

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 17.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1937.

5 Cents a Copy

House Passes Gavagan Bill

Southern Congressmen In Solid Block Against Bill

The Gavagan anti-lynching bill, this session's form of the Wagner-Costigan bill, was passed by the House of Representatives with a substantial majority. Lined up in solid opposition to this measure were the Southern Congressmen who ranted against this "interference with Southern institutions." All professed their great love for the Negro (in his place, of course) but declared the proposed legislation would lead to social chaos. What they meant was that it at least begins to recognize that lynching exists, that it therefore threatens the unchallenged rule of the reactionary planter-coal-steel baron oligarchy.

It is interesting to note that Speaker Bankhead, Democrat of Alabama, and, therefore an "outstanding leader" of the New Deal party of the Roosevelt administration, voted with the block of the Southern reactionaries. Thus it becomes clear that the actual enforcement of such a law and the elimination of lynching depends primarily on the strength of the organized workers and poor farmers.

Brooklyn Unions Form Council

Brooklyn and Queens trade unions were called upon to assist in the formation of a committee whose purpose will be to act as spokesman for labor in those boroughs and to serve as a clearing house in assisting unions engaged in strikes.

The call was issued in a letter signed by representatives of six unions organized as the Provisional Brooklyn and Queens Labor Committee. Unions with locals in Brooklyn and Queens were asked to send delegates or observers to a conference Saturday, May 22, at the offices of the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union, 765 Broadway, Brooklyn.

The purpose of the proposed committee would include defense of unions against repressive tactics such as those allegedly used by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. It would also assist in mobilizing public opinion against unfair methods of handling labor disputes by police, judges and other officials of Brooklyn and Queens.

The Provisional Committee met at the offices of the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union on Wednesday and elected Charles Rivers, district representative of the International Association of Machinists, temporary chairman, and Nat. Einhorn, treasurer of the New York Newspaper Guild, as temporary secretary. Louis Nelson, Manager of the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union presided. The letter forwarded to other unions today was also signed by H. Strassman, district representative of Local 22, I.L.G.W.U.; Mario Arcario, President of Local 217, Journeyman Barbers Union; and Samuel Freeman, Secretary-Treasurer of District Council No. 18 Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers.

The Wagner Act Ruling

an editorial

THERE is more cause for Labor being alert and vigilant than for being overjoyed and smug because of the Supreme Court verdict on the Wagner Act.

It would be idle to deny the fact that to the average American worker the Supreme Court decisions will mean that the federal government is for Labor's organizing. Regardless of whether this is true or not, the very notion or illusion should and will prove a powerful force for stimulating trade union organization.

One might then appropriately ask: how come that the Supreme Court should or could make such a

decision as will, even in a slight measure, be conducive—in effect if not in intention—to the welfare of labor? Have these nine young men of Wall Street suddenly switched class allegiance? And is the Wagner Act an unmixed blessing? In the answer to these questions lies the real significance of the decisions.

At the outset, we hasten to underscore the fact that neither Hughes nor Roberts has performed "a miracle" in rendering these verdicts. Hughes has completely ignored his own line of reasoning in the Guffey Act and the Schechter case. This

(Continued on Page 4)

MILITARY DICTATORSHIP NEW DANGER IN SPAIN

Imperialist Forces of England and France In Plot To Replace Caballero Government By National Cabinet Under Miaja Rule

NOW that Franco's Italian troops have been decisively defeated by the Spanish anti-fascist forces, the imperialist cliques dominating the Foreign Offices at London and Paris are busily at work setting into motion operations calculated to rob the Spanish masses of the fruits of their victory and to tighten the stranglehold of capital over that country. In a United Press dispatch of April 15, Frederick Kuh reports a "new plan to end the Spanish war at the expense of the present leaders of both

16, 1937):

"Suppose Franco should be defeated on the field of battle. . . . Then it would be England and France—seconded, of course, by Germany and Italy—who would take decisive measures to block the emergence of a socialist Spain under a proletarian regime. Then it would be England and France, working thru the bourgeois liberals in Spain itself, who would attempt to force upon the country a counter-revolutionary military dictatorship, . . . who would strive to set up a 'national concentration' government, embracing the conservative elements of the present regime together with some of the more 'reasonable' fascist chiefs."

