughout Catalonia: "Less than a month later the eleven points of the Economic Council appeared, three of which were concerned with the organization of the countryside: "Collectivization of the large agrarian properties, which will be exploited by the peasant unions with the help of the Generalitat and the compulsory union adherence of the producers exploiting small and medium sized properties."

It is obvious that we have here both the legalization of confiscation and a step forward toward the collective regime of tomorrow.

In regard to the application of this point, the Generalitat promulgated a decree a short time ago on "obligatory unionism," of which we will give an extract further on, aiming on the one hand at regrouping the peasants so as to carry on the collective acquisition of agricultural materials and, on the other, at the collective sale of the products of the entire village.

Besides this, the Union of Rabassaires and the various parties and organizations which aspire to win the support of the peasantry, are considering the means of dividing certain lands among the agricultural workers who would thus become small owners with the same rights as the freed farmers and rabassaires. This is only a question, as is easily seen, of first measures. It now becomes a question of knowledge of peasant mentality which is still an unknown quantity.

disillusionment. The German Communist Opposition, despite its meager resources, has given a brilliant example of how effective trade union work is really to be carried on in a land groaning under the heel of fascism!

Is it necessary now seriously to challenge a conception that urges us to treat the "minor National-Socialist officials" gently, remembering that they are not "little Hitlers," a conception that calls upon us to "support" and "join with" those "fascist leaders who are striving to take on the defence of the general or partial interests of the people?" It is so grotesque, so self-evidently suicidal, that it seems to require no special refutation, particularly after what has been said above.

The New Course And "Left" Fascism

The full meaning of the new course of the Communist International cannot be fully appreciated until we realize the fatal orientation balance it bears to the orientation of the so-called "left" fascists who constitute the various oppositional fascist movements. It is only necessary to read Otto Strasser's Black Front organ, *Die Deutsche Revolution*, for example, to find repeated, in just so many words, the conceptions advocated in the manifestos of the German and Italian communist parties. The same tendency to glorify the "original" fascist program and to idealize the "minor National-Socialist officials," the same slogan of "reconciliation!" It is not enough to counter that the motives are different and that the resemblance is largely external. Of course it is! But it is certainly no credit to the policy of the Communist International that it has such close points of contact with the program of the most reckless of fascist demagogues, so that the propagation of this policy must necessarily play into the hands of the "left" fascists and strengthen the force of their dangerous appeal.

Liquidating Illegal Union Cadres

It is but natural that the new course should have no use for illegal trade union cadres. For of what good are they if the Labor Front can "enable the masses to win considerable victories," if, indeed, it is the only lever by which the workers can be set into motion? And so we are led to the point of actual liquidation of illegal trade union work, which must be sacrificed on the altar of an absurd illusion as to the possibilities of "legality" under fascism!

Of course, it is necessary to take advantage of every crack in the fascist regime, of every possibility of "legal" activity, no matter how small! But experience has amply shown that, unless such "legal" work in the Labor Front or any other fascist organization is properly prepared and carried out by illegal trade union cadres, in which are grouped the more active and class conscious workers, whether socialist or communist, it can lead to nothing but defeat and

(Concluded in next issue)

The Fight Against Fascism's Program

By WILL HERBERG

(Concluded from last week)

If we are to effect the "reconciliation of fascists and anti-fascists" and to adopt the fascist program as "our own," it follows obviously that our attitude to the fascist mass organizations can hardly be one of outright hostility. And, indeed, it is a major contention of the new course that these fascist organizations can and must be converted into instruments of the proletarian class struggle. Nay, more it is even maintained that they are already the "trade unions of the workers" and that only thru them can the masses be gotten to act unitedly! I think I had better repeat the official declarations of the Italian and German communist parties for fear that the reader may think I am exaggerating a bit.

"The fascist trade unions can be an instrument in the struggle against the employers. . . . Therefore they must be regarded as the trade unions of the workers in the present situation in Italy."

"The fascist trade unions can, even under the totalitarian fascist regime, enable the masses to win considerable victories. . . . It is becoming more and more clear to the anti-fascists that it is possible to get the masses of the workers to act unitedly only if their demands are put forward legally in the Labor Front. . . ."

