

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

Vol. 6, No. 28.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, JULY 10, 1937

5 Cents a Copy

Japan Attacks Soviet Union

U.S.S.R. Prepares Defense But Urges Peace

An increasingly tense situation developed last week in the Far East. Evidently believing that it could take advantage of the Soviet Union's internal crisis, the Japanese militarists broke loose and perpetrated a number of deliberate aggressions upon the U.S.S.R. at the Manchoukuan frontier, culminating in the sinking of a gunboat on the Amur River.

On June 29, aiming to parry a Japanese thrust, the U.S.S.R. had agreed to withdraw troops and boats concentrated at Bolshoi and Sennefu Islands in the Amur River, thus dropping its claim to sovereignty over these islands. The next day, Japanese-Manchoukuan land forces made an unprovoked attack upon a group of three Soviet gunboats at Blagoveschensk, sinking one of them after some sharp fighting.

On July 1, the Japanese Cabinet, in emergency session, demanded that the Soviet Union immediately evacuate all territory claimed by the Japanese puppet-state of Manchoukuo. Japanese troops were reported mobilizing on the borders.

The Soviet Union is taking immediate measures of defense. At the same time, Litvinov stressed the fact that the Soviet Union was ready to submit the issues, sharp as they are, to discussion and peaceful adjustment.

Japanese imperialism will soon discover that, despite internal difficulties, the masses of the Soviet people are ready, as one man, to rally behind their government against the foreign aggressor. And in this they will be supported by many millions of working men and women throughout the world.

WPA Slashes Begin 12,000 Fired

Nearly 12,000 W.P.A. employees in New York City were discharged without even a day's notice last week as a result of the new "economy" drive of the federal government. Before October, 22,000 more will lose their jobs since it is announced that the city's W.P.A. rolls will be reduced from 169,000 to 135,000 in that period. These figures do not include the federal arts projects, where many thousands are due to lose their jobs also.

The callousness and brutality with which these discharges took place are unparalleled even in W.P.A. history. Not one day's notice was given; no appeal was allowed; and all protest was outlawed under threats of severe reprisals. The thousands whose jobs were taken away from them are now thrown on the pitiful resources of home relief.

Sporadic outbursts of resentment occurred at various points, especially on the education and arts projects, but no general movement of protest. It is necessary for the labor movement and all progressive-minded citizens to realize that the ruthless slashing of relief is a direct menace to themselves as well and that they must take some action before it is too late.

MILITIA LOOKING FOR SCABS TO "PROTECT"



Scene at the Franklin Gate of Bethlehem's vast Cambria plant But the strikers picket lines hold firm!

Chautemps Wins Decree Power

Franc To Find Its Own Level; New Taxes On Bonnet's Program

The cabinet of Premier Chautemps was granted, last week, the emergency financial powers that the previous cabinet of Leon Blum had been unable to obtain. By a vote of 380 to 228 in the Chamber of Deputies and 167 to 82 in the Senate, the new government received the power to issue emergency decrees that will not have to be submitted for parliamentary ratification until three months after their promulgation.

George Bonnet, Finance Minister, lost no time in putting into practice his program for "saving the franc" by inflation, devaluation and more taxation. One decree abolished the September 1936 regulation as to the fixed gold content of the franc, leaving it free to find its own level. It is believed that the franc will now be quoted as 25 to the dollar instead of 22 as in the recent past.

The French exchanges, closed for a few days, were reopened July 1.

Having received the vote it required, the Chautemps Cabinet will probably adjourn the Chamber and Senate until the autumn so as to avoid any parliamentary criticism. An increase of indirect taxation on articles of mass consumption

Britain and France Prepare to Recognize Franco Regime

Ready To Grant Belligerent Status To "Placate" Fascist Powers; Negrin Government Protests Attitude Of "Great Democracies"

Acting together as a fascist block, Germany and Italy continued last week their intensive diplomatic drive to advance their own interests in the Spanish situation and to render as much aid as possible to Franco's fascist forces. At the fifty-fifth meeting of the so-called Non-Intervention Committee in London on June 29, Dino Grandi and Joachim von Ribbentrop both categorically rejected the Anglo-French proposal that England and France should fill the gaps created in the patrol blockade of Spain by the recent withdrawal of

The Communist Party, which hesitated many hours before it finally voted for the socialist Blum's request for emergency powers, very promptly decided to grant these extraordinary powers to the liberal Chautemps. And Chautemps was, of course, able to manage the conservative section of the Senate which had been responsible for Blum's resignation.

