

# Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 25.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1937.

5 Cents a Copy

## Lansing Labor Shows Power

### "Holiday" Releases Eight Jailed Pickets; Unions Gain Many Members

LANSING, Mich. — In a most amazing display of labor's new strength and militancy, the local union of the United Automobile workers of America responded to the arrest of eight pickets by declaring a "labor holiday" to commemorate the "bravery" of the local sheriff who had dragged the wife of the union president, Lester A. Washburn, to jail at two in the morning of June 7th. Seven others, including Vera Christians, wife of a UAWA organizer, were "visited" around that time and dragged to jail.

Washburn, who had been at the conference of the workers of General Motors to draw up a list of demands to be presented when the present agreement expires, returned to Lansing at 2.30 A. M. the same night.

So great is the spirit, the solidarity, and the strength of the union movement here, that, altho the workers had no foreknowledge of these events, yet, by 8:30 A. M. the major auto plants were shut down completely. The response of other workers was also striking; busses, restaurants, everything was closed down in short time, including smaller auto plants, so that by noon all business was at a standstill.

From then on, until the company which had been picketed, the Capitol Machine Wrecking Company, capitulated to the demands of the union, the town of Lansing was run in orderly but determined fashion, by the workers themselves. Until the arrested eight were released, the union refused to negotiate. This demand was acceded and the eight were received by a

## STRIKERS PRESS FOR SIGNED CONTRACT



huge demonstration on the grounds of the capitol—over which flew the flag of the union!

The main center of the town was "barricaded" by thousands of auto workers and their autos, traffic control being completely in their hands. Special union permits were necessary for any activity. The halting of traffic, objected to by Governor Murphy, was ended only when the union said it would—after the pickets had been released.

In addition to the tremendous wave of confidence that has swept over the workers, who, for the first time, really understand their own power, great strides forward were made in organization by various smaller groups, while the local UAWA proper took in more dues than on any other day in its history.

## Lewis Favors Wage and Hour Bill; Hits Board's Powers

Hearings before the joint Congressional committee on the new Black-Connery Wages and Hours Bill included the favorable testimony of John L. Lewis and the outraged opposition of the National Association of Manufacturers, among others.

Both groups aligned themselves in accord with the general political and therefore economic outlooks which divide them, the N.A.M. declaring the proposal would strait-jacket American industry, without offering it anything in return. What was needed, the representatives of this exploiting combine of vested interests declared, was "protection (sic) from labor combinations in the field of commerce."

John L. Lewis, chairman of the C.I.O., saw the basic positive feature of the law as expressive of the new needs of labor, bringing "at last a glimmer of sunlight to millions of economic workers who now live in despair," while however hitting hard at the proposed powers to be vested in the Board of three or five as endangering the collective bargaining rights and contracts of the trade unions, the very independence of labor. He urged that the hours be specified at thirty to forty per week, according to

the conditions in the industry.

The bill is already being attacked as the "epitome of legislative tragedy," and within the Congressional committee sentiment has been expressed that its powers are wider than those of the NRA. It is expected, however, that it will go thru.

## Trade Unions Send Representatives To American Labor Party Convention

Approximately 300 delegates, 150 representing the affiliated trade unions and 150 representing the Assembly District organizations will attend the first convention of the American Labor Party to be held June 19 and 20 in the Sun Room of the Hotel Edison. One of the major questions likely to come before the convention will be drafting plans for an intensive campaign in the forthcoming municipal election.

Gov. Elmer A. Benson, Farmer-Laborite, Chief Executive of Minnesota, will be the principal speaker. Gov. Benson will speak during the Sunday session.

## POUM Hits Slanderers Of Barcelona Workers

### Reveals Solidarity of All Workers In May Days; Acceptance of "Revolutionary Front" Slogan By Masses Increases Party's Leading Role

The Workers Party of Marxist Unity (POUM) has made public thru its English organ, *The Spanish Revolution*, issue of May 19, its analysis of and position on the May events in Catalonia, under the heading of "The Barricades of May 3-7." It declares that militant actions of the workers were not the result of "fascist provocateurs" but, rather, "the responsibility, as is well known, falls directly upon the agents of Stalinism, the protectors of reformism and counter-revolution."