One is left breathless by this piece of consummate folly! The fascist mass organizations are in their nature, structure and control, poles apart from proletarian class organizations. From "instruments in the struggle against the employers," of course, anti-fascists must carry on work in them, but with what purpose? With the purpose of undermining, weakening and ultimately destroying them not with that of building them up, which is what we must do if they really are "trade unions of the workers." It is the business of the anti-fascists to discredit the Labor Front among the workers, who have little confidence in it anyway, as the few published figures on factory council elections go to show; certainly it is not our job to bolster up the faith of the masses in the fascist institutions by presenting them as "instruments in the struggle against the employers," which they are not and can never be. What would our super-strategists think of converting Black Legion groups or the Rev. Gerald K. Smith's clubs into fighting proletarian organizations?

The problem still remains: How is it possible for the Communist International to follow such a monstrous course, so thoroughly false in every respect, so utterly suicidal in its consequences? There are those who, not without malice aforethought, charge that the communists are seeking a truce with fascism under the pressure of Soviet diplomacy. There is neither rhyme nor reason in such explanations. The Soviet Union is today as hostile to Nazi Germany as it can possibly be and no evidence is necessary to prove that the official communist movement has not relaxed to the slightest degree its determination to fight fascism, however much it may have changed its methods. And that is precisely the point. The official communist spokesmen recommend the new tactics not as a way of easing up the struggle against fascism but rather as a means of intensifying it and rendering it more effective. We know that this is a piece of disastrous self-deception but we should not forget the political motivation behind it.

The Logical Culmination Of The People's Front

The fact of the matter is that this new orientation in the struggle against fascism is but the logical culmination of the strategy of the People's Front. It is no accident that, in their appeals, both the German and Italian communist parties entirely ignore capitalism as a system or even fascism as a movement and regime but direct their whole fire against the "three thousand millionaires who rule Germany," the "upper ten thousand," the "armament profiteers," and the like—the equivalent of the "two hundred families" in French communist propaganda. For the outlook in which the idea of the People's Front is rooted is one that ignores class lines or even fundamental political distinctions; it is a thoroughly petty bourgeois and populist—for it exists only a handful of wicked aristocrats arrayed against the undifferentiated mass of the "people." Such a conception leads directly to the appeal for the "reconciliation" of fascists and anti-fascists and to the grotesque idealization of the pseudo-radical "original" fascist program.

Of course, the strategy of the People's Front does not begin with

(Continued on Page 4)

in strategy and tactics. The line is drawn—in the one case, between the "people" and the "aristocrats," in the other, between the official communists and the rest of the world—but, in neither case, is it drawn so as to correspond with the objective class content of the situation. "Social fascism" passes into the "reconciliation of fascists and anti-fascists"; the "Red Front," into the "national front"; the doctrine that none but Red unions are genuine workers organizations into the conception that even the fascist unions are real trade unions of the workers—but whatever be the transformation, it takes place within the limits of the same vicious circle! One approach is essentially the other turned on its head!

Opportunism is panic-stricken sectarianism, so panic-stricken indeed that it is utterly impotent to uncover and eradicate the roots of its own appalling blunders!

PERI DEFENDS FRENCH COLONIAL IMPERIALISM

If we have given our readers the impression, in past articles, that the Communist Parties have "lost interest" in the colonial question, we wish to rectify that error right now. Quite the contrary. The French Communist Party, for example, has developed from the attitude of merely not desiring to "disrupt the territorial integrity of the French Republic" (i.e. French imperialist exploitation of the colonial peoples). From the refusal to fight for the right of the colonies to self-determination, our people's frontiers are become most militant, and military, defenders of France's colonial system—all on the grounds that Germany must be stopped!

Gabriel Peri, foreign editor of *L'Humanite*, granted an interview to *The Tribune* a London Labor publication, (January 15th issue) in which he considers German maneuvers in Morocco:

"The safety of the whole of Northern Africa is endangered by this penetration. By means of the natives of Spanish Morocco, Germany would be enabled to sow unrest among the native population of French Morocco as well. There exists already in French Moroccan territory a fascist movement which is engineered by Germany and Italy."

