

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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Plot Truce In Spain

Britain Strives To Rule Spain Thru Puppet Military Regime

A proposal for an armistice in Spain, to be followed by "mediation," emerged from official quarters in London last week and was submitted to the loyalist government at Barcelona and to the Franco regime for consideration. The exact provisions of the proposal are not known but it is understood that the idea of a "national concentration" government, to be composed of bourgeois republicans today in the loyalist camp together with sections of the insurgent leadership, operating under the control of Anglo-French imperialism, was suggested. Plans for a monarchist restoration and even for the partition of Spain, may be included. Such a "solution" would, of course, involve some arrangement with German and Italian interests in Spain.

Behind the scenes at Valencia, feverish efforts are being made to prepare the way for capitulation in the form of a British-sponsored "compromise." The bourgeois republicans and ex-monarchists, together with extreme right-wing socialists, are particularly active in this work. Among the masses of the people, especially among the rank-and-file socialists and the members of the trade-union federations, these developments have aroused dismay and bitter protest. In the top circles of the People's Front, too, there is growing dissension. The Stalinist leaders are, apparently, very much afraid that the consummation of the Anglo-French scheme would drive them out of power and perhaps expose them to persecution and suppression as the bearers of Russian influence in Spain. A serious shift in the cabinet seems to be in the offing.

The Future of the Wagner Labor Act

By M. PETERS

IN the current session of Congress, one of the most controversial, and certainly one of the most important, problems to come up will be a consideration of various amendments to the Wagner Act. In view of the important part this piece of legislation has played and is playing in the progress of labor, it is only natural that it should become the focal point for attack at this time. Thus it is that the employers are lining up behind the amendments introduced into the last session of Congress by Senator Vandenberg, while the reactionary officialdom of the A. F. of L., finding common cause with the employers in their fear and hatred of the C.I.O., are supporting the amendments to the Wagner Act introduced by Senator Walsh. The C.I.O., too, for its part, tho it has cause to be pleased with the National Labor Relations Act as administered by the present Board, nevertheless has some criticism to make of it and desires some changes in its operations. It will be seen, however, that the C.I.O. amendments are designed to further strengthen and implement the Act by plugging up its loopholes and are thus quite different from either the Vandenberg or Walsh amendments, which are aimed at destroying the act by changing its essential character.

It will be worth while, in discussing these proposals for changes in the Wagner Act, to review briefly its general purpose and its application by the present National Labor Relations Board.

The key to understanding the whole purpose of the Act is found in its preamble: "The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty

of control, and employers who are organized in corporate or other forms of ownership association, substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce. . . ." Involved in this statement is a direct recognition that the employers, by their economic power and the very fact that they are employers, have an "unfair" advantage over unorganized workers. To equalize this balance and compensate for the advantage of the employers, it is therefore, necessary for the government to intervene directly to make possible effective collective bargaining. This program is the counterpart, in the field of labor relations, of the general program and purpose of the New Deal in bolstering up the capitalist system by balancing off the various "extremes" and keeping them in harmony under governmental supervision.

That collective bargaining does not, in fact, equalize the bargaining power between capital and labor, that it does not destroy the advantage of the employers under capitalism but merely describes certain limits within which this advantage may operate, is true and important. It is a fact, however, that, as operated by the present Board, the National Labor Relations Act is one of the most significant pieces of legislation, from labor's point of view, ever to appear in this country.

The bitter complaints against and the sharp denunciations of the Wagner Act that have been coming from employer circles are all based on its alleged "one-sidedness" and "partiality" to labor. Yet it is in this "one-sidedness" that its essential purpose is to be found. To guarantee labor the right of organization for collective-bargaining purposes, the machinery

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THE MAJESTY OF JUSTICE!

TESTIMONY was offered that Bridges hit Shoemaker on the head with a gun butt, but, since the indictment stipulated injuries on "the body and limbs" of Shoemaker, Judge Dewell ordered the testimony stricken out. He ruled that the head was not part of the body.—From a news item in The New York Times, dealing with the trial at Bartow, Fla., of the six former Tampa policemen charged with second-degree murder of Joseph Shoemaker, Florida socialist.

State Labor Board Frames New Rules

Employers are given the power to invoke the aid of the New York State Labor Relations Board in obtaining elections to determine sole-bargaining rights, according to regulations promulgated by the State Board last week. This procedure, contrary to that laid down in the Wagner Act and applied by the National Labor Relations Board, is likely to prove of great advantage to employers in precipitating elections at times and under circumstances unfavorable to the union.

