

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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PROLONGED CIVIL WAR THREATENS SPAIN

C.I.O. WILL NOT BE DISSOLVED

Letter To Green States Council Has No Right To Suspend Unions

The Committee for Industrial Organization thru its chairman, John L. Lewis, announced to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, that its jurisdiction in the present dispute over industrial unionism and the right to form the CIO was still not recognized, and that therefore, the unions comprising the industrial bloc would not appear before the Council on August 3rd, as the latter had demanded.

A meeting of the CIO was held last week at which it was decided that they would keep their ranks intact that: "The Committee for Industrial Organization will carry on." The letter noted that the charges lodged by Frey had been received but that the unions involved "desired to point out to you that the proceedings you contemplate are wholly unwarranted by the constitution of the A. F. of L." This refers to the fact that unions can be expelled only at the conventions of the Federation, and then by a two-thirds vote. Suspension, which is threatened would "disqualify the unions affected from having any delegate representation in the convention and in this case is intended to have the effect of an expulsion."

The letter further dealt with the charges of dualism and fomenting of rebellion and insurrection, which, it said, were based merely on the fact that the CIO intends to organize certain mass production industries. This latter is violently opposed by the craft leaders of the Council. "They fear the inclusion of these unions as a jeopardy in their own dead-hand control of the federation. Satisfied now, as they have been for years, they regard the labor movement in America, as having culminated. They are mistaken; it has just begun, and if it cannot continue within the federation, it will be because of the desparate course of the Council itself."

This wide-open threat of a separate federation clearly shows that the situation is reaching a head. Members of the Council will probably go ahead with the threatened suspension, since the affair is of a life and death nature for the crafts. Green characterized the letter from the CIO as "a speech for propaganda purpose rather than a direct reply to the invitation of the Executive Council to meet and answer the charges filed."

The steel drive is not merely throwing the boss associations into a frenzy but is trodding the toes of some of the crafts. Murray, chairman of the Steel Workers Organization Committee, announced that the steel drive would include a drive among the workers employed in fabricating and processing plants making steel products. There are skilled craftsmen included in this category, claimed by some of the existing crafts, especially by John Frey's Metal Trades Department.

Nelson Scores U.S. Aid In Knitgoods Strikebreaking

Victory For Union Bosses Leave The Association

July 27th, the date set by the employers' association for the establishment of open shop conditions has passed with a complete victory for the Knitgoods Union. Eighty-six bosses were claimed by the Association—all were supposed to break the agreement. On the set date, however, only one shop tried this, with the result that the eighty workers immediately went on strike. The loyalty of the workers to the union, and the utter impotence of the bosses' association is amply demonstrated.

(The WORKERS AGE is printing below a special interview granted one of our correspondents by LOUIS NELSON, Manager of the Joint Council of the Knitgoods Workers Union. Dealing with the problems of the workers in the industry, these statements are of importance in the present situation, where the possibilities of a general strike exist. For purposes of easier reading, the question and answer form has been omitted.—EDITOR.)

"The Metropolitan Knitted Textile Association is today nothing but a shell, having only a small percentage of the shops behind it. This is mostly because of a certain amount of competition between the two types of work in the industry and the resulting differences between the employers. There are the knitted sweaters, usually called men's and boys', and the ladies sportswear. The ladies sportswear season starts August 15th—so, generally speaking, they are against settling with our union. The men's and boys' season is on now, and these shops are interested in settling. Even in the first group, there is some division, because some manufacture directly for the trade (retail) and others for jobbers. The jobbers need the workers now, to make their shipments to the retailers on time. So these also wish a settlement.

"In those shops that were in contractual relations with our union, a status quo agreement has been reached. And to show the weakness and lack of base of the Association, it is only necessary to point to the fact that 125 employ-



Louis Nelson

ers, employing 7,000 workers, have agreed to the status quo, and indicated their willingness to sign a new agreement, on the basis of the Union's demands. You should know that the status quo refers to the conditions of the agreement which expired on July 15th. Those shops which have violated the status quo are being answered with picket lines—500 hundred of our workers are on strike in these places, mostly in New Jersey.