"In addition a permanent German hold on Morocco would be a threat to communications in the event of a French mobilization. The whole system of French national defense is based on undisturbed rapid communications between Paris and North Africa."

Of course, M'sieu Peri is quite unaware of the machinations of the French Fascist movement in the colonies, activities aided and abetted by People's Front officials, as reported in *L'Oeuvre* (Reprinted in *Workers Age*, Jan. 16). All he seems to know, answering a question concerning the lack of comment of German infiltration, by certain French papers is that: "A portion of the French press places the interests of the caste which it serves above those of national security."

But M'sieu Peri can very well defend those national (bourgeois) interests of imperialist France:

"Certain precautions (against Germany) of a military nature, for instance, the mobilization of the garrison at Fez, should be taken." Then he hurriedly adds: "It is undeniably disagreeable for a pacifist and democratic government to take military measures. . . . Undeniably!"

Comparative Production: USA-USSR

Industry	U.S. - 1936	USSR - 1936	1937 Plan
Fig Iron (million tons)	30.7	14	17.5
Steel (million tons)	48.8	16	20
Rolled Steel "	"	"	"
Oil (million barrels)	*32.6	12.6	15.5
Coal (million tons)	156.5	27.25	34.5
Automobiles (thousands)	486.7	123	138.5
Locomotives	*4,412	146	184
Freight cars	*43,100	75,600	86,000
Gold (million oz.)	4.3	7	8.8

* Estimated. From *Business Week*

in strategy and tactics. The line is drawn—in the one case, between the "people" and the "aristocrats," in the other, between the official communists and the rest of the world—but, in neither case, is it drawn so as to correspond with the objective class content of the situation. "Social fascism" passes into the "reconciliation of fascists and anti-fascists"; the "Red Front," into the "national front"; the doctrine that none but Red unions are genuine workers organizations into the conception that even the fascist unions are real trade unions of the workers—but whatever be the transformation, it takes place within the limits of the same vicious circle! One approach is essentially the other turned on its head!

Opportunism is panic-stricken sectarianism, so panic-stricken indeed that it is utterly impotent to uncover and eradicate the roots of its own appalling blunders!

Key To Mexican Politics

(Continued from Page 4)

Endowed by nature with the richest subsoil for its area of any country in the world, Mexico's chief rival is the ex-Mexican portion of the United States. Now the oil and mineral companies of the Northern land dominated both sides of the line. Mexico's oil, minerals, railroads, banking, an indebtedness several times the size of Mexico's highest annual budget; and date, and ninety percent of her import-export trade passed into the hands of United States capital: all the rest was a mere shadow and all subsequent assertions of sovereignty mere shadow-boxing. Mexico's fate was sealed as a semi-colonial land so long as the Obregon pattern should endure.

The agreement came none too soon. Less than a month after recognition was accorded, Secretary of the Treasury Adolfo de la Huerta handed in his resignation to the President. His purpose was to head an armed rebellion to block Obregon's plan to name Calles as his successor. De la Huerta himself aspired to the post. Behind him was a majority of the Chamber of Deputies, the dominant Cooperatista Party, a number of state governors and most of the leading generals in the army. For a while Obregon's plight looked desperate. But the Government of the United States acted with amazing energy to sustain the administration with which it had just made an agreement. It rushed to Obregon arms, ammunition, airplanes. He had no funds, so it opened a \$10,000,000 credit to pay its own munitions makers. Such action is unprecedented in the history of Mexican-American relations.

At the same time, the workers and peasants of Mexico rallied to Obregon's support in great numbers, more than offsetting the military defections. Between them, American capital and the Mexican masses turned the tide. The Obregon pattern was working. Both pillars were holding firm. The epoch of successful revolutions was over: the epoch of unsuccessful rebellions had set in.

(Next week's article will deal with the Mexican labor movement.)