Highly significant is the description given of the uprising wherein it is made clear that "the P. S. U. C. (Communist Party of Catalonia) did not succeed in facing the workers of the U.G.T. against those of the C.N.T."

The statement, shows that the action of the workers was primarily

## CAPTIVE MINES STRUCK TO AID STEEL WORKERS

### Agreement With Railroad Brotherhoods Made By CIO; Huge Mass Meeting At Monroe Cheers Decisions To Re-Form Picket Lines

TEN thousand miners in the captive mines of the Bethlehem Steel and Youngstown Sheet and Tube companies were called out on strike by John L. Lewis as president of the United Mine Workers, in solidarity with the striking steel workers and for signed contracts in these mines. Seventeen mines, supplying coal to the steel mills, are affected by this militant strategy. "Any attempt to fill the orders of the steel companies," Lewis stated "will be resisted by the U.M.W. and members of the U.M.W. will not load that tonnage."

The effect of this move will undoubtedly be to the advantage of the strikers, and once again displays the great new spirit that pervades the American labor move-

ment thru the C.I.O. The close bond of economic interest between the miners and steel workers, the interdependence of their organization, one of the basic factors that made for the C.I.O., is continued.

The extension of the steel strike to the Bethlehem plant at Cambria, Pa., brought 12,000 more workers into the movement. Of great significance is the announcement made by Lewis that the C.I.O. had "entered into an entente cordiale to fight Bethlehem at Johnstown, Pa." with two railroad rotherhoods. The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen have called strikes on the Bethlehem-owned Conemaugh and Black Lick Railway.

Demanding that the government intervene to "disarm Tom Girdler" (president of Republic Steel), Lewis declared that: "Too much gas is being bought and used and labor is not going to swallow it with impunity."

On Sunday, in answer to the gassing of women by town vigilantes organized by Mayor Knaggs of Monroe, without disapproval of Governor Murphy, thousands upon thousands of workers from the auto and other industries converged on the town of Monroe to declare their solidarity with the strikers of Newton Steel, which supplies many auto firms, and their vigorous protests against the vigilante violence of the company's town mayor.

Homer Martin, president of the UAWA, stated that all the power of the union would be used to prevent auto companies from buying steel from the struck Newton plants.

Van A. Bittner, regional SWOC director, announced the definite intentions of reforming the picket lines, tear-gassed into temporary retreat by a combination of the town's "respectable" business and professional men marching side by side with local and imported hoodlums and thugs. Behind the terror, he said, was the heart of the open-shoppers, Republic Steel, who mobilized this drive against the SWOC. "There isn't a woman in the United States that six Monroe men with tear-gas guns can't lick," he sarcastically told the enthusiastic workers assembled.

In Youngstown, feeling against the open-company role of the Mayor and the city council is so great that not only has the Labor Congress declared itself ready for a general strike should the huge supply of ammunitions recently purchased by the town be used against the steel strikers, but the town's only newspaper is now urging Republic Steel to sign up.

ly a defensive one, and the task of the POUM as a party of the working-class was to be on the side of that class, to guide it in a strategic and orderly retreat.

"The May Days," the statement concludes, "showed that the only way out of the present situation is for the working class to take power. To arrive at this, it is necessary to coordinate the revolutionary action of the masses by building the Revolutionary Workers Front, gathering in all the organizations determined to completely crush fascism—a work which can only be realized with a military victory at the front and the triumph of the revolution behind the lines."

We present highlights of the statement of the POUM below:

### The Workers Hold the Streets

Barcelona, the workers' city, has just lived through glorious days. Just as the working class of Barcelona rose in arms against the fascist uprising of July 19th, from the 3rd to the 7th of May the workers showed that they would not allow Stalinism and reformism to snatch away their revolutionary conquests, won at the price of their blood.

Everywhere abroad, an attempt is being made to throw the responsibility for the bloody events of the May days upon the imaginary "provocateurs" in the pay of Trotskyism and therefore of international fascism. The revolutionary workers of Red Barcelona resist this slander. The Spanish Revolution, dedicated to their cause, must explain the fighting in Barcelona to the workers of the world.