"Up to about six months ago, the Metropolitan, which consists of the New York employers was at odds with the National Association, which includes everybody connected with the knitgoods industry—jobbers, retailers, manufacturers, makers of knitting machines, everybody except the workers. The National Association was the backbone of the open-shoppers and naturally this was the basis of their fight with the Metropolitan. Today with most of the employers out of the Metropolitan, the organizations have made up and are conducting a vicious campaign against our union.

"They have resorted to all sorts of tricks. Their latest has been to turn to the Federal Government in order to get scabs. I have documentary proof showing that the U. S. Employment Bureau has been sending scabs not directly to the shops, but employment agencies. Even this dirty trick did not work, for the workers reported to the union and the matter is being taken care of. If necessary we will throw a picket line around the

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STILSON WINS FREEDOM

J. V. Stilson, who, under the name of Butkus, has become a well-known journalist in Lithuanian workers' circles, has won his unconditional release thru the untiring efforts of workers organizations and individuals grouped around the Stilson Defense Committee.

Stilson was arrested on December 21st, 1935, by Federal authorities on a charge which had not been prosecuted for 18 years! In 1917, when Stilson was secretary of the Lithuanian Socialist Federation, federal agents raided the premises of "Kova" (Struggle), the official organ of the federation, then published in Philadelphia, and found anti-war leaflets. Stilson was arrested and accused of writing these leaflets. The trial, held in the atmosphere of the war, resulted in a verdict of guilty and a stiff sentence. Stilson refused to serve and for 18 years lived an underground existence in constant fear of arrest. But he continued his work in the labor movement and contributed many articles to labor papers under the name of E. Butkus.

The unconditional release of Stilson will allow him to return unhampered to the labor movement to which he is devoted. This is in every sense a victory for the workers. A celebration was held by the Lithuanian Workers Federation on Friday, July 24th, which was well-attended.

FRENCH STRIKES REACH FARMS

A partial resurgence of the strike movement, due to the counter-offensive of the bosses, began last week. This movement is extending to the farm-hands, who are also conducting "stay-in" strikes. Farm laborers in the North and near Paris, numbering somewhere in the thousands, refused to work on many large estates as the season for harvesting wheat approaches. At the same time, 25,000 metal workers, 4,000 shoe workers, 8,000 cannery workers, walked out, making a total of about 85,000 workers on strike.

Jouhaux, head of the trades unions, has denounced the strikes and is assisting the government in its frantic attempts to stop the movement. He denied that any sympathy strikes were to be called for the farm laborers and exhorted the workers to "keep calm."

Pressure from the bourgeoisie on the Blum government was increased as Rightist members of the Chamber demanded to know "what had happened to Salengro's declaration." (Salengro had promised the use of force to evacuate strikers).

Workers Hold Mountain Passes; Fascists Threaten Siege

The counter-revolutionary forces of the fascist monarchist bloc have settled down to a war of long duration in which all attempts will be made to starve out the capital, Madrid. General Mola was repulsed in his attempt to march straight on the capital by some heroic fighting on the part of the part of the armed workers and peasant detachments about 60 miles from Madrid, in the mountain passes of the Guardaramas. San Sebastian which was lost by the rebels is being heavily shelled again in an attempt to regain this territory. The strength of the fascist forces which numerically consists of 28 provinces out of Spain's 50, is far more dangerous than even these numbers would indicate. They control Spanish Morocco, almost all of Southern Spain, Oviedo the munitions center of the North and other territory.

The rebel forces have entrenched themselves in strategic points so that they form a ring around the capital. While the government has been successfully sending out workers' detachments to throw back actual drives, a siege looms large in the plans of the fascist. Mola has threatened to cut off the water supply—a maneuver which can effectively counter the most heroic fighting.

That these generals were able to lead such a movement shows the extraordinary laxness of the People's Front government, displaying "tolerance" towards its enemies. Known as monarchists and fascist, these and many others were not removed from office but were exiled, to the Canary Islands, to Morocco, etc. where they were able to maintain their connections and establish new ones.

The revolt began in Spanish Morocco which shows that the workers parties have not carried out their duty in respect to the oppressed colonial people. Whereas the freedom of the Moroccans is a necessary part of the workers' struggle, the question was "forgotten", so as not to embarrass the People's Front. But the economic needs of the colonials did exist and they turned to the fascists for leadership in this struggle.