Subscribe Now To

Workers Age

For its weekly analyses of events in America and Europe, the **WORKERS AGE** is just the paper you want and should have. And you can have it for the practically infinitesimal amount of:

\$1.00 for 52 issues
\$.75 for 26 issues

Write to:

WORKERS AGE
131 WEST 33rd STREET
NEW YORK CITY

POUM SLANDERED BY DAILY WORKER

The vicious struggle of the Communist International against the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity (POUM) extends, via cable, to "our own" Daily Worker. In the issue of January 25th, we are informed that: "Trotskyite Officers Desert As Spanish Fascists Attack; Treachery, Stabbing People's Front in the Back Is Role of POUM In Catalonia, Acting Under Trotsky's Orders." Then follows a "revelation" of how POUM battalions deserted in battle, and the Thaelmann Brigade had to rush in and save the day. In addition, the following is recorded: "... the people's front heads the armed struggle for independence and liberty"; "on the unanimous demand of all parties in Catalonia, Nin was removed from the new Catalonia Government"; La Batalla, organ of the POUM, "devotes itself exclusively to attacks on the Soviet Union"; and, finally, that "the POUM is passing more and more to acts of terrorism."

For the sake of the proletarian revolution, and not of the preservation of capitalism, we wish to inform the Daily Worker and its readers of the facts.

First, who is sabotaging? When the POUM proposed that the various militias be organized into a disciplined Red Army, did not the PSUC (Socialist-Communist Party of Catalonia) unify and lead the opposition to this demand? When the POUM proposed that there should be no compensation for expropriations, was it not the PSUC which unified and led the opposition? Has it learned nothing from 1917 except to imitate discredited menshevism? When the battalions were formed for the defense of the Saragossa and Aragon lines, was it not the POUM that enrolled most, next to the Anarchists, and are not its ten thousand the backbone of the Saragossa front?

And who is it that sabotages the introduction of a revolutionary economy in Catalonia? Who is it, that instead of fighting for Marxism against Anarcho-Syndicalist prejudices, capitulates to the latter's fantasies of a non-political workers' regime? Who weakens the heroic struggle of the Spanish workers and peasants for socialism, by classless preaching of the beauties of bourgeois democracy, one of the forms of capitalist dictatorship?

It is the PSUC which thus sabotages the revolution! It was the PSUC's maneuvers and double-crossing that led to the elimination of the POUM from the Catalan Government—because that elimination was based on the exclusion of all political parties from the government! The Solidaridad Obrero organ of the anarcho-syndicalist

CNT thus viewed (English Press Release, Generalidad de Catalunya, January 8th) the significance of the POUM'S expulsion:

"The political parties, although of a social type, have nothing to do with Spain. The revolution in Spain depends entirely upon the organizations that have taken the direction in the economy. (Faulty translation: refers to economic as opposed to political organizations—Ed.) In Russia, necessity obliged the Communist Party to govern. In Spain we are not in the same case. The proletarian culture and economy are frankly favorable to this transformation. Under a bourgeois regime we can understand the existence of a socialist group? But now?"

Here is the result of the PSUC's super-clever machinations—strengthening of anarcho-syndicalist ideology, a philosophy directed against all working-class parties, including the PSUC and against proletarian politics as such. These are the facts about "the unanimous demand of all parties to remove Nin from the Cabinet."

The attempt is made to link the POUM with a policy of terrorism and typical Trotskyist activity against the Soviet Union. Yes, unfortunately there are remnants of Trotskyist tendencies within the POUM, tendencies which are daily dwindling, and whose disappearance will mean the creation of a full-fledged revolutionary party. It is the irresponsible attacks of the PSUC which give aid and comfort to those tendencies. And it is the International, Communist Opposition which is carrying on a real struggle in practical and comradely fashion against remnants of Trotskyism by thoro discussion.

But as for terrorism: do the comrades of the Comintern refer to the invasion of POUM headquarters in Madrid, by YCLers, a bit of terrorism which destroyed these headquarters?

It is very simple to cable the imaginary contents of the POUM paper, La Batalla, to America, but not so easy to falsify its contents in Spain. Therefore the accusation is made here about the "exclusive devotion of the paper to 'attacks on the Soviet Union.'" We need but refer any reader to the "Spanish Revolution," English Bulletin of the POUM or to copies of the Workers Age in which excerpts have appeared from La Batalla, under the heading: "From the Spanish Workers Press." These show clearly that the role of the POUM is, in general, that of a proletarian revolutionary party, of a vanguard of the working-class. Despite its confusion and Trotskyite remnants it is offering the proletariat the best program for the Spanish Revolution of any party in Spain.