### The Forces in the Field

The coup had been prepared and carried out by the P.S.U.C. and the Esquerra. The members of these organizations, however, were not the shock troops of the Gen-

(Continued on Page 5)





## Philadelphia Hospital Tries To Bar Physicians' Union

By MEDICUS

There is a very curious fact about hospitals. Everybody employed in a hospital beginning with the scrub women and orderlies, up to nurses, social workers, bookkeepers, assistant superintendents and Superintendent, all get paid, more or less, for their work except those who are of the most importance to the existence of a hospital—I mean the physicians.

When one considers that the majority of our physicians only make enough to keep their heads above water, it is a real sacrifice on their part to spend three or four hours every day in a hospital. However, the physician does it cheerfully as his contribution to the thousands of poverty-stricken people who, thru no fault of their own, can't afford to pay for their necessary medical care.

### Capitalist And Physicians

For a long time, the physicians of Mount Sinai Hospital suffered humiliation from the lay board, consisting of manufacturers and real estate men, apparently as compensation for their unselfish work for that institution. To enumerate only a few instances:

Clinic hours had been changed to the detriment of the physicians who must make a living, without so much as consulting them.

A sort of "Punch clock" system had been established whereby every doctor must sign his name and time of his arrival, and also the time of leaving. Should a doctor be unavoidably detained by an emergency case, he will be politely told to watch his time or resign.

Lately, they have instituted a spying system whereby doctors are investigated at the expense, of course, of the hospital. Two cases in point are these: One young struggling physician was refused appointment, because the investigator's report noted, "poor residential environments." Another was refused because he read "radical literature." There have been cases where doctors who spent 10-15 years in the hospitals had been dropped with no explanation at all.

### The Physicians Organize

Some seven months ago the doctors of the above mentioned hospital organized into a "Junior Staff of Mt. Sinai Hospital of Philadelphia." This organization included all doctors on the staff below the rank of chiefs. Of the 160 on the staff about 80% joined.

What were the demands? Very modest ones indeed!

First: a voice on the medical board to adjust medical matters, like clinic hours, etc. Second: that no doctor be discharged without a hearing before a board of 3 consisting of one from the medical board, one from the Junior Staff and a third to be elected by these two.

Let the reader judge whether these demands were preposterous.

The answer of Mr. Wurtzel, the president of the lay board was that since we had not asked for his permission to organize, we must immediately disband. If not, everyone of us was to be fired! But in order to show us that his heart was in the right place, he offered us a new Junior staff organization, formed under his auspices, the by-laws of which should be approved by him. The open shopper Mr. Ford can take a lesson from our Mr. Wurtzel in company unionism and despotism.

However, not yet ready to bring our just cause into the open, we disbanded our organization. But the president of the hospital, in spite of our submission, started on a course of reprisals. The first thing he did was to take away our staff room—where the doctors take their hats and coats off and discuss their

grievances. Then, not satisfied with this, he worked out a list of sixty to eighty doctors to be fired.

We felt that it would be a crime to wait much longer and we immediately organized again to stir up Philadelphia against this nefarious act.

When the matter leaked out in the Philadelphia press, the first thing the President of Mt. Sinai did was to call up on the telephone all our officers and fire them. We responded by sending him a list of 100 signatures of our members, condemning his summary discharge of our officers and demanding their immediate reinstatement.

The president of the hospital then told the press that the sixty and more doctors were scheduled for discharge not because of organization activities, but because they are incapable. But that statement is a double-edged sword. These doctors have worked in a hospital for long years, and if they are incapable, they must have killed many a patient, which would ruin the hospital. So he changed his alibi by stating later to the Press that the hospital is over-staffed—too many doctors, and that is why he is going to fire them.

### Labor Supports Physicians

But every body asks: why was it suddenly discovered that the hospital staff has double the needed number of physicians, and, what does it matter, since the doctors work gratuitously? It is plain as day that the contemplated mass discharge is a cruel attempt to check our organization. The former banker and real estate man, the president of our hospital, is simply mad with fear at the very thought of the men organizing.