International capitalism has, to a great extent thrown its weight on the side of the fascist-monarchist bloc. In the international zone at Tangiers, Morocco, the representatives of France, Italy and England have refused to allow the government ships to land for refueling. It is very interesting to note that the president of this zone is an Italian fascist. France, also a government of the People's Front, has refused to aid in the struggle of the Spanish government, altho Blum was personally appealed to by the Spanish Socialists. That the "progressiveness" of France is here displayed under the banner of People's Front is unquestionable. While certain detachments of French communists are speaking of marching to Spain to help put down the fascists, the government they support is unwilling to aid its "brother".

The most amazing fact about the fascist forces is the foothold they have managed to gain among

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All Out to the Hippodrome!

WORKERS!

Demand the Unconditional Release of
TOM MOONEY and WARREN K. BILLINGS
Proceed from work directly to the
HIPPODROME
43rd Street and Sixth Avenue
THURSDAY, JULY 30th, at 5:30 P. M.

Show Your Class Solidarity with Labor's Martyrs

This Meeting Has Been Called by the
CENTRAL TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL

FASCIST REVOLT GRIPS SPAIN

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the peasantry. Their camps are being flooded with new recruits daily from among the peasantry proper and even farm laborers. Now the People's Front is reaping the bitter fruits of failing to distribute the land, of failing to break up the feudal estates. When 60,000 peasants seized the land at Badajoz, the Azana government, without any protest on the part of the Communists and Socialists, drove the peasants out at the point of the bayonet. Such deeds are not remembered with pleasure, such deeds serve to separate the peasantry from the workers and throw them into the arms of the fascists.

In many small cities and even in Madrid proper, it has become clear that the Left Republicans have, to all intents and purposes, abdicated. Some have fled the country—that is, it is the workers' parties who rule, without having the courage to take power. The immediate task in Spain for the workers' parties is the building of committees in the army, in the villages and among the workers, to form the bases of Soviets. This would place them in opposition to the people's front, which exists only in name, (since it is the workers and sections of the peasantry who are doing the fighting), and enable them to win decisive sections of the peasantry and the workers for a proletarian revolution.

NELSON SCORES BOSS TACTICS

(Continued from Page 1)

U. S. Employment Bureau. Working in conjunction with the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, the bosses tried everything—but in the end they will have to try one thing more, that is to sign with the union.

"A serious problem, not merely for us, but for our whole International is the problem of the runaway shops, the companies who seek to escape union labor. Some of these shops, out of town, have been on strike for seven or eight months. Despite the aid of the National Association in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, the financial reports of these runaway mills reveal bankruptcy. Several have failed, and if support is withdrawn by the Association and the local chamber of commerce were to start asking for rent, then many more would go under. As regards this, the International (ILGWU) has sent fifteen organizers into the field to organize these out-of-town shops, and placed a fund of \$150,000 in the bank for the drive.

"The weakness of the Association, the willingness of many employers to settle, the loyalty of our workers and the support of the International all will combine to give the Union a victory in this struggle."

BRADLEY'S CAFETERIA

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Canadian Jobless Force Restoration Of Relief

(By Our Canadian Special Correspondent)

Beginning with the first of April the municipalities, due to a reduction in their relief quota from the provincial government, started to put thru cuts—not all at once but more or less staggered over the entire province. They cut the food allowance and rent and fuel allowance and in some cases cut the single men off relief altogether. Clothing allowance were entirely cut off after the 1st of June. Some of the unemployed associations held protest meetings but were only able to arouse enough support to induce slight concessions in the fuel allowance. Just after the news of the "stay-in" strikes of the French workers had been in the press for a day or so, York Township Council and a joint deputation of individuals representing more or less dormant organizations came to a deadlock and the cuts were applied in that district. Spontaneously a strike was called and York Township surprised the whole suburban area of Toronto by the extent of the strike and the broad united front character of the demonstrations. The C.C.F. clubs participated, the Progressive Veterans and they even drew in the Canadian Legion. The single men who had been cut off "squatted" in a vacant field in dugouts made of sheet metal, packing boxes etc., nicknamed the "village" "Red Square" and held well attended meetings there nearly every night for a week. The Provincial Government immediately made a favorable offer and 54 single boys were shipped away to a road camp. To everybody's surprise the "dugouts" were immediately filled up with more single men who had been living at home and the government then agreed to meet a deputation who put up such a good front with the assistance of the Council that a housing scheme was proposed. The final decision of the Government turned out to be building one or two model houses in each municipality and the "enormous" sum of \$25,000 was to be spent on this scheme. This did not satisfy the workers.

