

Workers Age

A PAPER DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND FARMERS

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AUTO WORKERS VICTORY SPURS DRIVE OF CIO IN MASS PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

Amalgamated Wins Pay Rise

Hillman Says Industrial Form Of ACW Made Victory Possible

The Committee for Industrial Organization has another significant victory to its credit in the signing of a nation-wide agreement between the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the manufacturers' association. The agreement applies to the 135,000 members in the organization and provides for the retention of the 36 hour week and a 12% increase in wages. The life of the agreement is to run for three years.

Discussing the importance of the agreement, Sidney Hillman, president of the A.C.W., hailed it as a victory for the C.I.O. "Those who are associated with this industry," he said, "realize that no effective organization of labor would be possible if workers in this industry were divided into craft organizations, each representing a small group of skilled mechanics. Nor would a national agreement have been negotiated for the whole industry without an industrial organization of labor speaking for all the workers in the industry."

Hillman further stated that the wage increase constitutes a real improvement of the standard of living. After adjusting the wage increase to the increased cost of living the net increase is still about 8%.

The New York garment market is expected to gain much thru this national agreement which will cut down on competition from other markets operating under lower scales.

Labor Non-Partisan League Drafts Legislative Program

Complete drafts of eight proposed bills affecting labor and labor organization have been sent to all state chairmen of Labor's Non-Partisan League with the recommendation that they be made a part of the legislative program of every state branch of the League, Major George L. Berry, president of the League announced today.

"Supplying our state chairmen throughout the nation with copies of the proposed bills, together with recommendations that they be made a part of each League sponsored state legislative program, marks the formal beginning of the second phase of the League's work", Major Berry pointed out.

The legislation submitted for state action covers the following:

(1) State labor relations act similar to the Wagner National Labor Relations Act; (2) State anti-injunction act similar to the federal Norris-LaGuardia Act, pro-

LED AUTO WORKERS TO VICTORY



JOHN L. LEWIS



HOMER MARTIN

England, France to Let Nazis, Italy Aid Franco Unhindered

Preparations To Drop Non-Intervention Agreement Being Made By "Great Democracies" Allowing Open Aid To Spanish Fascists.

Complete and open support of the Spanish fascists by England and France was indicated in this week's dispatches. The "great democracies" feel that it is impossible to establish effective non-intervention, and will shortly "lose interest" in the war. Essentially this is Britain's policy, shamefully followed by People's Front France

and her socialist premier, Leon Blum.

Content to repeat outworn and refuted phrases in favor of neutrality, Blum, speaking to the National Council of the French Socialist Party, refused to consider aid to the Valencia government. Now it becomes clear to all that the French bourgeoisie governing thru the People's Front do not merely want to avoid aiding the Loyalists but are eager for the continuance and extension of Germany's and Italy's aid to Franco!

It is this typical expression of the love of the bourgeoisie for "peace and democracy" that creates the military situation in Spain today. Franco's new offensive would be unthinkable without German munitions and Italian troops and ships.

Without having lifted a finger to aid the embattled workers and peasants of Spain, the French People's Front, supposedly a weapon against Fascism, now is "tired" of the Spanish civil war and hides its reactionary the tacit support of the rebel fascists with pacifist phrases about desiring to see "an end to the war".

Apparently this conceals some sort of agreement which satisfies England that all the mining property she owns in Spain will not be grabbed by Italy and Germany, and which satisfies France that Germany will not get too deeply into Spain. Such "guarantees", of course, have been long proven stupid and useless.

Workers Scorn Attempts of A.F. of L. to Belittle Triumph

Strike Forces Wage Raises In Packard, Chrysler; Union Now Has 200,000 Members As Workers Recognize Necessity Of Organization

TENS of thousands of auto workers began their return to the General Motors shops last Monday, after more than six weeks of standstill. They return proud of their accomplishments, conscious that they have opened a breach in General Motors' labor policy which must result in a continued strengthening of unionism, aware that they have scored sole recognition in 20 plants and have a good head start in the rest; they return with heads high, flaunting their union buttons as a sign of their victory and encouraged by the knowledge that in the short life of the United Auto Workers and the CIO more has been accomplished than in the "ages" of A. F. of L. talk about organizing the mass production industries. More than that. William Green notwithstanding, the United Auto Workers has emerged from the strike an organization with 200,000 members, the fourth largest union in the United States.

COMPANIES TAKE "STRIKE INSURANCE"

Negotiations between the union and General Motors were scheduled to begin last Tuesday but these were anticipated by a number of events the significance of which the auto workers can hardly fail to perceive. General Motors announced a wage increase of 5% and blandly remarked that it had no relation to the sit-down strikes. Similarly Chrysler and Packard announced wage increases of 10% and 5% respectively. Ford no longer objects to the wearing of union buttons.

If these firms have given increases in the sense of a guarantee against strikes, a sort of "strike insurance", they will discover their mistake soon enough. At the moment the union is busy perfecting its organization and taking in members as fast as their cards can be made out. President Homer Martin has announced that demands have been sent to seven independent companies making automobile parts. Asked when the union is getting into Chrysler and Ford situations, Martin replied that the union was very much in it right now. It is clear that the union does not intend to rest on its laurels. The present victory is the beginning of a new intensified drive to organize the entire industry. Where and when to strike next is the subject for careful consideration by the union leadership.

ESTIMATING THE STRIKE SETTLEMENT

The labor movement is divided in estimating the settlement. William Green and other craft union leaders are shrieking "betrayal" because the CIO and the Auto Union did not get the closed shop and all the demands which they asked for. The insincerity of this cry must be evident to every worker. Particularly Frey but also other leaders emitted snorts of rage over the closed shop demand and insisted, in their letters to General Motors, that the Auto Union must not be recognized as the sole bargaining agency. Is there any doubt that their letters, splitting the labor front, gave aid and comfort to General Motors? When the Auto Union secured sole bargaining rights in 20 plants it was over the bitter opposition of the A. F. of L. leaders.

The craft leaders are indeed shedding bitter tears but judging by events it is rather because of their own dark future in the mass production industries.

However, this does not mean that appreciation of the real nature of the settlement is lacking. From every corner of the country has come an enthusiastic response to the strike settlement. President Homer Martin and John L. Lewis have been almost snowed under with congratulatory messages. Among these the most outstanding are the ones received from President David Dubinsky of the I.L.G.W.U., Sidney Hillman, president of the A.C.W., and Charles Zimmerman, manager of Local 22 I.L.G.W.U. These telegrams show a keen appreciation of the victory and its significance for steel, rubber, etc.

WHAT OF THE C.I.O.?

Avowed enemies and doubtful friends agreed that a defeat in the auto industry would be a death blow to the CIO in the steel, rubber and other mass production industries. That this is not so, that it is possible that the CIO may have a set-back here and there in the course of its constantly developing field of work must be clear to thinking people. However, the point is that in the auto industry the C.I.O. won a signal victory and the prophets of evil were struck dumb.

The victory won in auto is a complete justification of the struggle begun by John L. Lewis, David Dubinsky, Sidney Hillman, and the rest of the group comprising the CIO leadership. Sidney Hillman put it well when he declared:

"The Committee for Industrial Organization is spreading faster than its friends dared hope. Its activities in the future will not be limited to five or six industries, for it has struck the core of the mass-production industries and it will proceed constantly on a broader base. The victory in the major engagement with General Motors will act to speed up the drive on all fronts."