The regulations also facilitate the splitting up of the workers in given industries or plants by making it virtually mandatory to recognize small craft groups as bargaining units, no matter what the vast majority of the workers may desire.

The Board also decided that certification of groups as sole-bargaining agents should continue for at least a year, altho this rule may be changed under exceptional circumstances.

ALP Wins 5 In Council

Second Biggest Party In City; Its Councilmen All Unionists

The American Labor Party will have five members of the new City Council of New York City, it became clear last week towards the conclusion of nearly a month of counting of the proportional representation ballots. Another councilman, elected as a Fusionist, has announced that he will work with the A.L.P. group.

B. Charney Vladeck, well-known socialist, was elected from Manhattan and will probably serve as the leader of the A.L.P. men in the council. The others are Michael J. Quill, transport-union leader, and Salvatore Ninno, I.L.G.W.U. vice-president, from the Bronx, and Louis Hollander, A.C.W., and Andrew B. Armstrong, typographical union, from Brooklyn. Charles Belous of Queens is the Fusionist who has announced his association with the A.L.P.

The new City Council will consist of 26 members—six from Manhattan, five from the Bronx, nine from Brooklyn, five from Queens and one from Richmond. At the moment of writing, thirteen Tammany Democrats have already been elected, with the possibility of one more from the Bronx; one "independent" Democrat; three Republicans, with perhaps one more from the Bronx; and three Fusionists; one of whom will work with the A.L.P. The A.L.P. will, therefore, be the second largest party in the council and will wield great influence.

It is especially gratifying to note that all of the A.L.P. candidates are prominent figures in the New York labor movement and are closely identified with the big trade-union organizations of the city.

SAFEGUARD YOUR UNIONS AGAINST DISRUPTION!

An Editorial Appeal

A NEW danger is hanging over the trade unions. Completely lost to all sense of responsibility and class solidarity, the official Communist Party has issued the monstrous slogan: "Drive the 'Lovestoneites' out of the labor movement!" They have even made it part of the oath prescribed for new members of the party. In their press and in their declarations, they repeat the same contemptible threat on every occasion.

What does this new Stalinist slogan mean for the labor movement? It means that the official Communist leaders, in response to orders from their superiors in Moscow, are preparing to launch a new campaign of disruption in the trade unions. It means that, in order to get at their political opponents—the "Lovestoneites," the Left socialists or the Trotskyites—they are ready to create dissension and provoke conflicts and confusion among the workers. It means that they have not the slightest scruple in sacrificing the deepest interests of labor for the sake of their own narrow, factional ends. It means that the Stalinist leadership has lost every trace of loyalty to the labor movement and to the working class!

And who are these high-and-mighty powers who have the colossal impudence to arrogate to themselves the right to prescribe for the labor movement who shall and who shall not be part of it—on the basis of whether you do or do not agree with their

policies and practices? What is their record in the labor movement entitling them to set themselves up as supreme judges to decide who should be "driven out"?

They are the same people who, from 1929 to 1934, did everything in their power systematically to undermine and destroy the existing unions and to replace them by dualistic paper-organizations of their own.

They are the same people who branded the United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and all other legitimate labor organizations that they could not control, as "company unions," as "fascist" or "social-fascist" outfits. They are the same people who heaped the filthiest sort of abuse upon John L. Lewis, David Dubinsky, Sidney Hillman and other trade-union leaders.

They are the same people who openly preached and practised the policy of union-smashing laid down for them by Losovsky, the head of the Red International of Labor Unions, in the following words:

"That we want to break up the reformist (i.e., non-Stalinist) unions, that we want to weaken them, that we want to disrupt their discipline, that we want to break up and destroy the trade-union apparatus—of that there cannot be the slightest doubt" (R.I.L.U. Magazine, Feb. 1932).

They are the same people who did not shrink even from strike-breaking and scabbing in their mad crusade of destruction against the existing trade-union movement.

They are the same people who stood behind the notorious Trade Union Unity League, that became such a stench in the nostrils of all decent workers.

They are the same people who, for years, bitterly opposed a labor party as an "agency of American imperialism" and then, later on, sponsored the idea of a "labor party from below" to be used against the trade-union movement and the trade-union leaders.

They are the same people whose shameless hooliganism disrupted the great Madison

Square Garden meeting called by the trade unions in February 1934 to express our solidarity with the heroic Austrian working men fighting against fascism.