The "General Strike"

In the meantime the Ontario Workers Federation (a relic of the Communist Party's ultra-left period) attempted to mechanically organize a "general strike" along the Lakeshore even though two of the most heavily populated and industrial districts had no workers organization functioning. It looked hopeless until one of the Workers Associations, in Lakeview, farthest west on the Lakeshore, pulled a strike against a sudden imposition of work at 22½ cents per hour for relief task work. At the end of a week and the day before the July 1st holiday, having been refused their vouchers, they promptly occupied the relief offices and with the use of a large number of women were able to gain a settlement at 2.00 A. M. in the morning. The "general strike" was called along the rest of the Lakeshore and our district, Etobicoke Township, showed the best results. York Township was again heard from when they staged a more or less spontaneous demonstration outside the relief offices, while their leaders were some miles away in conference with the Council. They ended up by occupying the relief offices. Approximately 3,000 were involved. The deputation rushed up there from their conference and after the relief officials were held in for some hours a council meeting was called on the spot and the cuts were restored

with the single men being put back on relief—"until the money runs out." The government first condemned the move of the council then said it was O.K. but after the money ran out they would provide "credits" to the municipality until such times as they (the municipality) could increase their tax levy and collect same.

Workers Rush Support

The York Township demonstration was on Monday. On Wednesday the Etobicoke relief officials refused to pay the workers for the time they had been on strike and they promptly started an argument which was joined in by the Reeve later in the afternoon. The Reeve took a stubborn attitude and refused to negotiate before the next Monday so, that as the leaders came out to give this report, the workers spontaneously decided to hold all concerned in school basement until the Reeve would summon an immediate meeting of Council. He tried to get out, made the statement that he would do so if he had to crawl out and the workers thereupon decided to call his bluff. They sent out to different districts for support and after an all night siege the radio started to report that police forces were being massed to bust up the siege with a dead-line of noon. A temporary agreement was negotiated with the Reeve at 11.50 A. M. (the other councillors couldn't be induced to come near) but not before two or three truck-loads of

workers had come all the way from York Township to swell the crowd.

Mass Arrests Ineffective

Lakeshore speakers subsequently spoke at meetings in York Township the same night. At midnight 10 workers, from different districts, were picked out of their beds and taken to jail. They used one provincial, one county, and one local officer for each worker with all the arrests taking place simultaneously and the morning papers carrying big headlines as well as stories of "red plot" with the observation that "radicals" were in the background, using the unemployed for a "front" as the method of explaining why the demonstrations were not led by Communists except for a few individuals. 17 more were picked up in York Township on Friday night and a couple more on Saturday night and they were all charged under the Criminal Code with "kidnapping with the use of threats and force." Two in the Lakeshore, (1 Liberal, 1 C.P.) and Two in Cork Township (1 C. C. F., 1 C. P.) were let out on \$2,000 bail while the balance were let out on \$200 bail each. They also changed the rules so that only one bondsman could bail out one prisoner which made it more difficult to get the boys out. The Canadian Labor Defense League was not functioning very effectively (it is having growing pains as it has developed into the Citizens Defence Movement).

Protest meetings are well attended and the mass arrests have not had the effect the government hoped they would, up to the present. The workers movement feel "much obliged" to the government for the support they have gained from their "kidnapping" stunt with the use of their amalgamated police forces.

A VISIT TO JACK SODERBERG

On July 4th, Comrades Miles, Cork, Steinberg and Davis drove up to Sing Sing to visit Comrade Jack Soderberg, railroaded to jail by the capitalist class for his militant activity along the waterfront. Three of us were allowed into the waiting room. The waiting room was crowded to the walls with visitors, it being July 4th. Comrade Soderberg soon came in. A smile, a firm handshake, and we sat down together. He appears in good physical trim; he is in charge of the prison gym.