Dubinsky Protests A. F. of L. Scabbery In Cleveland Knitgoods Strike

In a scorching telegram to William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in which he charged that A. F. of L. organizers in Cleveland, Ohio, had, on June 30, escorted strikebreakers into a knitwear garment plant where 700 members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union are on strike and beat up the pickets, David Dubinsky, president of the I.L.G.W.U., directly accused the head of the A. F. of L. of "condoning the strikebreaking acts" of his organizers in Cleveland despite the established jurisdiction of the garment workers union in the knitwear industry.

Over 2,000 knitwear workers in four knitting mills have been on strike in Cleveland for the past three weeks. The strike is for

higher wages, shorter work hours and union recognition.

Mr. Dubinsky reminded President Green in the telegram that when John L. Lewis accused Green from the platform of the convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in Atlantic City on May 12 of attempting to sabotage the settlement negotiations last Spring between the United Automobile Workers and General Motors in a telephone message to Governor Murphy of Michigan, Green wired to the convention a denial of that accusation. "The conduct of your authorized representatives in the current Cleveland knitwear strike," Mr. Dubinsky declared in the telegram to Green, "goes a long way towards nullifying the value of your denial at that time."

SWOC WINS PACT IN INLAND STEEL

Truce to Precede Agreement; Strike Intensified on Other Fronts

Making public a report from the special Federal Mediation Board on July 1, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins rejected the allegations of the steel companies that the C.I.O. was "irresponsible." The report criticizes the steel "independents" for their refusal to negotiate with the S.W.O.C. and declares elections and collective bargaining, in accordance with the Wagner Act, essential to "industrial peace."

A truce, preliminary to a final settlement, was reached on June 30 between the Inland Steel Company and the C.I.O. thru the intermediary of Governor Townsend of Indiana. Upon the conclusion of this agreement, the Inland plants at South Chicago, Indiana, were opened and all troops withdrawn. About 14,000 workers are involved.

The truce provides for the following:

The Inland Steel Company agrees to recognize the S.W.O.C. as the collective bargaining agency for its own members. The workers will be taken back without discrimination. Workers are granted an 8-hour day and a 40-hour week, with time-and-a-half for overtime. Employees with five or more years of continuous service are to receive a week's vacation with pay. In matters of grievances, the decision of the state labor commission shall be final. This agreement will be put in writing if the National Labor Relations Board, in the case before it at the present time, decides that collective bargaining agreements, once reached, must be set down in written form.

There is, of course, little doubt that the N.L.R.B. will rule that an employer, once having reached an agreement with his employees, cannot refuse to commit it to writing. As a matter of fact, David J. Saposs, chief economist for the board, has already testified at the hearing on June 30 to that effect.

After originally agreeing to sign a similar truce, the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company backed out at the last moment. It is expected that its compliance will not be long delayed.

The preliminary agreement was characterized by Philip Murray, head of the S.W.O.C., as "a very fine settlement." Grim picket lines were transformed into cheering throngs as the steel strikers got word of the truce. A victory mass meeting was planned immediately.

Meanwhile, the struggle against Republic Steel and other "independents" that are still holding out, is being intensified. Mass picketing demonstrations are being planned for Johnstown, Pa., and other steel centers. James Mark, director of the strike against the Bethlehem Corporation at Johnstown and also president of District 2 of the United Mine Workers, announced that 60,000 miners were massing to take part in the picketing of the Bethlehem plants. At the same time, the S.W.O.C. chiefs appealed to Governor Earle to place the town under martial law so as to check the frantic efforts of the local authorities to break the strike. This appeal was strongly seconded by the heads of two big railroad unions, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen.

(Continued on Page 6)

New Pact for Cloakmakers

After two months of negotiations during which the possibility of a general strike arose more than once, a new agreement was reached last week between the New York Cloakmakers Joint Board of the I.L.G.W.U. and the employers associations in the industry.

The agreement will be for three years. About 35,000 workers in 1,500 shops in the area are involved with perhaps another 15,000 indirectly affected in other markets.

The agreement provides for wage increase of 10% for all piece-workers and a flat \$5 raise for all week-workers. A compromise on the union's original demand for the 30-hour week was included in the agreement, which provides for a work-week of 32½ hours, effective June 1, 1939, as against the present 35-hour schedule.

The new agreement was greeted by union leaders as "a victory for the Joint Board, the I.L.G.W.U. and the labor movement in general."

POWERS PREPARE TO RECOGNIZE FRANCO

(Continued from Page 1)
mise" provided belligerent status was extended to Franco. What the German reaction will be is not clear but it is expected that Hitler will hold out for more considerable concessions.

In all this maneuvering and counter-maneuvering, the great powers, democratic no more than the fascist, seem to be little concerned about the Spanish people or any interest it might have in its own fate; in fact, they proceed as if it were none of Spain's business what arrangements are made in London about its future. The Negrin government has already expressed its protest and indignation at this attitude of the "great democracies" but it finds itself utterly helpless because its whole policy has been to trim its course to

SP Hits POUM Persecution

We are gratified to report that the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party has sent the following cable to the Negrin government at Valencia protesting against acts of repression taken by that government against the P.O.U.M.:

"The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, U.S.A., meeting in New York, reaffirms support of your struggle against fascism but we urge restoration and preservation of civil liberties for all working class elements, even for those with whom there are strong differences of opinion.

"Request free speech for La Batalla and fraternal consideration for Andres Nin and other working class leaders.

"If Nin is brought to trial, we favor having present an international commission of workers. Only in freedom now for all working class elements can the struggle be won for freedom from capitalism and fascist tyranny.

(signed) ROY E. BURT
Executive Secretary,
Socialist Party."

suit Britain and France and to pin all its hopes upon these powers.

Mussolini's paper, Popolo d'Italia, declares editorially on July 1 that Italy would not under any circumstances withdraw her "volunteers" from the Spanish civil war.

**Philadelphia
New Workers School**
329 Pine Street, Phila.
Classes in
**FUNDAMENTALS OF
COMMUNISM
CURRENT EVENTS**
Every Friday Night

Civil War In Spain

(Continued from Page 2)

people in their hour of need, another government, a workers and peasants government, began to appear in embryonic form. To it the masses turned for guidance, for leadership, for orders. It was flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone: it enjoyed their confidence for it was the democratic and energetic expression of their own will.

THE DUAL POWER

But at Madrid the other government remained still strangely inactive. It no longer refused arms to the workers, for they had taken them and armed themselves. It no longer tried to compromise with fascism for the heroism of the Barcelona anarcho-sindicalists and P.O.U.M.ists had made surrender and compromise impossible. Casares Quiroga, the Prime Minister who had sought to meet a military uprising by going to bed, disappeared. Manuel Azaña, the President and ex-War Minister who had kept these monarchist generals at their posts for five years until they had completed their plans for revolt, fled to a monastery. The deputies who had filled the Chamber with their lyrical bird cries became silent and for the most part went into hiding or sought safety in Paris. New and more "left" cabinets were formed but without the intervention of parliament. Having failed to give the masses leadership, they were now forced to appeal to representatives of the masses to enter the "republican" government, lest the masses consolidate a government of their own, a government of the committees, a government of the workers and peasants. The republican politicians, those who were not too cowardly to remain, offered to head the government, in order to head off the developing proletarian revolution.

Where the workers, for the moment, found their

own head, they advanced with giant strides. Having reconquered Catalonia, they advanced far into rural Aragon. Having taken Madrid and Valencia, they reoccupied Castille and Valencia province. But the demoralized shadow government at Madrid continued to set the mark of vacillation, incompetence and the fear of the colossal forces it had to deal with, upon everything it did.

If we are to believe Leon Blum, and his public declaration on the question has never been denied, the Madrid government secretly assented to the shameful farce of "non-intervention" when he proposed it to them.

It possessed a 2,400,000,000 peseta gold reserve, one of the largest in the world outside of a handful of great powers; yet it made no serious attempt to purchase arms on a large scale for months, until it was too late. Nor did it remove, even now, the old monarchist officers where the prompt action of the working class had prevented them from declaring for the rebellion and had obliged them to assert that they had never wavered in their "loyalty" to the republic. In the months to come, all defeats were to be due to those two causes: lack of arms and treachery by unreliable officers!

Spain was being led by two governments: one, the cabinet of bourgeois republican politicians that had proved and continued to prove its incompetence and unreliability, a government that derived its authority from inertia and habit and from the theoretical support of a parliament that had ceased to function and had disappeared; the other, a half-formed government of committees, leading the masses, yet only partially conscious of its authority and role. Upon the resolution of the issue of authority between these dual and distinct organs of power—cabinet nominally parliamentary or committees that were the germs of soviets—depended the future of Spain.

Next Week: THE WAR AND THE REVOLUTION.

Publishers Meet for Crusade Against News Guild

Representatives of eleven large newspaper associations, assembled at a special publishers convention in Chicago last week, declared war upon the American Newspaper Guild. The resolution adopted reiterated "unalterable opposition to the closed shop for those who prepare and edit news copy and pictures for newspapers." There was, however, really no question of the "closed shop" for the Guild had made no such demand, limiting itself to the so-called "Guild" or preferential shop. Very little attempt was made by the assembled publishers to disguise the fact that what they were out for was to destroy every vestige of trade

unionism and collective bargaining in the editorial departments of the newspapers of this country.

A great outcry was also raised about the "freedom of the press" and horrified attention was called to the fact that the Guild had taken a stand on such questions as the Spanish civil war and court reorganization—as if publishers conventions had never gone on record on current issues or as if the convention decisions of the Guild bound its members to exercise censorship on the papers for which they worked! These absurdities could not cover up the fundamental economic issue involved.

The publishers Convention went so far as to make the Guild's affiliation to the C.I.O. a pretext for the crusade. In joining the C.I.O., the Guild had—according to the publishers—"enlisted as a partisan in a tremendous public dispute now involving the entire labor movement in this country." Apparently remaining with the A. F. of L. would have made the Guild "impartial" in this "dispute!"

The American Newspaper Guild is now faced with a hard fight to beat back the publishers offensive and to spread and consolidate unionism in the newspaper field. In this struggle, it will surely have the full support of the entire labor movement.

L.N.-P.L. POSITION ON WORK HOUR BILL

(Continued from Page 3)

standards are properly set, will go far towards correcting the whole situation brought about by sub-standard employment. It would seem advisable, however, to give very careful consideration to those parts of the proposed measure which go beyond the regulation of labor standards. The National Labor Relations Act has set up a machinery for dealing with certain types of labor disputes. The experience under the Act has not yet been great enough to permit a judgment of the need for revision; however, it is naturally to be expected that some such needs will develop. It would seem preferable therefore to keep the legislation now before your Committee out of this field of handling labor controversies or their subject matter beyond the basic limitation of wages, hours, child labor, and "oppressive labor practices." Those sections of H.R. 7200 which provide for setting of a minimum fair wage and a maximum reasonable work week should be left for future handling.

If the government were now to enter the field covered in Section 5 of the proposed act, several of the specific provisions should be changed. Section 5 (a) lists, for example, standards to be considered in fixing a minimum fair wage. The experience with such standards under the Transportation Act of 1920 in the railway industry was very unhappy, the breakdown of the labor provision of that act was due in part to the provision of wage standards in the law. The vagueness of the phrasing of these standards and the setting up of some which are beyond the understanding of

The formation of a national maritime federation, composed of all ship and dock unions on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, seemed probable with the announcement last week of a meeting of seventeen maritime labor leaders called by John L. Lewis for July 7.

The meeting, to be held in Washington, will formulate policies for the cooperation of the various organizations with the C.I.O.

While Joseph P. Ryan, president of the International Longshoremen's Association, was not invited, it is said that he may be included ultimately since he has conferred with Mr. Lewis and plans another conference soon.

laymen, and probably of many lawyers, would interfere with the functioning of the proposed Labor Standards Board, even the Section 5 were to be adopted.

One other vagueness should perhaps be called to the attention of the Committee. In the definition section of the Act, Section 2 (a) (8) of the bill, the term "labor organization" is so defined as to include agencies which are not genuine labor unions. The definition seems to have been taken from the National Labor Relations Act but, since that act itself deals with the conditions of bona-fide labor organization, its definition did not need to exclude company-dominated organizations. The definition in H.R. 7200 would be improved probably by adding after the word "work" on line 15, page 4 of the bill as printed, the words "but shall not include any employee organization, association, agency or plant, established, maintained, administered, or assisted by any employer thru any illegal or oppressive labor practice."

The Fundamental Meaning Of The Bill

The effects of low wages and long hours in American industry are many and serious. The worker and his family are the first and the greatest sufferers but every part of the nation feels directly or indirectly the consequences of low labor standards. If we are to approach our housing problem upon a sensible basis, if we are to attack the problems of crime, of disease and of poverty generally, if we are to make any progress whatever in the stabilization of industry and the prevention or mitigation of the periodical depressions from which we have suffered, we must find some way to raise the wages and hour standards prevailing in industry. Labor organization and collective bargaining are the natural and the most desirable means for bringing about this improvement in standards, but experience has shown us that employers have in their arsenals weapons which can prevent, delay or defeat labor organization. We are properly now guaranteeing to the workers those civil rights which open the way to collective bargaining.

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO WORKERS AGE

Enjoy your vacation at

BOWRY CREEK FARM

ACRA, GREENE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Most picturesque section of the Catskill Mountains

MODERN ACCOMMODATIONS — HOMELIKE COOKING
COMRADELY ENVIRONMENT — INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

Rates \$16.00 per week

REDUCED FARES TO CATSKILL

Directions: To Catskill by Hudson River Day or Night Line, West Shore and New York Central Railroad also bus lines. From Catskill our car will bring you to the farm if informed in advance. For information write to Milton Matz, Bowry Creek Farm, Acra, N. Y. or call New York phone TRafalgar 7-2085.