Meanwhile, we have stirred up Philadelphia. We are mobilizing the entire labor movement and public opinion of Philadelphia on our side. The hospital is flooded with telegrams and letters of protest against our dismissals. Even Judge Glass, Mr. Wolf and Mr. Waber, all three members of the Board of Trustees of Mt. Sinai Hospital protested against it.

We will see whether the president of the hospital, the little saw dust Caesar can stand up against an enraged Philadelphia. We have just begun to fight.

## Union Drive In Knitwear

With a series of meetings of active Union members held in Williamsburg, Brownsville and New York, the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union is initiating a drive against the sweatshop conditions existing in the non-union shops. This action is a direct follow-up of the decision of the recent I.L.G. W.U. convention to give full support to the organization of the knitgoods and miscellaneous trades. A simultaneous drive will be made in New York as well as out of town.

In waging this struggle, the Union has to pit itself against the reactionary, labor-baiting Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce that has already instigated, through the complacent Police Department and District Attorney's Office, an investigation of Union records, and the arrest of Union officials on trumped-up charges. Impotent against real racketeers and in cahoots with tax-dodging racketeers they are trying to show signs of activity by talking of labor racketeers. But what they really want and mean is the smashing of labor unions in Brooklyn.

## EUROPE TODAY

(Continued from Page 4)

their own camps and to facilitate the betrayal of the masses of the people. All this is part of the "skill" and the "delicacy" mentioned by the Temps. The game is obviously planned in such a manner that, after an armistice is once declared at various fronts, the side which demands a resumption of hostilities shall be branded and hounded down as an "instigator of war."

Hitler Germany, at first, accepted the basic principle of the proposal with several specified amendments. The situation is such that German as well as Italian military circles realize they cannot pin garlands of victory to their standards with the number of soldiers (about 100,000 men) and the amount of material thus far staked; that, for victory, a multiple of the manpower supplied by them up to date is required and that they cannot afford such a high stake for a number of good reasons. On pressure from Italy Hitler later withdrew his acceptance again. One need not draw the conclusion that Italy is able to muster the forces necessary for a complete victory. It is the policy of fascist Italy to take a chance and, by bluffing, perhaps extort more advantageous terms from France and England.

No answer has yet been received from the Soviet Union.

\* \* \*

IN THE LEFT Radical Socialist paper l'Oeuvre a left Radical Socialist politician, Archimbaud, voices a protest against France's playing the stooge for Britain's policy. But this voice is certainly an exception among Radical Socialists. The majority of Radical Socialist leaders, headed by the Radical Socialist Cabinet Ministers, have co-operated all along in bringing about the compromise which guarantees to strangle the Spanish Revolution and to protect the general class-interest of the French-English bourgeoisie and especially the interests of the English-French capital invested in Spain.

\* \* \*

THE VATICAN, in its reply to the British proposal, approved of it. Considering the close relationship that exists between the Vatican and the militarist-fascist camp in Spain this is a sure sign that the fascists are eagerly at work to bring about the compromise because they no longer count on a victory.