When Auto Workers Sit Down

The State of Cadillac

By STUART MESSAN

It is 8:05 a. m. on Friday morning, Jan. 8th. The night shift at the Cadillac plant is filing out of the doors, and the day shift is already at work. From all appearances it is just another day, though in the minds of every one working in the plant there is a certain tenseness. The bosses are wondering when and where the dreaded "sit down strike" is going to start. They do not have long to wait.

At 8:20 Big Slim with mathematical thoroughness gives the sign and the big presses in the press room stop. Slim is a little early as instructions were whispered to him hurriedly. At 8:30 the management is downstairs arguing with a little flout on the motor line who has shut off his machine and seems oblivious of the kind offers of the plant manager "to be reasonable and talk this over in my office." Someone throws the main switch and the whole line is down. The "loyal" worker turns it on again for a minute, the management realizes it cannot stop the "sit-down" and immediately sends less well-organized departments home. Meanwhile the fender line in the metal finishing department has been stopped and started up again three times. Finally the union men stop it entirely. The plant is down. Several union men post themselves by the door, trying to persuade some of the doubtful workers to stay in. Some are convinced and when the air is cleared we find ourselves with a strong detachment ready to set up living quarters in the plant and stay there till Domesday.

Immediately a meeting is called, a strike committee elected, with orders to set up a functioning system of sub-committees to take care of new home. These are to run care of picketing (inside), food, education, sanitary arrangements, entertainment etc. They get to work right away, and within a few hours are beginning to function after a fashion. The company has decided to humor us, several deluded workers and after inviting us over to the pay office to get our checks, they bring them over to us. To have gone over for them would have meant walking out of the plant.

The first day hardly seems like a strike. The thing is a novelty and workers chat to a few of the foremen who have reputations for being good fellows. Every one is convinced that it will be all over within a day or so. Sleeping on the hard boards and benches in the huge locker room, our headquarters, is not so bad for a night or so. However next day, whether on account of the uncomfortable sleeping quarters or because of a more serious attitude to the strike the workers begin to be a little restless. Why have these foremen and superintendents in the plant anyway? There is no work for them. A committee is sent to the management to ask them to withdraw such people. The management explains that they must be there to look after the stock. The committee undertakes to see that no harm comes to the stock, but the managements holds its ground. The committee reports to the sit-downers who decide to bar all foremen etc. by the simple process of

barring the tunnel by which they enter. This is done immediately. The management then contacts the Committee for permission to move a pattern of the 1938 model. The committee sees no particular harm in it, but the sit-downers see no good in it. It is not moved. For good measure they also decide to close down the Deisel experimental division, which tho not a part of the Cadillac Motor Co., is a G. M. affiliate located in the Cadillac plant.

About the third day of the sit down it becomes evident that all is not well in our organization. Some workers are doing all the picket duty, others none at all, and Big Slim has lost his voice pleading, cajoling and threatening. Other workers are making it tough for the Sanitation committee to function. The Strike committee formulates new schedules for pickets which are shorter, more regular, but more frequent. Our orators plead impassionately for better observance of sanitation rules. These measures work for a while but it soon becomes obvious that some disciplinary measures must be taken. It is decided to institute a "Kangaroo Court", tho it is in fact a far more real court than those held in jail. The oldest sit-downer, a venerable Scot of 62 combining a ready wit and much dignity, is elected judge, and a working man who had once studied law, prosecuting attorney. The sheriff is a large Assyrian who played the part as to the manner born. Charges are very simple but very illuminating. As the young law student very eloquently expresses it "the most serious crime in the eyes of this court is any act tending to weaken in any way the State of Cadillac." We are not interested in what faults a man may have on the outside, in our state the most immoral thing a man may do is to refuse to report for picket duty. The sentences of the punishment fit the crime. Failure to report for duty is punished by double duty. Failure to observe sanitation rules means a big clean

up job for the culprit. Occasionally a member of the strike committee is "framed" in order to create a little diversion. One thing very significant is the fact that two workers trying to use the jargon of our capitalist law courts found that in our classless society these devious and tricky terms were reduced to absurdity.

International events assume much significance to us workers, something we hardly understood before. After the battle of "Buis Run" in Flint (named because that is precisely what the bus did) we awakened upon our defence. Stock was wrought up close to the windows though we were never called on to make preparations that the heroic workers in Chevrolet did.

Gradually but surely our little state begins to function smoothly. Workers begin to realize that they are perfectly able to run things themselves. Some of us knowing nothing or little of socialism begin to explain "we could run the whole thing much better than General Motors". By this time even the most unmusical of us know some of the union songs and bellow them at will. The Cadillac workers will never forget the "Soup Song". Our entertainment committee begins to function efficiently at last and we have some fun every night. The educational committee has converted a few workers to the study of their own problems. Picketing ceases to be much of a problem, and the place is being kept clean. With the help of blankets from home most of us have comfortable beds. Rumors and scares (either company inspired or home grown) have little effect on us, though we check everything most carefully. On Saturday Jan. 16th, when we finally come out, we are a serious disciplined bunch of union men with a clear understanding of our immediate problems and some of us with a growing realization that a final struggle awaits us which will be waged around that remark of the Cadillac sit-downer "We could run the whole thing much better than General Motors."

"THE WEEK IN FLINT"

By MARY HEATON VORSE (AUTO UNION NEWS SERVICE)

FLINT, Mich., Feb. 8—The eyes of the world have been on Flint this week. The strike of the automobile workers was the center of the labor world and Flint, its core. Ever since gangsters kidnapped court organizers last week and wrecked their car at the outskirts of Flint, a demand for more action among automobile workers had been growing.

This was brought to a head by firing of several Chevrolet workers for union activities and the evasiveness of Plant Manager Lenz, about meeting Union officials to iron out the trouble.

Everyone in Chevrolet knew something was going to happen, a tenseness hung over the immense plant. Plant No. 4 where the motors are made, is its heart. Tie up that and you tie up Chevrolet. To stop production there was the

striker's objective.

To divert attention it had been decided to start the ball rolling in Plant No. 9. All the company police were concentrated at No. 9. One man's story went: "We started marching inside of Plant No. 9 and the police jumped us, they seemed to spring up from everywhere, some had on gas masks. In a minute there was fighting everywhere, a policeman hit me and I folded; they began throwing tear gas, there was a free-for-all, men were fighting everywhere, men with their bloody faces went to the windows for air."

Outside the women saw those blood-covered faces.

The women had already sprung into action. Word had been sent to the Women's Emergency Brigade, whose motto is: "Always ready," and who are prepared for any kind of strike duty night and day. With their American flag and their red caps they marched on to the front of the plant. When they saw their men fighting inside and the injured at the windows cries of:

"Break the windows; give them air!" were louder than the cry: "We don't want violence; don't break anything."

In the meantime the strikers had sat down in Plant No. 4. Chevrolet was tied up. The second truck called:

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TRADE UNION NOTES

By GEORGE F. MILES

THE automobile strike is over! Unbounded joy sweeps the ranks of the auto workers for they have succeeded thru the most sacrificing and militant action, to bring down that mighty giant—General Motors. The auto union has won recognition in 20 plants, members of the union can now return to work without fear of discrimination, proudly wearing the union buttons and aggressively "taking up" the merits of the auto union on company property. Even if no further gains are made in the forthcoming negotiations on conditions—and that is hardly likely—the victory achieved is of far-reaching significance. It represents the first successful attempt by a youthful organization born during the NRA growth of American trade unionism to crack an industry in which the open shop has been a traditional institution. So well founded and unchallenged had been this principle in the auto industry that even the chicanery of company unionism was unnecessary.