PLANTERS SEEK TO END LABOR SCHOOL

MENA, Ark. — Aroused over failure of the Arkansas house committee on education to grant an open hearing on Rep. Herman Horton's anti-sedition bill, H.B. 148, and a sudden recommendation for its passage, Commonwealth College lodged vigorous protests with Governor Carl E. Bailey.

Meanwhile the labor training school, which recognizes the measure as the spearhead of a cotton-planter inspired move against labor throughout Arkansas, wired to friends of civil liberties and supporters of workers' education in all sections of the country for immediate protests to these officials.

Anti-Lynching Bill Is Revised

WASHINGTON—A new Federal anti-lynching bill, which is really a revision of the well-known Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill, was introduced in the House of Representatives this week under the sponsorship of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

One of the objections which has been raised to the old bill was that it might be interpreted as applying to gang and racketeer killing and to clashes between factions in labor disputes. The new bill expressly provides that the term "lynching" "shall not be deemed to include violence occurring between members of groups of law breakers such as are commonly designated as gangsters or racketeers, or violence occurring during the course of picketing or boycotting incidental to any labor dispute."

The new bill also broadens the Lindbergh federal kidnaping act to include interstate kidnapings and lynchings such as the Claude Neal lynching.

The new bill, like the Costigan-Wagner Bill, is not simply confined to those in the custody of peace officers. It covers cases in which victims are hunted down and lynched by mobs or so-called posses before they are ever arrested and formally charged with a crime.

The new bill does not attempt to punish private individuals but concentrates on punishment of peace officers and State prosecutors who fail to protect prisoners before lynching or prosecute the members of the mob after a lynching has taken place. It still provides for civil damages against the county or counties in which lynchings occur.

The new bill also differs from the Costigan-Wagner Bill in that it provides definitely for the conduct of an investigation of a lynching by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, better known as the G-Men.

PICKET BAN FOUGHT BY FRISCO UNIONS

The entire labor movement of San Francisco is organizing a special campaign for the repeal of the Anti-Picketing Ordinance. This law has been on the California books for twenty years. A special election for its repeal has been forced for March 2nd, 1937.

Special emphasis is being laid on registration of all trade unionists so that they can participate in the election. A general committee has been established by the Central Labor Council, and small committees are being set up in each union to forward the work.

Attention!

Lenin's "Theses On Democracy" will be continued in next week's Workers Age, lack of space preventing their appearance in this issue.

THE NEW WORKERS SCHOOL BOOKSHOP

announces the
BOOK OF THE WEEK
SALE

offering all best sellers at
marked reductions.

The week of February 1st

We offer

Marx-Engels
Correspondence
at \$1.85

10c postage for all out-of-town
orders

Look for future offers in this
column of Workers Age

Labor Party and Youth

(The questions raised by Comrade Cunningham about the labor party are twofold, dealing with the Youth Division and the role of the Labor Party as such. Comrade Mautner's article, appearing on this page, is in reply to certain of the questions raised. We invite further discussion from our readers.—EDITOR.)

By STEPHEN CUNNINGHAM

The proper initial effort in building a Labor Party lies in the organization of voters. It is not necessary to point out that the Labor Party—American or English—is not the final battlefield of the class struggle; nor should it confuse those who are wedded to the building of a youth movement in America. Stimulating youth is nothing mysterious. The Catholics have developed tremendous influence over the young by staging almost hourly some spectacular affair to attract youth. In the fireworks brigade, nobody whoops it up louder than the fat Priest who lugs along his Roman candles.

While the Protestant Church also spends money and time on corraling the babies, the radical movement is now at the point in America where its own youth movement needs a dose of some vigorous purge. The hue and cry of the "aged" New York youth movements directed towards the creation of a Youth Division of the American Labor Party, might impress those who have doubts about political activity of any sort, and especially those whose past political activity has consisted of a shrug of the shoulders and a couple of wise cracks—but no registration and vote-casting.