Such a course is but the logical consequence of the despicable diplomatic course followed by Tory England in alliance with People's Front France for the last year; the way for it has, moreover, been opened by the whole policy of the People's Front as practised by the government parties in Spain. The persistent and shameful denial that socialism constitutes the essential aim of the Spanish masses in the present struggle only facilitates the reactionary maneuvers to "save the country from socialism." At the same time, the efforts of the People's Front regime to dissolve the Workers Militia into a "non-political" bourgeois army is bound to paralyze the effectiveness of mass resistance to any counter-revolutionary crusade in the future. Nor can it be ignored that the People's Front, thru the protection it affords to bourgeois liberalism, is actually fostering those treacherous elements who may tomorrow go to make up the "government of republican concentration, appeasement and reconstruction"—that is, the government of bourgeois counter-revolution.

Careful observers have forecast this danger for some time. The Workers Age sounded a clear note of warning four months ago (Jan.

MILITARY DICTATOR?



General Miaja

on the continuation of the war to victory. But the United Press reports that "left wing political quarters" are involved in the plan for a military dictatorship. A diplomatic correspondent of the London Daily Herald asserts that the plan for the Miaja dictatorship has already "been outlined discreetly to loyalist and rebel army leaders and that their first reactions to it were favorable." "It is suggested," the report significantly concludes, "that if the military men on both sides agree, political leaders would have to accept the plan."

The danger is great and imminent. The "great democracies," England and France, together with a section of the Spanish People's Front, are preparing to collaborate with Franco's forces to drive the Spanish people under the yoke of capitalism once more. Will they succeed in their nefarious plot? The answer to this can be given only by the Spanish workers and peasants—and by the labor movements of England and France!

A. L. P. Hits Tammany Trick

Tammany Hall and its allies were bitterly attacked this week in a statement by Alex Rose, Secretary of the American Labor Party, for "beginning the Municipal Mayoralty campaign, this early in the season, with their usual political chicanery and underhanded methods." He declared that a bill introduced into the State Senate by the Bronx Democrat, Julius S. Berg, requiring the Labor Party to hold a primary, in September, was "a cheap artifice by

Pact Blocked By Hepburn

Hall Tries To Provoke General GM Strike By Auto Union

The General Executive Board of the United Auto Workers Union opening its sessions in Washington last Monday was faced with the Oshawa strike still deadlocked and demanding action. Proposals for a general strike were being weighed carefully altho there was no doubt in anyone's mind that General Motors had double-crossed the union after agreeing to meet with an Oshawa Committee of the union. President Martin stated that GM had really broken the contract with the UAW when it refused to meet with CIO representatives in Canada.

Feeling in the plants in the United States is running high. Workers consider it as a blow against their gains secured thru strike action here. As a result there are reports that in many plants production is being slowed up as a protest against GM's trickery.

Premier Hepburn has extended his saber-rattling to include other unions. In an abusive statement against CIO leaders he expressed the fear that the CIO might attempt to organize the gold fields and warned that Lewis "and his gang will never get their greedy paws on the mines of Northern Ontario." In the Oshawa developments the hard-boiled anti-union attitude of the Premier has gone a long way to strengthen the opposition of GM to a settlement of the issues involved.

Also the so-called pro-labor Mayor Hall is complicating matters by utilizing the strike for his own political advancement. He is attempting to force the hand of the UAW by demanding a general strike in all GM plants in the U. S. A. and threatens to call on the workers to withdraw from the CIO union if that is not done.

The roles in the strike of both Hepburn and Hall are of interest in the sense of illustrating the unreliability of the so-called friends of labor. Both Hepburn and Hall were considered as pro-labor liberals. Of Hepburn's liberalism nothing remains. He stands exposed as a blatant nationalist and an open tool of big business. Mayor Hall going along with the workers, for his own political interests, is now beginning to act a role which ostensibly strongly pro-labor, in reality plays right into the hands of GM. Both cases illustrate the necessity of labor keeping such politicians at arm's length and replacing them by trade unionists thru Labor Party action.

the local Democratic machine to try to seize hold of the ALP nominations."

The Berg measure, according to Mr. Rose who is the Secretary-Treasurer of the United Hatters, Cap & Millinery Workers Union, would enable thousands of "Tammany ward healers" to vote upon the American Labor Party's nominations, rejecting the wishes of the majority of workers and progressives who make up the party's membership.