THE MASK OF "LOYALTY"

In 1934, these American Stalinist leaders were suddenly ordered from above to make a right-about-face in their party policy. Overnight, they began dripping sugary phrases of "loyalty" and "devotion" to the labor movement. In contrast to their former sectarianism, they now became so "broad" as to embrace every reactionary and disreputable element in their trade-union and labor-party combinations. When the C.I.O. was born, their new-baked "loyalty" to the interests of labor did not prevent them from taking a very sceptical attitude towards it, from issuing the utterly reactionary slogan of "a powerful united A. F. of L." or from hampering and obstructing the C.I.O. movement on many fields. Here, too, they suffered a last-minute change of heart and now they try to pass themselves off as the sponsors and champions, in fact, the inventors, of the C.I.O.—not without serious damage to the industrial-union movement. Indeed, to a very large extent, the difficulties in which the C.I.O. finds itself today in a number of situations, are to be traced directly to the criminal irresponsibility of the Stalinites and their allies.

(Continued on Page 4)

Jay
LOVESTONE

"Auto Worker and
The Crisis"

DETROIT
Sunday, Dec. 12
2:15 P. M.
Detroit Institute
of Arts

Future of Wagner Act

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and, to a large extent, succeeded in tying up its application with hundreds of injunctions and appeals challenging its constitutionality. Since the Supreme Court decision last April upholding the law, this avenue, while not entirely closed, has been less available. Today, unable to use the Act for their own purposes, they are ganging up on the law on another way—by trying to destroy it thru amendments. A mere outline of the Vandenberg amendments shows on the face of it how this would work. These amendments would include among the "unfair labor practices" of the National Labor Relations Act the following: "coercion" to join a union by any worker or any other person; violation of property rights in a strike; compulsory assessments by a union for political purposes; holding of office in a union by a non-citizen; taking part in a strike that has not been voted for by a majority of the workers involved; taking part in a strike to force an employer to break a contract or violate a law; refusal to sign a contract after an agreement has been reached and striking in violation of a contract. In addition to these "unfair labor practices," the Vandenberg amendments would permit employers to petition the National Labor Relations Board and force elections at times and under circumstances to their advantage and make illegal any agreement between the workers and employers arrived at while the case is pending before the Board. Finally, a union would be punished for any infraction of these rigid restrictions by being forbidden to collect dues! No extended argument need be made against these "amendments". Their purpose is not only to restore to the employers the full measure of all advantages they enjoyed before the Wagner Act but to force back the labor movement to a position of impotence, saddled with all the old obstacles to unionism and with some new ones to boot!

The Walsh amendments to the National Labor Relations Act, endorsed by the A. F. of L., would accomplish the same things by more roundabout means. They would rob the Board of its discretion and its realistic approach on the question of the bargaining unit and force it to declare any craft a separate unit whenever a majority of that craft want it, without regard to the desire of the rest of the workers or to any of the other considerations that determine the course of the Board at present. This would be a way of forcing upon the workers by law the impotence they shook off when they struck out for industrial unionism under the banner of the C.I.O. It

would undermine and destroy the labor movement by tying down the mass of workers to a form of organization that makes trade unionism really impossible in the basic industries. Thus do the separate approaches of the employers and the A. F. of L. converge in one common stand to the detriment of labor organization.

Progressive Amendments To The Wagner Act

To defend the purpose and policies of the National Labor Relations Board from attacks from these sources, however, does not mean that we must take the view that all is as it should be and no changes need be made in the Wagner Act. On the basis of the experience of the C.I.O., it is possible and necessary to work out a series of amendments to the Act that will tend to make it even more effective for labor.

First among these necessary amendments must be a definite statement in the Act that a refusal to sign an agreement with a union after agreement is reached is an "unfair practise". Tho this was stated to be the intention of the Act and tho President Roosevelt mildly scolded Girdler for his refusal to sign during the strike in Little Steel, the lack of this definite provision in the Act is a serious shortcoming. Secondly, many of the union-smashing devices which are forbidden to individual capitalists are being used with impunity by associations of employers, employer-inspired "civic" organizations and local and state governments. The experience of the Maine shoe strikers, the Hershey incident in Pennsylvania and the events during the Little Steel strike, show where the danger lies. The Bethlehem and Weirton hearings now going on are proving that the companies can carry on all of the old "unfair labor practises" thru their domination of the political and social life of whole communities. The National Labor Relations Act may well be amended to cover these situations. Finally, the enforcement machinery is entirely unsuited to getting prompt compliance on the part of employers with N.L.R.B. orders. To enforce a decision, the N.L.R.B. must appeal to a federal circuit court to order compliance and only then take action if the

POUM MAKES NEW ADVANCES

(from the Independent News, Paris)

Barcelona, Spain. NEW sections of the P.O.U.M. have recently been established in many districts of Catalonia, in the Aragon, in the Levante and in Castille. We cannot give the names of the places where these sections have been organized, lest they be exposed to the repression to which the party is subject thruout Spain.

* * *

Lerida, Spain.

At the conferences of the food-workers and wood-workers unions held here recently, the P.O.U.M.ists obtained almost all of the votes against the Stalinites.

court order is not obeyed. But the courts are, more often than not, definitely on the side of the employers and unwilling to enforce a Labor Board order. Even where a lower court does issue an order, there can always be appeals. The five cases before the Supreme Court, today, to say nothing of the large numbers of injunctions against Labor Board rulings, as well as the cases on appeal in lower courts, testify to the crying need for an enforcement machinery that will really work.

In considering the Wagner Act and its application, it should be born in mind that this is but one fragment of the New Deal program and that it has the same fatal shortcomings and the same limitation as does the program as a whole. Under this heading, the first point to remember is that neither the Wagner Act nor any other piece of social legislation is free from the Supreme Court threat. The decision of the court last April is no guarantee that, in one of the pending cases, the court may not reverse itself. Furthermore, as long as such legislation passed by Congress must be based upon the commerce clause instead of the welfare clause of the Constitution, there is an ever-present if not ever-immediate danger that with the precedent of the Wagner Law established, it may be used against labor's right to strike because ob-

INDIVIDUALS GREETINGS — PHILADELPHIA

Bernard Rebalsky	N. Fishman	Comrade
David Peltan	M. Yonselson	Jim Thorpe
Jack Radel	George Davies	E. Askin
I. Morlinsky	A Faithful Friend	Daisy Sharpe
Netsky	Hannah U.	A. Little
Brodway	A Friend	Faith
Bail	E. K.	Judy Simpson
Berman	Sympathizer	Samuel R. Weintraub

Stalinist Jails in Spain

(We publish below the concluding section of the report by a Spanish militiaman on the private prison of the Stalinites in Valencia, the Santa Ursula. The first instalment of the report appeared in a recent issue of the Workers Age.—The Editor.)

Barcelona, Spain

THE worst feature of the prison is the fact that, systematically, there is put at the disposal of the bourgeois prisoners beds, tobacco, soap, etc., while class-conscious workers, deprived of liberty, are refused all hygienic measures, sleep on the bare ground and are starved.

Who was at Santa Ursula? In the months of March and April, there were doctors, priests, lawyers, business men, people who, because of their class ties, were considered enemies. But that soon changed. More and more of these bourgeois elements were liberated. Some known and avowed fascists were set free. Others were freed after a trial. And, more and more, proletarians arrived—old members of the Socialist Party, syndicalists, members of the P.O.U.M. The change was so marked that it was even discussed by those fascists who remained. And while they, the fascists, were being liberated, the anti-fascist revolutionists had to

viously, strikes "affect" interstate commerce.

And finally, the Wagner Act represents only one aspect of the New Deal program for labor relations. The other, and exceedingly dangerous side of the administration's labor program is the tendency to place labor organization under governmental supervision in some form. Tho this second aspect is not expressed today in the Wagner Act, yet, as part of the program from which the Wagner Act itself stems, it represents a very serious threat, against which labor must be vigilant.

NOTICE

We need, for our files, all available copies of the following issues of the Workers Age: No. 1, Jan. 2, 1937; No. 33, Aug. 14, 1937. If you will send them in to the Age office, it will be greatly appreciated

The Strawberry Mansion Unit (Philadelphia) of the I.C.L.L. greets the

WORKERS AGE

on its eighth anniversary and wishes success in its fight for communist principles

resort to a hunger strike—initiated by a group of syndicalists—to protest against their incarceration by the Stalinist G.P.U. and the People's Front government.

But there were, at Santa Ursula, also some bourgeois anti-fascists—aviators, journalists, volunteers at the front. One of them was the Italian emigre who, several years ago flew a plane over Rome and dropped anti-fascist propaganda on the Italian capital. He had come to Spain as a journalist in order better to defend the Spanish cause abroad.

Another category of prisoners—the conveyors of arms and planes who represented foreign manufacturing plants. After they would deliver one or two planes or some other material, they would be seized as "spies" or "dangerous individuals." Some inventors who had come from various countries to offer their patents—likewise anti-fascist emigres—after weeks of waiting, met the same fate. Another such "spy" was a Norwegian emigrant, a trade unionist who had brought to Spain a contribution of a million pesetas!