Conversation quite naturally turned first to the situation amongst the seamen. He had followed developments very closely, especially the favorable situation on the West coast. He expressed his admiration for Bridges, "A good guy, knows what he's about." Then we talked about the recent seamen's strike here, and about Curran whom he had not known.

Then the situation in the Communist Party came up, its new opportunist line, the People's Front, their stand in the elections, the attitude toward Roosevelt, the issue today is not socialism versus capitalism but fascism versus democracy, progress versus reaction, the defense of democracy against fascism, etc. He told us about conversations he had with some Party members who had come to visit him, how they reeked with the line and echoed it faithfully like prepared sounding boards.

Then we talked about the situation in the C.P.O., its activities, politically and in the unions, the situation in the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the danger of a split, the steel campaign, about Mooney and the renewed campaign for his release centering around Mooney Day.

He follows everything closely, not only events in America but the situation in the movement internationally. "I've got plenty of time to read now." Proletarian novels. He expressed his desire for Meh-

ring's life of Marx. He had read James T. Farrell's book on literary criticism. Farrell's a good friend of his, and writes to him frequently.

We knew what it meant to a proletarian activist to be discussing the class struggle instead of actually engaging in it, forcibly kept from doing so by being confined to a capitalist dungeon because of activity in behalf of the working class. When we left he said, simply, "Been in now 4½ years. Out in May 1940. Well, reached the turn of the road, the halfway mark is passed." His faith in the working class, his desire to fight is undiminished.

The limiting hour for visitors had come. A firm handshake, "So long, Jack," and the prison door clanged behind us.

On August 2nd, the baseball team of the I.L.G.W.U. travels up to Sing Sing to play the prison team. This will give many more of us than is possible under ordinary circumstances a chance to come and give greetings to a true fighter for the working class.

J. C.

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BOOKS of the AGE

THE SIGNIFICANT MODERNS, by C. J. Bulliet, Covici-Friede. 200 pages of text, 276 full-page illustrations. \$4.00.

This book, by the pro-modernist art critic of the *Chicago Daily News*, is an attempt to give a bird's eye view of the most significant work of the movement in art which began with Cezanne and ended with Picasso. The text consists of brief anecdotal-biographical and appreciative notes on some sixty-eight artists, founders or temporary or permanent followers of the modernist movement. Each comment is popular, picturesque, and as far as brevity and selection permit, "spicy."

Within the field of judgments which have already become conventional, Bulliet's taste and sensitivity are adequate, in the main even irreproachable. His "giants" are quite properly Cezanne, Seurat, Renoir, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso, though the present reviewer has a strong suspicion that several of these giants, notably Gauguin, Matisse, and (except as a tireless experimenter and stimulus to movements destined to outgrow him) Picasso, will be subject to considerable shrinkage under the desiccating process of time.

But the author, after ridiculing the academics who could not appreciate the impressionists, and the preachers of impressionism, once so daring, who showed hardening of the mental arteries when Cezanne began his departure in the direction of the reassertion of form in painting, seems to show the same insensitiveness to recent art developments. Of course, he has a legitimate ground for ending his book with 1929 since the movement he depicts petered out with the death or the aging of the "giants," and the collapse of the market for their imitators in the stock market crash of 1929. But Bulliet writes as if significant painting itself had stopped on that fateful date, and as if he were unaware of the way in which life had once more begun to "renew itself" in the social-monumental mural movement initiated by the great Mexicans, Rivera and Orozco, and their associates. Professional art critics who fail to realize that some time in the middle twenties the "center" of the art world suddenly shifted from Paris to Mexico City, will have a hard time of it keeping abreast of art history in the making. Diego Rivera gets into this work with a single picture, a nude taken from one of his murals, by no means representative or suggestive of his work, and he gets in merely because of his one time association with Picasso; while Orozco, not having been to Paris, is admitted.

More significant than the text is the collection of reproductions. There are 276 of them, well selected, with a slight but natural, overemphasis on nudes, and most of them fairly, some of them excellently reproduced. This does indeed give the sensitive observer a bird's eye view of the movement known as "modernism." And the fact that a first edition with 276 full-page half-tones is offered for \$4.00 should give food for thought to publishers of expensive "popularizations" of works of art.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE