

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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Cabinet Out In France

Blum Tries To Form New Regime; Unrest Grows Among Workers

After several months of manoeuvring against each other by the three main components of the People's Front, the Radical-Socialists, the socialists and the communists, the Chautemps cabinet fell on January 14, officially foundering on the question of exchange control, which the communists and sections of the socialists demanded and which Finance Minister Bonnet strenuously opposed. When the communist deputies refused to sign the statement of confidence in the government's financial policy, the crisis came to a head; the resignation of the nine socialist ministers signalized the collapse of the second People's Front cabinet and the rupture of the People's Front itself.

For months previously, the Radical-Socialists, and Chautemps in particular, had striven to oust the communists from the government alliance and to reorganize it to the right so as to include the Flandin elements and even more conservative groups. The financial question provided an opportunity far from unwelcome to Chautemps. Behind the unexpectedly unyielding position of the communists is probably their strong dissatisfaction with the cabinet's foreign policy, especially its increasingly cool attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Within a few hours of the resignation of Chautemps, negotiations for the construction of a new cabinet began. First, Georges Bonnet, the reactionary ex-Finance Minister, and then Leon Blum, the socialist ex-Vice Premier, were entrusted by President Lebrun with this mission. Because of socialist opposition, the former failed in his efforts to form a right coalition excluding the communists; the latter is still engaged, at the time of writing, in trying to "reestablish on a broader basis" the People's Front regime of Radical-Socialists, socialists and communists. Dissolution of the Chamber and new elections are not altogether excluded as a possibility.

Meanwhile, unrest and discontent are spreading very widely among the French working masses, finding expression in a renewed strike wave and in growing hostility to the policy of compromise and surrender followed by the socialist and communist parties in the People's Front.

Police Threaten Harsh Picket Ban

A threat of increasing difficulties for labor unions in New York City in their conduct of strikes was indicated by Police Commissioner Valentine's instruction to officers of the Police Department on the restriction of picketing. While the right of peaceful picketing was not denied, police officers were warned that picket demonstrations and mass picketing must be prohibited. The officers were told to determine what constitutes mass picketing on the basis of the location and traffic conditions at the scene of the strike. These new restrictions will mean that effective picketing will be forbidden on busy streets—precisely where pickets must ap-

PRES. DUBINSKY AND C.I.O.

an editorial statement

THE address of President Dubinsky at the special meeting of the I.L.G.W.U. executive boards in New York last week, raises a number of vital questions of the greatest concern to every one who has the interests of the C.I.O. and the labor movement at heart.

Was Unity Possible?

It is our opinion that President Dubinsky is entirely too optimistic in his belief that there ever was any real possibility of sound unity emerging from the recent A. F. of L.-C.I.O. negotiations at Washington and that these prospects were blasted by the irreconcilable attitude of the C.I.O. leaders. From the welter of reports and counter-reports as to what actually developed at these conferences in the way of proposals and concessions, we are still unable to extract a consistent story but one thing seems perfectly clear from the very nature of the situation: However ready they may have been, for strategic reasons, to allow Green, Harrison and Woll to "negotiate," the real powers of the A. F. of L.—the craft-union chiefs

headed by Hutcheson, Frey and Wharton—never for a moment wavered in their determination to block any unity that did not mean the capitulation of the C.I.O. and the destruction of the industrial-union movement. The signed editorial of Daniel Tobin, himself an Executive Council member, in the January issue of the Teamster, states categorically that the A. F. of L. negotiating committee did not have plenary powers, did not, in fact, have the "power to make any kind of agreement without reporting back to the Executive Council." The strategy of the craft-union leaders was plain enough almost from the very beginning. Their whole effort was to reduce the issue from the broad question of industrial unionism to a series of involved jurisdictional disputes, each considered in isolation, and thus to break the common front of the C.I.O., so that each section could then be smashed separately. Negotiations would be dragged out interminably — any agreement reached would be ultimately voided at some essential point by the die-

hards in control of the Executive Council—and the C.I.O. would be left holding the bag, its ranks torn with speculation and confusion because of the uncertainty of the settlement. It seems to us, therefore, that the C.I.O. was fundamentally correct in insisting on a three-point minimum program as the basis of unity: industrial unionism for the mass-production and allied industries; free admission of all C.I.O. unions into the A. F. of L., with any conflicts to be adjusted thereafter; and some guarantee of security for the C.I.O. affiliates once inside the A. F. of L. from any reprisals or discrimination on the part of the craft-union officialdom.

The Tactic Of The C.I.O.

Such is our conviction based on our view of the essential situation. But, at the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that the tactics pursued by the C.I.O. in the course of the negotiations were little calculated to bring out the real strength of its case or to throw

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Dubinsky on Union 'Peace'

The criticizing the policy and strategy followed by the C.I.O. in its recent "peace" negotiations with the A. F. of L., David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, emphatically declared last week that his union would remain in the C.I.O. and continue to give its best support to the industrial-union movement. Mr. Dubinsky spoke at a special meeting of 1,200 members of the executive boards of the New York locals of the ladies garment union. The I.L.G.W.U., with over 250,000 members, is the third largest C.I.O. affiliate and is one of the most powerful and progressive unions in the country.

The burden of Mr. Dubinsky's criticism fell upon the conduct of the C.I.O. leadership in the "unity" negotiations at Washington some weeks ago. He insisted that the concessions the A. F. of L. was ready to make went a long way in meeting the vital demands of the C.I.O. and might have led to unity had the C.I.O. shown a greater readiness to come to terms. At the same time, Mr. Dubinsky emphasized that he had "never been for peace at any price" nor did he take such a position now. He referred again and again to the disastrous consequences of the division in labor's ranks, especially in this period of economic depression, and urged the speedy resumption of "peace" negotiations as well as the cessation of mutual "raiding," sug-

gesting that the C.I.O. confine itself to the organization of the unorganized and to expansion in the mass-production industries where it would have a clear field.

Quoting from a recent editorial in the Daily Worker, Mr. Dubinsky sharply denounced the unprincipled conduct of the Stalinites, who combine general phrases about "unity" with underhand intrigues calculated to intensify friction and promote dissension in the ranks of the C.I.O. and labor generally. He also pointed to the damage done to the C.I.O. by the Communist Party publicly parading as its authorized spokesman and representative.

"Altho we have not been consulted and have had no say as to its administration and policies," was Dubinsky's conclusion, "we will not withdraw from the C.I.O. because no good will be served by the general labor movement by such action. The principle of industrial unionism would not gain in the least. Secondly, we will not withdraw because of our definite conviction that peace will have to come in the near future and we want to stay in the C.I.O. to make our contribution to achieve it."

President Dubinsky's remarks were followed the next day by a brief interchange of press statements between him and John L. Lewis.

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(Read the editorial statement on this page—The Editor.)

STALIN CULT SUPREME!

THE diplomatic correspondent of the London Daily Herald, Labor Party paper, reports that, at or immediately after the present session of the Soviet "parliament," Stalin intends to bestow upon himself the dignity or title of "Father of the Peoples" or "First Citizen of the Soviet Union."

Indeed, a worthy culmination of Stalinist "democracy"!

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Big Vote for Ludlow Plan

The Ludlow resolution, providing for a national referendum to be taken before the declaration of a foreign war, was headed off by the administration in the House of Representatives last week after a hard battle and a very close vote. By this action, the House refused to release the war-referendum proposal from the Rules Committee, hoping to kill it there. Supporters of the measure declare, however, that the fight has only just begun and that, for the time being, the battle will be transferred to the Senate where a similar resolution was introduced some time ago by Senator LaFollette.

Representative Louis Ludlow, sponsor of the measure, had desired to postpone action on the question for some weeks in order to obtain adequate time for preparation and to allow popular sentiment to register fully. Thru the manipulations of Congressional leaders, however, the matter was hurriedly brought up on January 10. Thereupon, a special communication from President Roosevelt to Speaker Bankhead, impassioned addresses by leading Democrats and Republicans and considerable behind-the-scenes intrigue, were brought into play in order to swing the House and even then the vote was 209 to 188, so that a shift of only 11 would have changed the outcome. The bitterness and fury of the attacks on the Ludlow proposal, from Bankhead who charged that it was a "radical, revolutionary assault" upon the "American system" to the Daily Worker which branded it as "fascist," shows how seriously the referendium idea as an obstacle to their plans of driving the country along the road to war. On the other hand, the very closeness of the vote, despite tremendous White House pressure, indicates how powerful and widespread is the mass anti-war sentiment expressing itself as support of the LaFollette-Ludlow Amendment. It is noteworthy that,

FDR Consults Big Business

President Confers With Industrial Magnates On "New N.R.A."

Following a meeting with five outstanding industrialists, President Roosevelt last week invited 46 other big-business leaders to confer with him on January 19 for the purpose of developing a plan of "cooperation" between business and government. The five "economic royalists" with whom Roosevelt met in the preliminary session were Alfred F. Sloan of General Motors, the notorious Ernest T. Weir of the National Steel Corporation, Lewis H. Brown of Johns-Manville Corporation, M. W. Clement of the Pennsylvania Railroad and Colby M. Chester, board chairman of the National Association of Manufacturers. Chester, Weir and Sloan were closely identified with the American Liberty League. Present were also Secretary of Commerce Roper and Donald Richberg, once head of the N.R.A.

Three days later, President Roosevelt met with another group, this time a mixed aggregation, consisting of business men, Owen D. Young, Thomas W. Lamont and Charles Taussig; labor leaders, John L. Lewis and Philip Murray; and "brain trusters," A. A. Berle and Rexford Tugwell.

It was unofficially indicated that these conferences were the preliminary steps towards the drafting of some sort of post-N.R.A. device by which business would be enabled to engage in "self-regulation" and "self-policing" with government sanction and without regard to the anti-trust laws. Some such program was suggested in the President's message recently.

It is clear, as has been repeatedly emphasized in these columns, that for the last two years the administration has been moving in the direction of reestablishing the essential features of the N.R.A. piecemeal. The Wagner Act, passed shortly after the nullification of the recovery act by the Supreme Court, reconstitutes Section 7a in a new and stronger form. The wage-hour legislation now pending is intended to replace the minimum-wage and maximum-work-week features of the N.R.A. codes. And the plans for the "self-regulation" and "self-policing" of business, supplemented perhaps by some scheme of federal licensing of corporations, obviously correspond to the regulation of trade practices and production policies that formed such an essential feature of the N.R.A. code system.

while the demand to bring the measure out on the floor of the House came from Democrats and Republicans alike, the big leaders of both parties rallied behind the President in the intensive drive to prevent consideration of it. It was a vote cutting across party lines indeed, with the official spokesmen of both parties joining together to keep the road to war open and clear! The entire delegation of eight progressives from Wisconsin and the five Farmer-Laborites in the House, however, supported the proposed amendment.

After the vote, Representative Ludlow and his supporters declared that the fight for the war-referendum proposal would be continued in Congress as well as in the elections this year

Auto Union Adopts Anti War Resolution

(The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the International Executive Board of the United Automobile Workers Union at its session at Detroit on January 13.

—THE EDITOR.)

WHEREAS, an attempt is now being made by the organized press of the country to involve the American people in a conflict with Japan merely for the purpose of protecting the vested interests of a few large-scale American corporations in China, such as the Standard Oil Companies, and for the protection of such interests, American Marines and soldiers have been dispatched to China to remain in the war area; and

WHEREAS, labor is most vitally interested in any policy of this country which may involve the people of this country in a war with another nation, because of the fact that in a war labor does most of the dying; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this Executive Board does hereby give its whole-hearted endorsement to the constitutional amendment as it was originally introduced by Senator LaFollette and Representative Ludlow in Congress requiring a national referendum on the question of whether this country should engage in any war other than one of defense against invasion of this country; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the President of the United States immediately issue a warning to all American citizens and their families in the war area that an opportunity will be afforded to them to be removed from such war area and that, unless they afford themselves of such opportunity, no further protection will be given them by the American government and that, after having given full opportunity to all such American citizens and their families to be removed from such war area, the President withdraw all of the armed forces of the United States from China; and be it further

RESOLVED, that it is the expression of this Executive Board that the foreign policy of the United States shall not be form-

Wages-and-Hours Needed by Labor

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standards, at levels consistent with health, efficiency and general well-being of workers and the maximum productivity and profitable operation of American business." Not only does this sentence declare the pitifully low standards of the bill to be consistent with health and well-being of the workers, but it permits any court to refuse enforcement of even these standards should it be shown that they would cut into profits.

This provision, together with others of the same kind forbidding enforcement of the minimums where they "curtail opportunities for employment" or "curtail earning powers"—and together with the amendments added in the House requiring each order to be made as near as possible to the premises of the employer and delaying enforcement until after a waiting period of ninety days—all go to make of the bill at its present stage almost as much of a danger as an asset to labor.

The Machinery Of Administration

Not only has the character of the Black-Connelly bill been amended beyond recognition but its machinery of administration has been completely changed in the last few months. The administrative machi-

ulated or made dependent upon the protection of the vested or property interests in foreign countries of the large corporations in this country but rather that such foreign policy should express the whole-hearted desire of the American people for international peace, and be it further

RESOLVED, that, consistent with this position, we oppose the militaristic and war-like aims of the fascist countries and their aggressor policies against other nations and propose the strengthening of the popular boycott of Japanese goods and support direct aid to China; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Executive Board is opposed to any attempt to mask military expenditures for weapons of aggression under the guise of bringing a return of prosperity to this country. We believe the needs of the working people in this country require expenditures by the government for low-cost housing and relief expenditures for the unemployed. Armament, if any is necessary, should only be on the basis of protection against invasion and not to protect profits of United States big-business interests abroad.

PRES. DUBINSKY AND C.I.O.

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the responsibility for disunity where it really belongs, on the shoulders of the craft-union diehards dominating the Federation. Indeed, it has been our opinion for some time that the C.I.O. has not given enough thought to developing a really long-range policy on the "unity" question; nor has it, it seems to us, made enough effort to unite its own ranks on such a policy. On this, as on other ques-

nery outlined in the original bill was similar to the enforcement procedure of the Wagner Act. The Labor Standards Board was to issue orders and regulations which were to be enforced thru the courts. The Board was to be "quasi-legislative," like the National Labor Relations Board. According to the latest revisions made in the House during the special session of Congress, all this is done away with by entrusting the whole job of administration to a single official in the Department of Labor. This step was taken under pressure from certain A. F. of L. leaders who are at heart against minimum-wage legislation and have been trying to block such legislation for some time. It is not merely the consideration of the efficient handling of such an enormous problem which would in itself condemn the idea of leaving it to the Department of Labor. Effective administration obviously requires that those who violate the labor law should be prosecuted by those friendly to labor. Leaving it to the Department of Labor places prosecution in the hands of the Department of Justice, which has never been noted for its pro-labor sympathies.

The bill that is waiting in committee is today so confused, so complicated, so contradictory and in parts, of such dangerous implications for labor, that no good will come of it even if it should ever be reported out and passed by Congress. For labor, the problem remains one of working out a new bill—a simple, direct and effective program as outlined above—and of carrying on a vigorous and united campaign for it.

THE DEPTH OF DEGRADATION

IN a leaflet recently issued by the Communist Party, full of frantic but impotent abuse against the "Lovestoneites," we find the following:

"In the auto workers union, Lovestoneites have caused unauthorized strikes. Witness the Lansing, Michigan, general strike, playing directly into the hands of the reactionaries."

On June 9, 1937, the Daily Worker, official organ of the same Communist Party, declared in an enthusiastic editorial:

"LANSING'S WORKERS BLAZE THE TRAIL.—From every town in America, there comes this ringing acclaim today: 'Three cheers for the workers of Lansing! The 25,000 C.I.O. members in Michigan's capital showed conclusively what the workers can do when they move together, as one man. The one-day 'labor holiday' . . . achieved results.'"

What words are there to describe the degradation of creatures capable of turning what they themselves hailed "with ringing acclaim" only yesterday, a one-day "labor holiday" that was authorized by the union, into an "unauthorized general strike, playing directly into the hands of the reactionaries"—and all for the sake of some filthy factional end!

tions, there has been too much drifting in the sea of events, too much insufficiently considered action in a crisis, too little deliberation and consultation, too little regard for appearances and public opinion. . . . Insofar as President Dubinsky's remarks were directed against such shortcomings in the C.I.O., we feel that his criticism was quite in place.