White Collar "Lefts" Ignore C.I.O. In Conference Call

By STATIST

An amazing call for a conference to be held in New York City has been issued by four white collar organizations for Saturday, April 17th. We quote below the most significant section of the call: "Certainly no American Federation of Labor Union of white collar and professional workers can refuse to seriously consider the possible assistance it may render toward increasing the prestige and strength of the A. F. of L. among other white collar and professional workers." At a time when the A. F. of L. is attempting to disrupt the C.I.O. unions, at a time when the A. F. of L. is denouncing the sit-down strikes, at such a time these "left" unions call upon the white collar workers to increase "the prestige and strength of the A. F. of L." The following unions signed the call: American Federation of Musicians, Local 802; Bookkeepers', Stenographers' and Accountants' Union, No. 12646; American Federation of Teachers, Local 5; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, A.W.P.R.A. Council.

Lest anyone attribute the call to an oversight, it is necessary to relate the actions of the C.P. majority in the Executive Board of the BS&AU, one of the signers of the conference call. When the call was read at the April Executive Board meeting of the BS&AU, Albert Epstein of the Progressive League strenuously opposed the above-mentioned section of the call. He proposed that the BS&AU delegates be instructed to present the pro-C.I.O. position of the union at the conference. President Merrill ruled the motion out of order. Brother Epstein, refusing to discuss technicalities, then proposed that to the resolution on the organization of white collar workers passed at the Tampa Convention of the A. F. of L., the following be added as instructions to the BS&AU delegates to the New York conference; "Whereas, John L. Lewis, in a radio address delivered on December 30, 1936, called for the organization into trade unions of white collar and professional workers, therefore be it resolved that this New York Conference of white collar and professional unions call upon the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. to aid us in the organization of the white collar and professional workers."

The motion was defeated by Lewis Merrill and his supporters. It is clear from the above decisions that the call for "increasing the prestige and strength of A. F. of L." is not accidental, but is inspired by the Communist Party's doubtful stand on the C.I.O.

Another test of the attitude of the C.P. forces to the C.I.O. came in relation to the forthcoming Eastern Seaboard Conference of A. F. of L. office workers' locals. Harry Fox of the Progressive League moved that the BS&AU delegates be instructed to work for the postponement of the conference in order to avoid a split on the C.I.O. vs. A. F. of L. issue. He argued that it is inadvisable that the first conference of office workers should result in a split. He said that a sharp clash on the C.I.O. question is inevitable because of the active participation at the conference of William Collins, A. F. of L. organizer who is scheduled to deliver one of the main reports. Upon the defeat of the above motion, it was moved that our delegation present a pro-C.I.O. resolution to the conference. This was also defeated. A motion to give the C.I.O. unions equal recognition with the A. F. of L. at the conference by inviting a speaker from the Textile Workers Organizing Committee was also defeated. Finally, Albert Epstein

man, General Manager of the Joint Board of Dressmakers Union be invited to speak at the conference. made a motion that Julius Hoch-This was adopted after much opposition by leading administration board members. Even after Lewis Merrill came out in favor of this proposal, Anne Robbins and Morris Yanoff argued against it. And Anne Robbins showed her opposition to the very end by casting the lone vote against the motion.

It is not enough to favor the C.I.O. within the confines of the Executive Board. Far more decisive are the public declarations that one makes.

The workers must be made aware that only the C.I.O. is capable of organizing the unorganized white collar workers. Reliance upon the A. F. of L. means that this section of the workers of this country will remain unorganized forever. In short, no pussyfooting on the C.I.O.

LABOR MOVES

(Continued from Page 2)

ists, there is law and law—law against labor and law for capital. That is why Justice Miller of New York could very well thunder: "The court won't recognize any property right in their jobs. Absolutely not."

William Allen White has recently done a little thinking on the larger aspects of the sit-down strike. Some of his observations we will discuss in a subsequent article. At this point, it is necessary, however, to emphasize that Mr. White is all wrong when he talks about workers getting hold of Mr. Chrysler's "tool." American economic life has long ago passed from the "tool" stage to manufacturing and from manufacturing to mass production. Socially as well as economically, there is all the difference in the world between a tool and a machine and between a small and medium machine shop and the huge plants employing tens of thousands of workers.