The blow delivered against the P.O.U.M. was thus one of the links in the chain of activity which represented systematic sabotage, even against the interests of bourgeois-republican Spain.

It must be added that the corps of prison guards, often the worst elements, frequently found itself incapable of preventing the escape of fascists. More than once, "fraternization" between the guards and the fascists took place in the cells. And after the party guards (composed of members of the C.P.) were replaced by the National Guard (formerly the Civil Guard of the monarchy), the latter declared that they had no "political interests" and that they were merely soldiers. This shows the extent of degeneration of a considerable section of the state apparatus on which the Communist Party and the People's Front government rest.

Santa Ursula belongs to the Communist Party. As a prison, it is relieved of all other control, placed outside the prisons of the state. Santa Ursula is one of the numerous prisons of the Spanish C.P. and of its Stalinist inspirers, from one of which Comrade Nin was kidnapped. Only the pressure of international anti-fascist organizations on the Spanish government will put an end to these terrible outrages.

A decisive struggle must be conducted against the terror exercised by the Stalinist clique in Russia and in Spain, a terror which they are trying to introduce into every working-class organization.

Safeguard Your Trade Unions!

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But, amidst all of these sudden and unexpected turns and twists, they have never wavered in one thing: in the promotion of their own narrow, factional aims without regard to the interests of labor as a whole—in their reckless, unprincipled demagoguery with absolutely no consideration for the consequences. To them, the interests of labor mean nothing; they neither understand them nor care anything about them in comparison with their own petty, partisan ends. That is why they have left such an unsavory reputation for criminal irresponsibility and charlatanism wherever they have shown themselves in the labor movement.

THE RECORD OF THE "LOVESTONEITES"

And whom do these people propose to "drive out"? The "Lovestoneites"! Our record is an open book, well-known to the

labor movement. While the Stalinites were busy splitting unions and breaking strikes, we were conducting an uphill fight to strengthen the trade-union movement thru a spirit of progressivism and militancy at a time when stagnation and apathy reigned everywhere. We fought dualism and union-smashing and fought it to a finish. From the very beginning we aligned ourselves with the C.I.O. and the new labor movement arising under its banner, sparing no effort at constructive activity in every field of labor struggle. We have every right to be proud of the splendid work our members have done in the auto workers union, in the I.L.G.W.U., in the rubber, textile, coal, steel and other trade-union organizations. Our record speaks for itself and we confidently refer to the members and officers of any union in which our people are to be found for a certificate of constructive activity. Can those who propose to "drive us out" do the same?

We have our differences with the leaders of the official Communist Party, sharp differences on practically every question arising in the course of the labor struggle. We regard their general policy on American and world issues as false and reactionary. We regard their trade-union policies and

practises as positively dangerous to the best interests of labor. But we do not, on that account, raise the slogan of "driving" them out of the labor movement; we do not on that account, call them "fascists." We do not regard ourselves as endowed with the right or the power to legislate for the whole labor movement or to decide who shall and who shall not belong to it. In the labor movement, there is room for workers of all sorts of political views and all sorts of opinions as to how the interests of labor may best be served. Thru free discussion and democratic procedure, the rank and file will themselves decide which policies they approve and which type of leadership they prefer. We, on our part have the utmost confidence in the experience and commonsense of the workers!

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

For the masses in the trade unions, it is therefore, not a question of whether they agree or disagree with us on this or that point, on this or that issue. It is a question of whether they are going to let the Stalinites make their political differences with us the occasion for disrupting and weakening those unions in which they may find them-

selves. It is a question of whether they are going to permit the official Communist Party to create turmoil and dissension in their ranks while prating about "unity," as in the old dual unionist days. It is a question we must all face!

We regard the empty threats and hysterical denunciations of the Stalinites with the contempt they deserve. They do not scare us one bit. But we are concerned for the welfare of the trade-union movement. The mad crusade of the Stalinites, while it cannot hurt us very much, can do serious damage to the labor movement by creating dissension and strife in its ranks precisely at the time when, because of increasingly difficult economic conditions, the workers need unity more than ever before. This must not be permitted to occur!

Trade unionists! Safeguard your unions against the Stalinist disrupters! Don't let them undermine the power and unity of your organizations by launching a campaign of extermination against some of the most loyal, devoted and constructive elements in the labor movement just because they don't happen to agree with us politically! Show the Stalinites that you don't intend to let them start their union-smashing all over again!