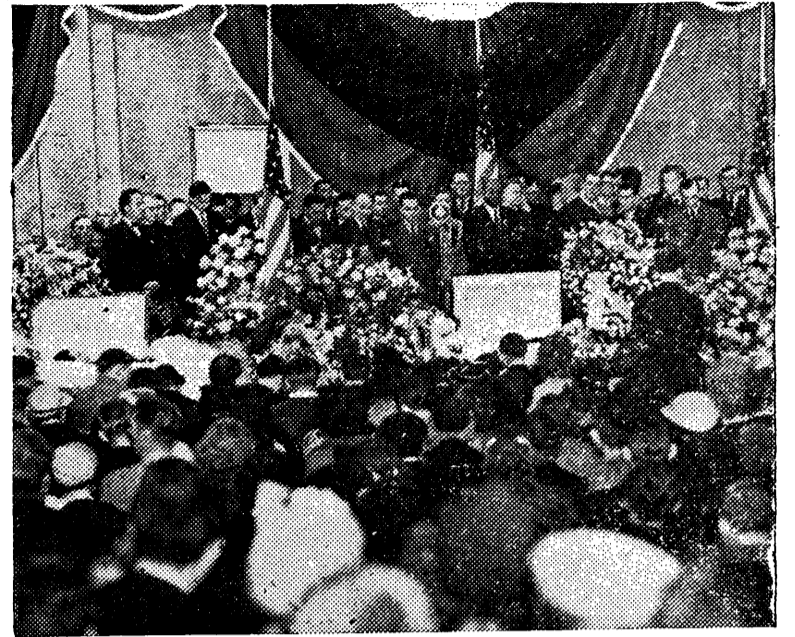
The London Times and the Paris Temps, the two leading news-organs of English and French finance capital, expressed simultaneously, and almost in the same words, their opinion that instantaneous success for the consummation of such a compromise is not very probable. But they are preparing the ground for future events.

\* \* \*

THE INTERNATIONAL working class, therefore, must not relax its vigilance if the current drive should not reach its objective at once or if it should be even dropped altogether for a while. The imperialist powers are working incessantly and tenaciously towards this goal and the cabinet revision in Valencia has re-enforced the support of this policy within the Spanish Government. The drive for mediation launched by England and France is patently designed to back the forces in the Valencia Government who are sponsoring a compromise.

The international working class, in its turn, must do everything in its power to mobilize the broad masses of the people in all countries against this attempt to garrot the Spanish Revolution. The workers must, in their turn, powerfully back the revolutionary forces of Spain.

## Impressive Demonstration At Funeral Of Eight Martyrs of Republic Steel Massacre



## Office Workers Convention

(Continued from Page 3)

50% tax will grow as the Locals begin their organizing drives. And there can be no doubt that this will be changed at the next convention.

The truly factional character of the convention showed itself most clearly when it came to the election of the General Executive Board. Here all pretense was dropped and a straight Merrill-caucus slate was elected. A proposal to leave a place open for a representative from the Chicago STB&AU, the second largest local of office workers in the country, which was represented through observers, was turned down. A General Executive Board was set up without a single representative allowed to any minority opinion at the convention. At a membership meeting of the BS&AU Merrill admitted that representation would have been given to the minority had they "behaved properly."

In the course of the nomination and election of the Executive Board, a very significant event occurred. One of the Hartford delegates seconded the nomination of Albert Epstein. Morris Yanoff was so startled by this act that he arose and shouted, "Who seconded that nomination?"

In a speech, severely condemning the bureaucratic conduct of the convention, Albert Epstein pointed out that once there was

a real mass organization of office workers, once leaders rose from the ranks, the C.P. would be unable to pack conventions and run them to ruin. The worshippers of Merrill, (the hero cult has reached the BS&AU, two songs about Merrill have already been distributed) looked upon Albert Epstein's criticism of Merrill as nothing short of lese-majeste.

But we want to see the complete unionization of the office workers. We want to see a powerful International Union. Only a democratic union can be a strong union. The membership must be inspired with self-confidence and militancy. Unity must be established in the Union through the cooperation of all constructive tendencies. This unity will not be achieved by stifling minority opinion or by depriving them of representation on leading committees. Such methods can only lead to internal strife. The danger of factional control was shown clearly at the last membership meeting of the BS&AU in N. Y. The shameful speech of Mervyn Rathborne can mean but one thing: The C.P. looks upon the trade unions it controls as Communist Party organizations. Whoever disagrees with the C.P. is an agent of the bosses and must be driven from the unions. Rathborne said it in so many words. What is this but disruption from within?

*Just Out!*

## The TRUTH ABOUT the BARCELONA EVENTS

By LAMBDA

a pamphlet on Spain including:

1. Lambda's detailed analysis of the class forces involved.
2. An extensive introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe, just returned from Spain.
3. The POUM's 13 point program to meet the present crisis.

5c a copy. Reduced rates for bundle orders.

Place your orders with

**WORKERS AGE**

131 West 33rd Street  
New York, N. Y.