The growth of the demand for enlarged rights for labor is almost parallel to the growth of industry itself. The evolution of industrial development is clearly reflected in significant changes in the organic composition of capital. The sit-down may today be used in small scale production units, that is, in small plants, or even in offices. But, as a problem, it grows out of the relations of mass production. Its social and economic implications assume significant dimensions only in that stage of capitalist economic development in which the mass production industries predominate. Labor is awakening in 1937. Labor was beginning to wake up in 1837. But a hundred years ago we had no sit-in or sit-down strikes as problems challenging frozen conceptions and ruthless ruling class authority.

The use of the sit-down obviously has nothing to do with the degree of progressivism harbored by the workers or their leaders. In recent weeks, members of the most conservative A. F. of L. unions have been scoring quick successes by sitting down. It is because of the economic roots and potency of the sit-down strike that conservative as well as progressive unions are beginning to resort to it. That is why the opponents of judicious use of the sit-down strike are strike-breakers in effect. This is true whether they get paid as editors of trade papers or as president of the American Federation of Labor. It is because of Chrysler's role in the war against the sit-down that he is now being hailed as a new Messiah of big business. For example, we find the

LABOR LEADERS ON WAGNER RULING

JOHN L. LEWIS, President of the United Mine Workers and head of the CIO: An astounding judgement. The quibblers of ancient Greece were intellectual sluggards as compared with our Supreme Court. Apparently the destiny of our republic and the well-being of the population depend upon the legalistic whims and caprices of one man.

Yesterday the Guffey Coal Stabilization Act was struck down. Today the Wagner Labor Relations Act is sustained. If today the Court is right, then yesterday, forsooth, the Court was wrong.

The Court is as variable as the winds, and the people wonder how long they are to be victims of its instability. Obviously the situation needs change. The President's court plan is the immediate answer.

HOMER MARTIN, President United Auto Workers: Had the Act been effective a few months ago the strikes in the automobile industry would never have happened. . . .

Beginning immediately, the international union will start a concerted drive among Ford workers. Henry Ford is not bigger than the United States Government. The Supreme Court has given its decision and the law will act. Henry Ford can do but one thing—recognize and deal with the union, even at the price of changing his mind. Others changed theirs including the Supreme Court.

CLINTON S. GOLDEN, regional director for SWOC in Pittsburgh: The decision to our minds does the following things: Brings to an automatic end company unions in the steel industry because, as we

following by Chris Sinsabaugh in the *Automotive Daily News* of March 27, 1937:

"But one thing seems certain—the sit-down frontal attack, labor's greatest asset to-date, seems to be on the way out and Walter P. Chrysler is the man of the hour, the head of the corporation which has stuck by its guns and which has refused to yield an inch its determination to hear everyone in a labor squabble regardless of affiliation.

"Maybe this present labor controversy, which has had the sit-down for its foundation stone, has been a blessing in disguise for the country as a whole. Emboldened by its success in tying up production in General Motors and Chrysler plants by the kidnapping process, unions have tried similar tactics in other cities and towns throughout the United States, producing an epidemic of sit-downs, a machine-gun that mowed down all resistance."

This same issue of the *Automotive Daily News* features Chrysler's picture with the caption: "He ate the canary."

Towards A Sound Labor Movement

It's folly to look upon the "sit-down" as a passing fad or as a mania. The job of every worker, the job of every labor organization, the task of the working class as a class is to make the Chryslers and the Sloans, the Freys and the Greens eat crow in their opposition to the sit-down precisely because it is an effective weapon of labor rooted in the soil of the economic life of the country, in its present stage of development. That is why we cannot repeat too often: let no one ask "is the sit-down legal?" Rather, let all workers in the big industrial plants of the country act and organize so as to make the sit-down legal through its practical widespread and effective use. This will aid the primary interests of the workers as a class. This will help lay the foundation of a sound labor movement. Here we have all the justification we need for hailing the sit-down or any other weapon of working class struggle.

understand the decision today, the Wagner Law, as applied to steel, is upheld. . . .

The decision is consistent with the trend of the times. It definitely establishes the SWOC in the steel industry. We are delighted beyond words at the impetus this decision will give to the campaign, but we should like it known regardless of the decision our campaign had gone so far that complete success was inevitable.

SIDNEY HILLMAN, President Amalgamated Clothing Workers: These decisions demonstrate the desirability of the present court proposal. In the present situation, the interpretation of the Constitution with respect to labor problems depends upon the state of mind of the members of the court. There is no difference between coal mining, held beyond the regulatory powers of Congress, and the manufacturing of clothing.

DAVID DUBINSKY, President International Ladies Garment Workers Union: The decision destroys the efforts of predatory, open-shop employers to perpetuate sweatshop conditions, economic slavery and the company union. Labor will now advance to its rightful position as a real participant in industrial democracy. The wave of union organization cannot now be stopped.

GUSTAVE A. STREBEL, Executive Director American Labor Party: The decision is a great victory for progressive government. It opens the doors for the orderly adjustment of labor problems, for the settlement of the many injustices in effect thruout the land. This to us is the modern 'Missouri Compromise' held valid.

This is not the time to stop our insistence upon the enactment of President Roosevelt's imperative plans for court reform. Our judicial system must be reorganized! Never again must there be the grim spectre of a reactionary Supreme Court on a sit-down strike, holding the nation's future in peril because of its dilatory tactics. Never again must the nation's safety be endangered by a gamble, as in the Associated Press case, of one judge's whims. Five to four decisions must go.

CHARLES ZIMMERMAN, manager of Local 22, ILGWU: The decision of the Supreme Court, if properly used, can be a weapon in the hands of the labor movement. However, the trade unions must not rely upon the law alone to achieve their aims. In the final analysis it is our organized strength that will decide the issue.

JUST OFF
THE PRESS!
Spring Issue

The International
CLASS STRUGGLE

Order Copies from
WORKERS AGE
131 West 33rd Street
New York City

EUROPE TODAY

(Continued from Page 4)

ernment which bears the responsibility for Clichy. The Communist Party has done and is doing everything in its power to soothe the justified anger of the masses and to placate them.

The general strike, called by the leadership of the Paris trade unions, was forced upon it by the spontaneous movement of the workers in a number of plants. The leaders of the Paris trade unions finally took command in order to check the tide of mass action, true to customary reformist practice. In this they succeeded admirably. The general strike of half a day's duration petered out as a result of this leadership. The leaders of the Paris trade unions declared emphatically that the strike was not aimed at the government, limited it to half a day, and waived the pressing of concrete demands upon the government by this strike, stifling all agitation for economic gains suggested by the workers in the plants.

The leadership of the Paris trade unions is virtually in communist hands.

Further developments will depend on whether the anarchists succeed in obtaining a real mass influence and whether they will be able to consolidate and organize it. The anarchists have learned a great deal, primarily from the events in Spain. While the official Communist Party, day by day, keeps trampling under foot the fundamental principles of communism—(today even the framework of the party is predominately composed of reformist elements which have swelled its ranks under the banner of the people's front)—the anarchists, on the other hands, are moving towards communism.

The anarchist proclamation says among other things: "We can only marvel at the solicitude in behalf the 'democracy' evidenced by the cardboard-Jacobins of the Oeuvre (organ of the left wing Radical Socialists) when they write: 'Just look and see—it's got to be pointed out—what we have gained by our intolerance which is bent on claiming all liberties for ourselves while denying them to others!' We can only reply with the famous remark of Robespierre, a true Jacobin: 'There is no liberty for the enemies of all liberties.'"

It is obvious that this viewpoint does not coincide with the old anarchist doctrine.

If the people's front policy in France is to be carried on after the massacre at Clichy and after the surrender to big capital without any serious opposition from the working class—what will be the result?

Unrestricted liberty for propaganda and agitation by the fascists while the working class renounces all action of protest. Simultaneously the surrender of the government to big capital and exploiters of industry will drive large numbers of recruits into the arms of fascism. The petty-bourgeois elements, in ever-growing numbers, will furnish a rich source for fascism, exposed as they are to the ever-growing exploitation of big capital and left without recourse by the people's front government and through the constant decline of action of the working class. The behavior of the Radical Socialist Party indicates that a change of sentiment among the petty-bourgeois elements is already beginning—a change in the direction of fascism.

Philadelphia

New Workers School
329 Pine Street, Phila.

Classes in
FUNDAMENTALS OF
COMMUNISM
CURRENT EVENTS
Every Friday Night