The American Labor Party is now in the "lawyer" stage. The stuff being advanced by the boys who make a living out of technicalities of this and that, offers a real opportunity to those who have the power and influence to organize voters. But the cruel truth is found in the common observation that "what the labor leaders have neglected in political ABC's, makes a real problem." In the past, the average Tammany-purchased trade unionist has hardly earned his money.

The depth of the morass in which the Labor Party has floundered is no deeper than the height of intelligent organization, if intelligence is applied. What needs to be done is known by every Tammany stooge. They are simple rules.

1. Do the trade union enthusiasts register? Where?

2. Are the trade union members conscious of the filth of politics and schooled in fighting the Tammany (or Republican) machine in such matters as vote-stealing and voting fraud in general?

3. Do New York radicals know the tremendous need of naturalization among the working class, indeed among our most forward-moving unions? Some of the best-known radicals have notions that a naturalization drive (with anti-foreign pogroms in the offing) is a waste of time.

4. The careful study of minority problems in New York has revealed that the American Labor Party has been quick to grasp the racial angle of the political situation, but slow to meet the need of change from the original set-up. For agitation purposes radicals are quick to jump to the Negro question, but slow to recognize that a greater proportional vote exists in Harlem than in any other ghetto.* (The Youth Movement tried to settle the Harlem problem by picking a few under-age yes-men, even as their elders forgot that 200 other

minorities need more than yes-man recognition).

In general, the problems that confront this stage of the American Labor Party are so tremendous that all the energy that over-age Youth members can apply should be applied to the adult problems. Voters must be organized to start a Labor Party. After the actual launching of a Labor Party with Labor candidates, more attention can be devoted to the sons and daughters of recognized voters.

There is a sneaking suspicion that terrified Youth would rather talk about their own discrimination problems than settle down to an attack on vicious capitalist parties. The solution for political minded youth (over 21) is to proceed to organize voters.

Youth Needed In Labor Party Now

By M. S. MAUTNER

The question of the organization of young workers into a separate section of the labor party movement has, to date, been settled in fact. Contrary to the usual procedure in our movement, it is now doubted and opposed in theory. Comrade Cunningham, as I understand him, conceives of a labor party movement solely in terms of its ability to corral votes. In the face of this task, he naturally concludes that no one over voting age should be involved with problems other than vote-getting.

Now, it is quite true that in our years of agitation for a labor party, we were concerned with its general outlines, and not with its concrete politics. The latter can only be faced as they arise—and if they arise. The correct view of the labor party does not completely exclude its formal bourgeois character, as a participant in the capitalist electoral system, but, for us, the sole emphasis does not lie there. The labor party movement is no longer merely an idea to be fought for, but we must retain and spread some of the enthusiasm surrounding the awakening of the political consciousness of American labor, and act on the basis of our larger perspective, rather than yield to the very comfortable tendency of Tammany corruption with a union label.

Do the youth, below and above voting age, fit into the set-up now? I think they do. The fundamental strategy of the labor party movement is to lay the base for an organization. While attempting to avoid any mushroom activities, it certainly leans over backward in this direction. But, on the other hand, you can't put off labor party activity until you have complete labor party organization. The two go hand in hand. If the creation of a labor youth movement were to be made dependent on a full-fledged organization of voters, we would simply be side-stepping the problem.

As a matter of fact, the organization of a youth division, despite the inner-politics that were involved, is objectively a progressive step. Precisely because the Catholic Church and the Protestant youth organizations, and others, have such a hold on young workers and students, is it necessary to create a labor atmosphere for their youth activities. It will be their enthusiasm and drive that will aid the growth of the labor party. At the same time it will be the labor basis of this party that will mold the labor-consciousness of young people (i.e., non-working-class elements). This can be and should be one of the major functions of the labor party movement—a function not opposed to its growth as a decisive political factor, but necessarily integrated therewith.

* The Knickerbocker Democrats expected to elect Marcantonio on a Republican ticket with the assistance of Father Divine and the non-existent Harlem People's Party.

1 For the inside story of the exclusion of the POUM from the Catalan Government see Workers Age of January 23, 1937.

You Are Invited
To Our Theater Party

Monday, February 15th

ARTEF THEATER

to see

CHAINS

by H. LEVICK

● Reservations made by
phoning BRyant 9-0127

Prices range from
\$.75 to \$1.50