Despite the howling of the paid press agents of General Motors that the strike was doomed; despite the voluntary aid to General Motors rendered by the embittered and biased reactionary craft union leaders of the type of Frye and Green who desperately sought to pit the skilled craft members

against the mass of the strikers; despite the stool pigeons and tear gas, the machine guns and the bayonets of the National Guard, the auto workers, especially the Flint workers who stood in the forefront of the fight, won a glorious and well deserved victory for which the entire labor movement congratulates them.

What effect will that have upon the rest of the mass production industries? There can be no doubt that the tempo of organization will be enhanced and the workers encouraged to seek redress of long-standing grievances thru the medium of the organizations affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization. The prestige and standing of the CIO in American industry is an established fact.

To the extent that the CIO has scored a great victory the A. F. of L. has met a crushing defeat. The categorical manner in which leading members of the Executive Council placed themselves against the auto workers' fight for recognition, the more recent statements of William Green—speaking for the Council—during which Green himself felt extremely uncomfortable and stated that the A. F. of L's attitude is not to be taken as support of General Motors, these developments have completely weaned the masses in the auto industry away from any sympathy for the craft wrecking crew and has shattered the confidence of many erstwhile supporters of craft unionism.

Democracy in Chi. Federation

The delegates and observers at the February 7th meeting of the Chicago Federation of Labor were given an example of the extent to which the reactionary forces in the American Federation of Labor are willing to go in stifling democracy in order to defeat progressive measures. More than thirty delegates to the city central body had signed and submitted to the Resolutions Committee a resolution expressing solidarity with the striking automobile workers. The President ruled that the resolution could not be considered because it proposed support to a union which has been suspended from the American Federation of Labor. He even went so far as to violate all standards of democratic procedure by refusing to permit an appeal to the floor from his ruling—supposedly on the grounds that such appeal would have to be made to the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor which had ordered the suspensions. A delegate asked whether the President's ruling would mean that the Chicago Federation could not vote support of any strike conducted by a local union affiliated to the Chicago Federation of Labor if its international was among those suspended. His question was not answered.

From his actions it was evident that the President, Brother John Fitzpatrick—one time chairman of the 1919 steel strike committee—feared that the delegates present would vote support of the auto workers and bring down upon the Chicago officialdom the wrath of the craft union controlled Executive Council. Events earlier in the session show that his fear was well founded. A letter was read from the American Federation of Labor explaining the Tampa amendment to the AFL constitution—practically prohibiting city central bodies from boycotting anti-labor employers. A routine motion was made to receive and file. A progressive delegate attempted to amend the motion to add a statement of "regret" that such action had been taken at the last convention. The amendment was ruled out of order. Denied any other form of protest the delegates proceeded to defeat the motion to receive and file by a vote of 91 to 63.

Why the sudden settlement after the determined resistance of General Motors these several weeks? There is no doubt whatever that the sit-down as a method of trade union struggle proved extremely effective and completely baffling to General Motors. The auto workers not only held the factories but even extended their field while the courts were discussing their ousting.

General Motors could not fail to see the significance of these facts. Production was severely curtailed and might have been further reduced had not the strike been settled. In the face of this curtailment of production General Motors gazed coolly at the rising production figures for Chrysler and learned to their dismay that highly skilled technicians were beginning to shuffle off to competing firms. Last, but by no means least, the high morale, excellent fighting qualities of the workers and the widespread sympathy for the cause of the workers—even the members of the National Guard were affected—were a most important factor in determining General Motor's decision to come to an agreement.

Of course, the auto workers will look upon this settlement as a temporary truce, during which the most intensive drive must be made to unionize all the plants thruout the automotive industry. There now appear no insurmountable difficulties to accomplishing this task except, perhaps, finances. These, it is our conviction, the labor movement will be happy to supply, when the union asks for it.

We congratulate President Martin on the occasion of this victory. Also we wish to say that CIO chairman John L. Lewis has, during the course of this strike, lived up to the best expectations of the progressive labor movement and thru his militant leadership has done much to strengthen and build the cause of industrial unionism.

THE MOSCOW TRIALS an editorial statement

ALTHO there was good reason to anticipate it months in advance, the second great political trial recently completed at Moscow has aroused a feeling of dismay and horror hardly less intense than that which characterized labor and liberal opinion after the first trial some time ago. Thought itself is momentarily paralyzed at the incredible spectacle of old Bolsheviks of world repute standing before a Soviet tribunal charged with murder, wrecking, treason and conspiracy with the fascist enemy! But the Moscow trials are a fact and facts must be faced!

The Fundamental Problem

As for the trials themselves, it is altogether out of the question to attempt any detailed evaluation at the present time, in the sense of passing judgment upon the validity of each bit of evidence or of the details of the specific guilt of each of the accused. Those who are in such a frightful hurry to pretend omniscience on these matters are either special pleaders or are the tail to one or another faction of the Russian communist movement, ready to accept anything in blind faith from either Stalin or Trotsky. Discrepancies, contradictions, even sheer impossibilities in the charges and allegations of the two trials are not hard to find, but the impression seems to us inescapable—and it is shared by many observers not particularly friendly to Stalin—that, even after such material is discarded, there still remains a substantial bedrock of fact: that efforts at assassination and sabotage were indeed made by some of the followers or former followers of Trotsky and Zinoviev.

These questions, important as they are, are still secondary to the fundamental one. When objective judgment is passed on the Moscow trials, it must surely be done primarily on the basis of the all-absorbing question: Is it Stalin or the Trotskyist opposition that, by and large, represents the basic interests of the socialist revolution in Russia, that is the bearer of the fundamentally sound policies of socialist construction? And on this question our position has been made clear more than once. The course of events itself, moreover, has pretty generally confirmed the viewpoint of Stalin as against that of Trotsky on the vital questions of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, on the tempo of industrialization and on the collectivization of agriculture.

Some Grave Problems of Regime

The Moscow trials also raise a number of very grave questions in other directions. Does it not constitute a serious reflection upon the type of regime to be found in the C.P.S.U. in a period of so many years, it has not succeeded in dissolving the various oppositional movements and reabsorbing their elements into the party, but rather in consolidating and embittering them to the point where such acts as have been confessed and such charges as have been made become possible? How long can a regime be continued in which no one ever knows upon whom he can rely, in which men in high and responsible positions, such as Radek, the official spokesman, or Piatakov, the Assistant Commissar for Heavy Industry, or even Stalin's private secretary, can no longer be trusted? Does not the very regime of hero cult, personal exaltation of the leader, qualification for office by sycophancy, elimination of collective leadership, abandonment of democratic discussion—do not all these constitute a serious danger, of more vital concern to every communist and real friend of the Soviet Union than even the deeds or the fate of the defendants on trial?

Far from drawing the necessary lessons from these events, the leadership of the C.P.S.U. has sought to make factional capital out of them, thus further narrowing the regime. How else are we to interpret the declaration in *Pravda* (December 15, 1936) that: "We must not take the word of any former oppositionist. No, not one!" How else are we to interpret the effort obviously being made today to extend the odium of Trotskyism to elements whose political line has uniformly been diametrically opposed to that of Trotsky?

It does not help matters either to imply that any one who has ever disagreed with Stalin or who may ever disagree with him must necessarily have opposed Lenin or vice versa. Many ardent supporters of Stalin today were bitter opponents of Lenin thruout his career. Stalin also at times opposed Lenin and certainly Lenin was, on occasion, very sharp in strictures on Stalin. At this moment, particularly, Stalin is far from the fundamentals of Leninist teaching on a number of questions, such as the attitude towards bourgeois democracy and coalition government, proletarian policy in war, etc. Such mechanical equating of Stalin, or any man, to infallibility, making opposition to him the equivalent of counter-revolution, renders absolutely impossible any real correction of errors or any judgment of questions of strategy and tactics on their merits rather than on their sponsorship.

It is indeed a shattering blow to the moral foundations of bolshevism and of the whole socialist movement, that men who were among the foremost architects of the Russian revolution, the closest co-workers of Lenin and the members of his central committee, should now stand accused of the most atrocious crimes against the revolution and their socialist fatherland. With what confidence can the masses of the workers be expected to look to communist leadership when such men, the communist leaders of yesterday, are now proclaimed by their own former comrades—and by their own confessions as well—to be assassins, wreckers, traitors and fascists?

Danger of "Blood Letting"

There was a time, in 1922—and the Soviet regime was far from being as strong and as firmly established then as it is today—when Lenin found it possible to grant the accused Socialist-Revolutionist terrorists on trial, the services of foreign counsel (E. Vandervelde, Th. Liebknecht and Kurt Rosenfeld) and to commute the death sentences finally passed upon them. There was a time, too, not so many years ago, when Stalin protested against a policy of "blood-letting" in dealing with political problems. "The method of lopping off," he once declared with a good deal of emphasis, "is full of the greatest dangers for the party. The method of lopping off, the method of blood-letting, is dangerous and contagious: today, this one is lopped off; tomorrow, that one; the next day, someone else. What, then, will be left of the party?" But in

the last decade this very sound piece of advice has been ignored by no one as much as by Stalin himself. The policy of "blood-letting" has reigned unchecked and, as Stalin warned in 1926, the base of party and Soviet leadership has been dangerously narrowed, to the great detriment to the foundations of the socialist regime. Not Trotskyism so much as the Soviet Union is likely to be the chief sufferer from the factional strategy culminating in the Moscow trials.

An Unmitigated Disaster

It is impossible for us to take seriously the proposal now being canvassed for the setting up of an "impartial international tribunal" before which Trotsky could submit his own case and be given a "fair trial". In the first place, the very idea of an "impartial" tribunal is either a fantasy or a piece of deception; there just simply isn't any such thing and never could be under the circumstances. In the second place, if Trotsky has any evidence conclusively proving his own innocence and that of the Moscow defendants, why hasn't he produced such evidence before a very real tribunal that doesn't have to be set up—the tribunal of the world press, certainly willing enough to give him all the facilities he may need. It seems to argue a criminally frivolous attitude on Trotsky's part that he should keep secret such vitally important material, which he himself claims would prove the innocence of the accused. In the third place, the "impartial" tribunal, the so-called anti-tribunal, is in its very essence a political weapon. So it was with the Dimitroff case where the London tribunal was aimed directly at the Nazi regime. So it must be with the proposed Trotsky anti-tribunal which would necessarily be directed straight at the Soviet Union.

We, on our part, can examine the situation with a certain degree of objectivity, because, unlike the official communist parties or the Trotsky groups the world over, we have never been, nor are we now, associated with any tendency or faction in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, neither with the Stalinists nor with the Trotskyites nor with the Bukharinites. All the more, therefore, must we express our profound conviction that, from whatever angle they may be viewed,

POUM and the Trotskyites

The Daily Worker and all official communist papers at home and abroad generally, are full of the most vituperative attacks upon the Spanish Workers Party of Marxist Unity (POUM) as "Trotskyite" and therefore "counter-revolutionary" and "fascist". The policies and activities of the POUM during the last year of crisis are enough to refute such malicious slanders, as the readers of the *Workers Age* are well aware. But it is instructive to note that the Trotskyites, the real true-blue Trotskyites that is, are very emphatic in repudiating any kinship with the POUM, which they condemn in terms hardly less bitter and extreme than the Daily Worker itself.

In the December 1936 issue of the *Socialist Appeal*, the official organ of the American Trotskyites, there is a special "editorial statement" on the "POUM and the Spanish Revolution". Here is what the official spokesmen of Trotskyism have to say about the Spanish party:

"A tragic aspect of the Spanish revolution . . . is the role played by the POUM . . . Many placed great hopes in the POUM. The passage of week after week of civil war, however, cannot have

proved disillusioning insofar as these hopes are concerned. . . .

"The POUM leadership, which opposes these two parties (the C.P. and the S.P.), cannot rightly claim a sufficient superiority to them to warrant the title of genuine leadership of the proletariat. . . . What it (the POUM) is doing and what it is failing to do show that in a critical situation the half-way measures and half-way policies characteristic of all species of centrism have a natural habit of wreaking havoc on the cause of socialism. . . . In the decisive question of policy, the POUM leadership has played an intolerable and indefensible role, particularly in Catalonia, the seat of the party strength. . . . That reactionary, anti-revolutionary process (the crushing of the organs of dual power) . . . is being openly justified by the POUM chiefs."

Thus, the very same party that the official communist press brands as "Trotskyite" and "counter-revolutionary" is accused by the Trotskyites themselves of being "centrist" and of following "intolerable", "intolerable", even "anti-revolutionary" policies! There seems to be a discrepancy somewhere!

Duranty Writes "to Please"

WALTER DURANTY, we are assured, "writes as he pleases". He certainly does—with-out regard either to fact or to scruple! In the Sunday Times Magazine of February 7, 1937, this omniscient commentator on men and events decides to instruct his readers in political history:

"Trotskyist centers—units of the so-called 'Fourth International'—had been established at various points, notably in Paris, where Trotsky's chief henchman, was Jacques Doriot, now definitely a Social-Fascist; at Barcelona, where the Trotskyists last Summer outnumbered the orthodox Bolsheviks; and at New York, where Jay Lovestone and John Pepper caused on Trotsky's behalf a schism in the American Communist Party from which it has hardly yet recovered."

These "facts" Duranty relates without so much as a blush of shame. But Duranty, of course, knows perfectly well that:

1. Jacques Doriot never was a Trotskyist. He passed from official communism to outright fascism (not "social-fascism") very rapidly without any connection with Trotskyism. He certainly

never was Trotsky's "chief-henchman" in Paris. Trotsky has many grave sins upon his head but not this one!

2. The "Trotskyists" at Barcelona—apparently the P.O.U.M. is meant—were repudiated outright by Trotsky over a year ago and have since been savagely attacked by the genuine Trotskyists all over the world for their alleged "centrist" policy.

3. Jay Lovestone and the political tendency he represents have traditionally been the most inveterate opponents of Trotskyism in the United States from 1924 until the present day. The "schism" which Lovestone is supposed to have "caused" took place in August 1929, nearly three-quarters of a year after the real Trotskyists (Cannon-Schachtman) broke with the C.P. And since then we have systematically fought the program and policies of the Trotskyites in our press and public utterances. As a matter of fact, it was the present leadership of the Communist Party—Earl Browder, Clarence Hathaway and others—who were members of a joint caucus or fraction with the Trotskyites before the expulsion of the latter, separating themselves from

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LENIN SPEAKS ON DEMOCRACY

(Continued from last week)

Comrades! I should like to add something further to the last two points. I think that the comrades who are to make us a report about the Berne Conference will tell us about that in more detail.

Throughout the whole Berne Conference not a word was said about the significance of Soviet power. For two years now we have been discussing this question in Russia. At the Party Conference in April 1917 we had already theoretically and politically posed the question: "What is Soviet power, what is its content, what is its historical significance?" For almost two years we have been discussing this question and at our Party Congress we are adopting a resolution on it.

The Berlin *Freiheit* on February 11, published an appeal to the German proletariat which was signed not only by the leaders of the independent Social-Democrats in Germany but also by the leaders of the fraction of the Independents. In August 1918, the most important theoretician of these Independents, Kautsky, wrote in his pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, that he is a supporter of democracy and of the Soviet organs, but that the Soviets must have merely an economic significance and in no way be recognized as state organizations. Kautsky repeats this same thing in *Freiheit* for November 11 and January 12. On February 9, there appeared an article by Rudolf Hilferding, who is considered also as being one of the biggest and most authoritative theoreticians in the Second International. He also proposes to unite the system of Soviets with the National Assembly juridically, by means of state legislation. This was on February 9. On February 11, this proposal is adopted by the whole Independent Party and published in the form of an appeal.

In spite of the fact that the National Assembly is already in existence, even after "pure democracy" has been embodied in practice, even after the most important theoreticians of the Independent Social-Democrats have declared that the Soviet organizations must not be state organizations, in spite of all this—hesitation again! This proves that these gentlemen have really understood nothing about the new movement and the conditions of its struggle. But it shows something else also and that is, there must be conditions, causes which call forth such hesitation! After these events, after this now practically two years of victorious revolution in Russia, when they are proposing such resolutions to us as those which were accepted at the Berne Conference in which nothing was said about the Soviets and their importance and at which not a single delegate uttered a single word about this, we have the full right to declare that these gentlemen both as Socialists and as theoreticians are all dead for us.

But practically, from the political point of view, this, comrades, is the proof that a great change is taking place among the masses, since these Independents who were formerly theoretically and in principle against these state organizations, suddenly propose such a stupidity as the "peaceful" unification of the National Assembly with the system of Soviets, that is, the unification of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat. We see how all of them become bankrupt both in the Socialist and theoretical respect and what an immense change is taking place among the masses. The backward masses of the German proletariat are coming to us, have come to us! The importance of the Independent Party of the Social-Democrats, of the best part of the Berne Conference from the political and Socialist points of view, is in this way exactly equal to nothing. However, it has a certain importance still and this consists in the fact that these hesitating elements serve us as a sign of the mood of the backward sections of the proletariat. In this, I am convinced, lies the greatest historical significance of this Conference. We passed through something like it in our Revolution. Our Mensheviks passed through almost exactly the same course of development as the theoreticians of the Independents in Germany. At first, when they had the majority in the Soviets, they were for Soviets. At that time you could hear nothing but: "Long Live the Soviets!" "For the Soviets!" "The Soviets are Revolutionary Democracy!" When we, the Bolsheviks, got the majority in the Soviets then they sang quite different songs. The Soviets must not exist alongside the Constituent Assembly; while various Menshevik theoreticians made almost the same proposals, such as the unification of the system of Soviets with the Constituent

The pre-Parliament elected in Russia in the autumn of 1917 in order to decide upon the future Constitution. The October Revolution took place before the Assembly met and it was finally dissolved by the Soviet power.—Ed.

uent Assembly and their inclusion in the state organization. Here it once again became clear that the general course of the proletarian revolution is the same throughout the world. At first the spontaneous formation of Soviets, then their spreading and development, and finally the appearance in practice of the question: Soviets or National Assembly, or Constituent Assembly or bourgeois parliamentarianism; the complete confusion among the leaders and finally, proletarian revolution. But I propose that after almost two years of revolution we should not put the question in such a way, but that we should bring forward concrete decisions since the spreading of the system of Soviets is for us, and especially for the majority of Western European countries, the most important task.

I should like to quote here only one resolution of the Mensheviks. I asked Comrade Obelensky to translate it into German. He promised to do so, but unfortunately it is not here. I will try to reproduce it from memory since I do not have the complete text of this resolution.

It is very difficult for a foreigner who has heard nothing about Bolshevism to form his own opinion about our disputed questions. All that the Bolsheviks maintain is disputed by the Mensheviks, and on the contrary. Of course in time of struggle it cannot be any other way, and it is therefore very important that the last Conference of the Menshevik Party in December 1918 adopted a long, detailed resolution which was printed in full in the *Menshevik Printer's Paper*. In this resolution the Mensheviks themselves shortly explain the history of the class struggle and of the civil war. In the resolution they state that they condemn those groups of their party who are in alliance with the propertied classes in the Urals, in the South, in the Crimea and in Georgia, and they enumerate all these districts. These groups of the Menshevik Party which, in alliance with the propertied classes, marched against the Soviet power, are now condemned in a resolution, but the last point also condemns those who passed over to the Communists. From this it follows: the Mensheviks are compelled to recognize that there is no unity in their party and that they stand either on the side of the bourgeoisie or on the side of the proletariat. The greater part of the Mensheviks went over to the side of the bourgeoisie and during the civil war fought against us. We, of course, persecute the Mensheviks, we even shoot them, when in war against us they fight against our Red Army and shoot our Red commanders. We have answered the war of the bourgeoisie by the war of the proletariat—there could be no other solution. So from the political point of view all this is only Menshevik hypocrisy. Historically it is incomprehensible how at the Berne Conference people who had not officially been declared lunatics were able at the request of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to talk about the struggle of the Bolsheviks against them but to remain silent about their struggle in alliance with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

They all bitterly attack us because we are persecuting them. This is true. But they do not say a word about the part that they have taken in the civil war! I think that I shall have to put into the minutes the complete text of the resolution, but I ask the foreign comrades to pay attention to this resolution since it is an historical document in which the question is correctly put and which gives the best material for judging the dispute of the "Socialist" tendencies in Russia among themselves. Between the bourgeoisie and proletariat there still exists a class of people who incline now to one side, now to the other. It was so in all revolutions and it is absolutely impossible that in capitalist society, where proletariat and bourgeoisie form two hostile camps, there should not exist intermediary sections between them. The existence of these hesitating elements is historically inevitable and, unfortunately, such elements who themselves do not know on whose side they will be fighting tomorrow, will still continue to exist for a fairly long time.

I want to make a practical proposal which consists in adopting a resolution in which three points will be specially mentioned.

First: One of the most important tasks for the comrades from the Western European countries lies in explaining to the masses the significance, importance and inevitability of the system of Soviets. There is not a sufficiently good understanding to be observed on this question. If Kautsky and Hilferding as theoreticians have become bankrupt, then the last articles in *Freiheit* show nevertheless that they are correctly representing the mood of the backward section of the German proletariat. And the same thing took place with us. During the first

eight months of the Russian Revolution, the question of Soviet organization was much discussed, but it was not clear to the workers what the new system consisted of and whether it was possible to create a state apparatus out of the Soviets. In our Revolution we went forward not in a theoretical way but in a practical way. For example, we did not first of all pose the question of the Constituent Assembly theoretically and we did not say that we do not recognize the Constituent Assembly. Only lately, when Soviet organizations had spread over the whole country and won political power, only then did we decide to dismiss the Constituent Assembly. We now see that in Hungary and in Switzerland the question stands much more sharply. On the one hand this is very good. We draw from this a firm conviction that the Revolution in the Western European states is moving quicker and will bring us great victories. On the other hand there is a definite danger in this, namely that the struggle will be so impetuous that the consciousness of the working masses will not keep up with such a development. Even now the significance of the system of Soviets is still not clear for great masses of politically educated German workers since they have been brought up in the spirit of parliamentarism and of bourgeois prejudices.

Second: On the spreading of the system of Soviets. When we hear how quickly the idea of Soviets is spreading in Germany and even in England this is a most important proof for us that the proletarian revolution will conquer. Its course can only be held up for a short time. It is another matter when Comrades Albert and Platten tell us that in their countries almost no Soviets exist among the agricultural laborers and small peasantry. I read in *Rote Fahne* an article against peasant Soviets but perfectly correctly, in favor of Soviets of laborers and village poor. The bourgeoisie and its lackeys such as Scheidemann and Co., have already put out the slogan of peasant Soviets. But we need only Soviets of laborers and village poor. Unfortunately from the reports of Albert and Platten and of others we see that, except in Hungary, very little is being done in the countryside for the spreading of the Soviet system. In this maybe there is still a practical and very great danger for the achievement of real victory by the German proletariat. Victory can only be considered as guaranteed when not only the town workers but also the country proletarians are organized, and moreover not when they are organized as they formerly were, in trade unions and co-operatives—but in Soviets. Our victory was obtained lightly because in November 1917 we went with the peasantry, with the whole of the peasantry. In this sense our revolution then was a bourgeois one. The first step of our proletarian government consisted in recognizing in the law published by our government on October 26 (old style), 1917, the day following the Revolution, the old demands of the whole peasantry which had been expressed under Kerensky by the peasant Soviets and village meetings. In this was our strength and it was for this that it was so easy for us to win an overwhelming majority. For the villages, our revolution still continued for a long time to be a bourgeois one, and only later, in six months' time, we were obliged within the frame of the state organization to lay the beginnings of the class struggle in the villages, to form in every village committees of the poor, of the semi-proletarians, and systematically to fight against the village bourgeoisie. With us this is inevitable because of the backwardness of Russia. In Western Europe things will go in another way and we should therefore emphasize that the spreading of the system of Soviets among the village population also in corresponding and possibly new forms, is absolutely essential.

Third: We must say that the winning of a Communist majority in the Soviets is the chief task in all countries where Soviet power has not yet been victorious. Our Resolutions Commission yesterday discussed this question. Perhaps other comrades will still speak on it but I should like to propose the adoption of these three points as a special resolution. Of course, we are not in a condition to dictate the line of development. It is very likely that in many Western European countries the revolution will come very quickly, but we as the organized section of the working class, in our capacity as a party, are striving and must strive to win a majority in the Soviets. Then our victory is guaranteed and no force will be in a condition to undertake anything against the Communist revolution. Otherwise victory will not be so easily obtained and will not be so lasting. So I should like to propose the adoption of these three points in the form of a special resolution.

Mexico's "Labor Governments"

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE

PLUTARCO Elias Calles "ran" for president in 1924 on the Laborista ticket. He called the labor leaders "comrade", spoke freely of his "socialism", and appointed Morones, trade union head, to the post of Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor. Besides the cabinet post, the little group of leaders of the *Crom* by 1927 had 11 senators, 40 deputies, two governors, innumerable state legislators, myriads of political appointments, management of the munitions factory and government printing plant, and governorship of the Federal District, rich in political plum since it includes the capital. Such was the set-up for Mexico's "Labor Government."

As Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Labor, Morones fulminated against the "wastefulness of strikes," urged the "collaboration of labor and capital to foment national economy," broke a number of strikes, principally those of non-*Crom* unions or those directed against American interests, declared the railway shopmen's strike of 1927 illegal after a Mexican court had pronounced it legal, renewed the promises to the oil companies of the "non-retroactivity of Article Twenty-Seven," and publicly proclaimed to Mexican labor: "It is time to declare a truce in this class war." On the First of May, 1927, the Minister's International Labor Day speech to his demonstrating cohorts culminated with a description of President and "Comrade" Calles as "the greatest continuer which the world has known of the work of the men who died in Haymarket, Chicago, forty-one years ago."

While all this was going on, incapable and self-blinded observers of both Catholic and liberal and socialist tendencies were working themselves and their readers into fevers over the "Socialism" of Mexico. The Catholic commentators found it an unmixt evil; the liberals and socialists an unadulterated good. Actually the working-class was gaining very little, and "socialism" was but a phrase to be played with. A certain positive residue or sediment of all the turgid demagoguery is of course inevitable, but even today in 1937 the Federal District with its large bureaucratic and middle class population consumes more meat than all the rest of the country put together, a staggering index to the poverty and malnutrition of the great mass of the Mexican people. The minimum wage laws required by the constitution, are still being "regulated and investigated" and the writer has personally entered rural areas where not one laborer receives even the legal minimum. In much of the country the traditional wage of less than fifty centavos a day (fourteen cents in our money) still prevails. Even in the capital, the workers receive the legal minimum, which there ranges from one and one-half to two pesos (forty-two to fifty-six cents), only

strike a paper match, use a corrugated box or a section of plate glass in Mexico, without paying tribute to the Calles group who form the substantial nucleus of a rapidly growing native capitalist class.

The group includes the banker Rodriguez, whom he subsequently made President of Mexico, Aaron Saenz and Alberto Pani who formed parts of both the Obregon and Calles cabinets, De la Chica, manager of the big and flourishing Monterrey steel enterprises, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, also a Calles-made President, and a number of others. Through interlocking directorates they control something like a score of enterprises. So far they have no conflict with foreign interests because they have made no serious attempt to invade the fields of oil and minerals, but monopolize the construction industries (steel, concrete, cement, rubber, glass, building construction and road-making) and have branched out into various consumption industries such as milk, crackers, garbanos (chick-peas) and realty and resort and hotel developments. When in 1935 Cardenas, the fourth Calles-made President, broke with the Jefe Maximo (as Calles had come to be called), he deported both the Jefe and his chief political lieutenants such as Morones and Leon and removed many of his friends from military and political posts, but he either did not care or did not dare to disturb Calles, the native capitalist group and financial industrial system built up under Morrow's brief tutelage by the apt pupil "Comrade" Calles and his intimate associates.

"The Men of the Revolution" These, the real Callistas, are known as "men of the Revolution"; from the Revolution they issued and through it acquired generalships, governorships, cabinet posts, presidencies, prestige, power and wealth. As generals in the field they confiscated "enemy" properties, made forced levies on stocks or gold and currency, "purchased" supplies with the paper pesos they printed over their signatures, acquired estates by "agrarian expropriation" and seized and carried off and sold everything movable in the regions through which they passed in their campaigns. Obregon began life as a mechanic and petty rancher; he ended it as a big landowner and the chief garbanzo grower and the chief began as an undiplomated rural school teacher; today he owns the rich haciendas of Trinidad, Soledad de la Mota, Santa Barbara and El Tambor. These men represent a new capitalist-minded land-owning class; but under Morrow's tutelage they became more than that: bankers, builders, roadmakers, realty men and modern industrialists. This development seems likely to mark a new epoch in the history of Mexico. And in it lies the secret of the growing conservatism of the Calles group. Having

acquired land, they began to call for even the slow, makeshift, inadequate land distribution to come to an end. Having acquired industrial properties, they began to fear the Frankenstein labor movement they themselves had called into being. Strikes were all well and good as an aid to American interests in their competition with other foreign capitals, as a crusher of small enterprises in favor of growing native monopolies, as a weapon against "reactionaries", i.e. government opponents. But suppose the labor movement should become less discriminating? get out of our hands? Suppose the Callistas should cease to be in control of the government? The "Men of the Revolution" began to wish that the demagoguery they themselves had started would cease

Two New Pamphlets Issued By Communist Opposition

Two very much needed and anxiously awaited pamphlets will be off the press within one week. The first, by Will Herberg, is a simple, lucid explanation of the differences over the issue of craft vs. industrial unionism, which now divides the trade union movement. The pamphlet also takes up the attitude of the various political organizations to the CIO and closes with an appeal for support of the CIO. The pamphlet is entitled "The C.I.O.—Labor's New Challenge". It will sell for 5c a copy.

The second pamphlet, by Jay Lovestone, is entitled "The People's Front Illusion". It is an 80 page book, selling for 15c. The timeliness and importance of such a discussion at this time need not be emphasized. Nor is it necessary

to state that no more competent authority than Comrade Lovestone could possibly be found to discuss this topic. Jay Lovestone brings to this topic a wealth of knowledge in the theoretical system of Marxism which is denied and challenged by the People's Front, as well as rich experience in the field of communist strategy and tactics which is totally disregarded in the People's Front system.

Comrade Lovestone concludes that from the standpoint of strategy the People's Front is the road to new defeats for the proletariat and from the standpoint of Marxist fundamentals it is a break with the principles of revolutionary socialism or communism and an approach to reformist socialism.

Next Week: "THE FALL OF THE BIG CHIEF" the Story of Cardenas' Rise to Power

Blind Men on the March

By MAX DUBROW

Inured to the sight of mass demonstrations, pickets marching and militants carrying into the streets their battle against oppression in every form, base New Yorkers were jarred out of their usual smug complacency, still somewhat bleary of vision, stared in open astonishment at the strange spectacle of the blinded in revolt.

It's the early forenoon of January 25, 1937: A procession of nearly a hundred Blind wending its way cross town, from West to East Side, on New York's busiest thoroughfare Forty Second Street. Starting out from Times Square marching arm in arm with slow, measured steps, holding aloft an array of placards inscribed with their slogans, they announced to the world.—"We Want Equality With The Blind In Other States!" Amazed spectators asked, "Why? Haven't they got it?" "What do other States offer their Blind, that New York does not?"

Inquiry elicited the authentic information that of thirty-three States having any legislative provisions whatsoever for the Blind, New York and Massachusetts stand alone with no mandatory law which in practice has meant, and means now that the questions of adequate or inadequate, minimum or maximum here are equal to exactly no provision at all. Thus the "leading", richest, most populous State of the Union, New York, becomes the pace-setter for the following most backward states, which have neither mandatory nor optional (scraps of paper) laws: Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North

Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

All others—from Nevada the least populous, with its \$800 a year "Blind-pension", California and Pennsylvania, both vying with each other for first place, with the most progressive "Blind-laws" in the entire country, to the State of Ponce DeLeon, Florida, just barely getting in under the line with a maximum of \$180—have in varying degree established precedents for every one of the other demands formulated and incorporated into a draft-bill by the Joint Action Committee Of The Blind, the organization responsible for the demonstration and furnishing the leadership for this March On Albany, via Grand Central.

Let us, however, walk, across Forty Second Street, with them and let us read the signs (of the times) as they pass. First—"We Want Work At Prevailing Wages and Standards! No Sub-Standard for the Nimble Fingered Blind!" and secondly—"Open the Doors of Industry to Us and Free Us from the Curse of Charity!" Will, perhaps, the reader react to these demands as did some of the spectators, and with them exclaim: "What! The Blind in Industry?," "Fantastic!," "Preposterous!" "He will!", said our informant, "particularly if he is one of that vast mass who, lacking genuine information, clings to rotten-ripe prejudices and outworn ideas concerning the Blind; deeply rooted in the view by Vested Interests, so carefully fostered and inculcated, of the necessity for the segregation from the cradle to the grave, of the Bling from the Sighted."

Is this, then, the product of a fertile imagination, run riot and

(Continued on Page 6)

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Progressive Tailors Demand Democratic Elections

The February issue of the "Tailors Bulletin" published by the Amalgamated Progressive Circle and the Rank and File Committee, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, calls upon all the members of Local Twenty Five to elect Progressive candidates to the Executive Board in the coming elections.

The program on which these candidates base their fight is as follows: Guaranteed minimum wage scales for all the crafts on the basis of a dollar per hour; the classification system in all organized clothing markets of the country; enforcement of the 36-hour week; true democracy in the union; abolition of the so-called corporation shops, not more than two contractors to be allowed in a shop; restriction of the speed-up system in the shops.

The "Tailors Bulletin", in its appeal reviews the miserable conditions under which the tailors work today, despite all the old promises of the leadership of the Union to enforce conditions which had been guaranteed—on paper.

Dealing with the important question of assuring truly democratic elections it goes on to state:

"Taking into consideration the bitter experiences of the past, how can we assure a democratic election? It is necessary that these most elementary democratic principles of a Union are observed in these elections:

"1. Nominations for the Election and Objection Committee should be made from the floor of the Local meeting and not appointed by the chairman, as it was practiced in previous elections. The election to be by secret ballot and the counting of same to take place the same evening on the platform of the meeting. No candidate for the Executive Board should be eligible for membership in the Election Committee.

"2. The polling should be carried through in voting booths in order that the worker should be free to

vote as he pleases without interference.

"3. The Election and Objection Committee should permit watchers representing the different slates during the counting of the ballots.

"Only the carrying through of these constructive proposals will assure an honest and democratic election.

"Sisters and Brothers! You are no doubt aware of the fact that about ten months ago the Amalgamated Progressive Circle and Rank and File Committee had formed a United Front on the basis of a constructive program in our Union. Minimum wage scales for all the tailors; enforcement of the 36-hour week, and democracy in the Union were the main planks in our program for which we have fought courageously at every opportunity. In the coming elections for an Executive Board in Local 25, both groups will continue to work together; we will have one program and one slate for which we call upon you tailors to support and vote for. We also declare that we will gladly endorse every suitable candidate who does not belong to our group or is not in agreement with all points of our program, providing he is willing to struggle with us for an honest election and a democratic Union. This is the only condition we place for the endorsement of a candidate. On this point there can be no compromise.

"At a time when the entire Trade Union Movement of this country is stirred and inspired by the great strike movement in the mass production industries; at a time when the whole labor movement is undergoing deep changes and facing decisive moments—at this time particularly it is of utmost importance to elect an Executive Board that will not be a rubber stamp but will lead Local 25 on progressive lines in the interests of the entire membership."

Philadelphia Sit-Down Strike Won in "Exide" Battery Plant

By M. WHITMAN

Philadelphia's first sit down strike of major proportions ended Monday February 15, 1937, with a positive victory for the strikers. 1800 employees of the Philadelphia Electric Storage Battery Company succeeded by virtue of their militancy and solidarity to win substantial gains for the union.

Remaining within the company's two plants since January 4, 1937, the men maintained a discipline and morale seldom seen in Philadelphia. Soon after the strike began, Charles Gaff, president of the Federal Battery Workers Union, announced that the men were out after a fifteen cents an hour increase. Henry S. Drinker, attorney for the company answered Gaff by stating the company's refusal to begin negotiations until the men left the plant.

The workers, from the very beginning, asserted their intention to stay in "until June if necessary" to win their demands. Ample proof of the tremendous support of the strike by the men can be seen in a vote taken during the fifth week of the stay-in. Out of 1200 employees in one plant, one voted to leave, and out of four hundred in the other plant two voted to leave.

Aid given by the other unions in the city contributed in no small measure to the success of the strikers. Food and clothing were

sent regularly by the United Radio and Electrical Workers, the machinists' unions and other groups.

Although the battery workers did not succeed in winning their full demands, they won a five cent an hour increase and complete recognition for the union. Negotiations are already under way between the union and company officials on other union demands. More important than specific gains, however, is the splendid and heroic examples given Philadelphia workers in the sit-down strike technique.

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M. THOREZ—DR. OF PROSPERITY

At the national conference of the French Communist Party held on January 22, Maurice Thorez, leader of the party, spoke at great length in praise of the People's Front for having brought about an increase of industrial production and lower interest rates. "I believe in a steady economic recovery," he said, "in spite of the gloomy forecasts of the enemies of the People's Front. . ."

Not so very long ago—we seem to recall—the Communist International severely criticized the right wing Social-Democrats for having assumed the role of "the doctors and not the grave-diggers of capitalism". But, of course, it is altogether different when the People's Front does it!

When Right Teaches Left

The whole labor movement is discussing President Roosevelt's judicial proposals. It is being widely recognized that these proposals constitute a flank attack on the Supreme Court, the chief obstacle in the way of the New Deal program today. Precisely because the Supreme Court has shown itself such an inveterate enemy of all progressive social legislation, organized labor is almost unanimously in favor of the plan to change the composition of the court. But it is also realized that Roosevelt's approach is after all indirect and uncertain. There is very great danger that the scheme to replace six "old" judges by six "young" ones may come to be looked upon as a cure-all and divert attention from the much more fundamental task of curbing the court by amending the constitution so as to make labor and so-

Blind Men On The March

(Continued from Page 5)

the other it struck out squarely against the Dunnegan-Steingut Bill which would legalize a practice making the Blind shiver in fright and horror at the very thought that they might be subjected to the whim and fancy of some social worker and some unscrupulous medica, eager to "write a paper", ambitious to establish a reputation in his profession, the prerequisites for both of which would be a human guinea-pig to perform and experiment on!

On and on! They marched, confident in their belief that they were going to Albany and victory, by convincing the legislature and the great "liberal", Governor Lehman of the inadequacy of any bill but their own, providing for all previously mentioned points at issue and, perhaps, the better clinched with the following: **We Want 60 Dollars Monthly Pension, The Right To Own 500 Dollars Savings and 500 Dollars Life Insurance!**

The mere posing of the question is a challenge to the working class who in times of Peace augment and in War swell to overflow the ranks of the Handicapped; yet, somehow, contents itself with leaving their fate to the Three "Graces" of capitalism — Faith, Hope and Charity.

Meanwhile, the Handicapped are marching and demand recognition.

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"THE WEEK IN FLINT"

(Continued from Page 2)

"Everything is in hand. Everybody keep quiet. The sit-down is a success. Protection squad, watch your sound car."

Not a man on the outside was injured, the seventeen casualties all happened inside the plants through the attacks of thugs and company police who attacked the unarmed workers.

At the same moment the injunction hearing was going on in the court house. As Lee Pressman, attorney for the United Automobile Workers, told the bloody story of General Motors, the uncomfortable company lawyer, attorney Brownell, threatened to walk out if Attorney Pressman continued. Attorney Pressman pointed out to the court that this was contempt of court on the part of the General Motors lawyer. Hastily the company attorney withdrew his

words.

The tenseness in Flint grew. No one knew what action would be taken against the sit-downers. No one knew if they would be evicted with violence.

Wednesday had been chosen as Woman's Day. The Women's Emergency Brigade made its first formal appearance in Flint. They swept out of the Pengelly Building, the streets were bright with their red caps of Flint and the green caps of Detroit. There were women from Lansing, Toledo, Bay City, and Pontiac, although there had been almost no notice given. The idea of a spearhead for the woman's auxiliary with a distinctive armband and cap originated in Flint, but it is spreading like a prairie fire throughout the automobile industry. Their procession gay with banners and bright caps, they marched through the heart of Flint.

Cars took them down to the immense picket lines looped around Fisher No. 1 guarding the workers from violence. The demonstration around Fisher was unique in the history of labor. There were ten thousand pickets and spectators. The women marched and marched, their banners and caps brightening the crowd.

The strikers themselves policed this amazing crowd and directed traffic, and, at the request of their leaders, dispersed it.

Though there was no disorder, word came to Union headquarters that vigilante groups were being formed. Armed vigilante groups, guns given to them by the police, lurked in the night threatening to attack the strikers who, ignorant of this, were attending a splendid women's meeting where women from many automobile towns were telling of the constructive work done in the Woman's Auxiliary, the home and the Union coming together.

At midnight an agreement for a truce was reached between the strike leaders, the city and military authorities, and the police. The agreement called for the disbanding of the vigilantes on the one hand, on the other the strikers agreed to avoid assembling in such numbers and to lay aside the staves many had been carrying.

The strikers laid aside their wooden staves, but tension continued to mount in Flint as a meeting was called in the I. M. A. hall by the same vigilantes who were recruited under the name of a "Citizens Army".

While this meeting was held the strikers picketed plant No. 1. The women in red and green caps walked around and around the plant. Snow was falling, the sit-downers' band played for the strikers. Suddenly the men and women against whom the vigilantes were arming were all dancing, the picket line had been transformed into a gay street festival.

Night came, the dancing stopped. The sitters waited for the latest news from Detroit. With them waited the workers of America whose eyes were on Flint.

The Moscow Trials

(Continued from Page 3)

the Moscow trials constituted an unmitigated disaster—alike to the revolutionary movement of the world and to the Soviet Union. Only a complete overhauling of the whole system of political leadership and inner-party life in the communist movement, such as has long been advocated by the International Communist Opposition, holds out hope for the future. Those who are deeply concerned with all that the situation may mean for the Soviet Union, its leading party and the international labor move-

ment, will aid us in redoubling our efforts to achieve inner-party democracy and collective leadership in the Communist International and all its sections, including the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It is the only guarantee of a healthy communist movement!

NEW WORKERS SCHOOL
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Classes every Tuesday at 8 p.m.
at I.O.F. Hall
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