Stalinites In The C.I.O.

Especially timely was Mr. Dubinsky's denunciation of the sinister role played by the Stalinites in the C.I.O. Within the last few weeks, it has become apparent that the Communist Party is engaged in an elaborate intrigue in the C.I.O., trying to foment dissension and, if possible, to provoke a split. Suddenly, out of the clear sky, after years of servile fawning, it has turned its fire upon Dubinsky and I.L.G.W.U.—an editorial in the Daily Worker, a cartoon in the Freiheit, the mobilization of "its" unions and, most contemptible of all, poisonous slanders "unofficially" spread thru every channel at its command. The Stalinites thrive on chaos and dissension generally: in this particular case, they see great advantage to themselves in straining the relations between the I.L.G.W.U. and the C.I.O. To them, the interests of the C.I.O. and of the labor movement mean nothing; their own narrow factional interests are supreme.

As we have indicated above, we do not see entirely eye to eye with President Dubinsky on how trade-union unity may best be achieved. Such differences are quite legitimate and should be cleared up by discussion conducted in a constructive and fraternal manner. But it is nothing short of a crime against the C.I.O. to question Mr. Dubinsky's loyalty to the movement, to attempt to launch a heresy-hunting drive against him and the I.L.G.W.U., or to carry on a whispering campaign for the purpose of stirring up dissension and setting off one section of the movement against another. It is playing right into the hands of the A. F. of L. officialdom, all of whose manoeuvres are also directed towards splitting

Knitgoods Union Meets Problems of Crisis

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phant—it is annoying but there is no danger. Their policy, of trying to eliminate from the union active members who differ with them politically, has met with much opposition on the part of our union membership. The result is that these people are becoming an isolated little group, just as they were when they maintained their dual unions. They are operating today as fractions of the Communist Party, issuing leaflets and literature from the Communist Party to the members of our union as well as of other unions. The workers are very resentful of outside political parties attempting to solve their inner-union problems in such a manner. Altho the Joint Council Knitgoods Workers Union tolerates all political views and opinions, the Communist Party leadership is mistaken if it thinks that it will make any headway by attacking the leadership and active members of a union by calling them "fascists" and "enemies of the working class" without proof of reasons.

Recently, the Communist Party members adopted the policy of boycotting all union activities, such

as picket lines, etc. The only thing they will do is come to membership meetings and make noise. The membership of our union, however, knows who they are. Previously, they paraded under the name of so-called "non-partisan" groups. Today, they act officially under the C.P., so that it is much easier for our members to realize from where all their disruptive activities emanate.

The Joint Council has succeeded in mobilizing the best elements among the knitgoods workers—elements who defended the union against these people when they had their dual union three years ago and who will also defend their union from its enemies outside and from those who attempt to weaken it from within.

Today, the knitgoods union is firmly established and is known as a progressive trade union, participating in all activities of the working class, nationally and internationally.

The Educational Department of our Union is functioning well and has established classes in which a great number of our members participate. New recruits in the labor movement are being educated to know what a labor union is and what it should be.

Toward Labor Unity

The economic crisis thruout the country and the present split within the labor movement weaken labor. The knitgoods workers paid a price for this internal strife, especially in Cleveland, for many years one of the most outstanding open-shop centers in the knitted outerwear line. In Cleveland, we had to fight on the picket lines against members of the A. F. of L., instead of against the employers and scabs. Due to that internal split, the Cleveland situation did not materialize as it would have had unity been maintained in the ranks of labor.

We are convinced, however, that unity will be established within the American labor movement despite the opinions of the leadership of both organizations, the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. The pressure and needs of the lower ranks will force them to establish unity and, when this is done, not only the knitgoods workers but the general labor movement thruout the country will be the gainer.

possibility of effective control and direction; they will be overcome with the stabilization and consolidation of the movement that is now beginning.

In and thru the C.I.O., the American labor movement has risen to a new, higher level of working-class organization and unity from which there can now be no retreat. When sound unity is achieved—as it must and will be, sooner or later—it will be achieved on the basis already firmly laid down by the C.I.O.!

CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

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by
Bertram D. Wolfe

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growth of the C.I.O., beyond the