

REVIEWING THE NEWS

The Capitalist Press and San Francisco

In tearful articles about the suffering of women and children, in threatening stories about the power of the National Guard and the Army, in hair-raising reports of "Russian Reds" imposing their leadership on Americans the capitalist press does its bit to discredit the greatest forward step taken by American labor in years—the Pacific Coast general strike. And yet hidden away, far from the front page and the headlines, we find the World Telegram's correspondent saying: "The strike, strong and dramatic, has seemed amazingly popular with the general public." Over the protests and barriers set up by the traitorous and yellow labor leaders, many of them bought with enemy gold, the working class of California, "the great American working man" has surged forward in splendid class solidarity. That surging enthusiastic militancy has carried with it not only a "conservative" organized labor and sections of the unorganized but also thousands of the white collar workers, professionals and small business men who make up "the general public". Here we have a mental, spiritual and moral awakening of the workers of California—in a word a rising class consciousness which shows that the grave-diggers of decaying American capitalism are reaching for their spades. No wonder the capitalist press becomes hysterical.

Green—"The Lost Leader"

William Green who is so much in evidence when chains of arbitration are being fastened on labor has nothing to say. This buzzard stands to one side hoping that working class defeat will furnish him rich pickings in bringing labor back to "sanity". Whatever the settlement of the California strike may be, one thing is sure, that the handwriting is on the wall for the blustering Baptist betrayer Bill Green and his kind.

"Lost" General Strikes

The capitalist press with great gusto tells of the lost general strikes of the past and reckons among them the Winnipeg general strike. And it is true that the Winnipeg strike was called off without winning recognition of the metal workers union, the point for which the strike was called. However, during and after the strike wage increases were won by practically all sections of Winnipeg labor. Thousands of workers were brought into the labor movement who had no previous contact with it. Literally thousands broke their church, lodge and other ideological ties with their masters and never restored them again. So great was the support of the strike that months later four of the strike leaders, three of them still in jail were elected to the provincial legislature. A labor mayor and a group of labor aldermen were elected in the city. Later with the formation of the Communist party a Communist alderman was elected. Despite the fifteen years of prosperity and depression, fifteen years of apathy in the American labor movement, the solidarity and militancy generated by the Winnipeg general strike is yet a potent force in that city. The San Francisco strike, greater in its scope, occurs under far different conditions. Conditions much more favorable for the working class. Gentlemen of the Capitalist press: American labor, conscious and aggressive, has arrived. It is here to stay. It took some hesitating steps in the past year and again more firmly in Minneapolis and Toledo. Now, standing upright and powerful, it places its feet down firmly in the Frisco general strike. Its face is to the East. There will be setbacks. But its task is laid by history. Awakened and all-powerful it shall march across the continent, clearing the capitalist rats and parasites from the country it has made.

Class Collaboration

The following item was not clipped from the organ of a company union, nor even from Green's American Federationist but from the Stalinist Daily Worker. However, it should occasion no wonder that those who can read "peaceful intentions" in the Imperialist policies of France and England can also "be keenly aware of the problems facing "both sides" in the factories of American capitalism and "have a realistic approach to their solution". Here is the quotation, Daily Worker, July 18th—I Rosenberg writing on the shoe industry in New York: "The manufacturers must admit (really!) that our organization is keenly aware of the conditions prevailing in the industry and the problems arising in the shops affecting both sides and they know that our organization is having a realistic approach to the solution of the problems." Bill Green couldn't put the case for class collaboration letter than that. Here again the swamps of Stalinism and reformism merge.

—BILL

Strike Ends in Philadelphia S.K.F. Works

Philadelphia.—The heroic struggle of the SKF Anti-Friction Bearings strikers ended on July 9, after a four month battle.

The strike broke out when the bosses refused to renew the agreement for a closed shop (which had been in effect for six months) and in its place tried to force an agreement embodying all the earmarks of a company union. The Philadelphia Regional Labor Board's pretensions to "impartiality" were exposed. "These bosses' instrument tried to get the men back to work under this condition: to arrange negotiations between the men and the bosses for a period of 10 days during which the men were to remain at work, and after that to arbitrate all disputed points and render a binding decision in 30 days.

A Vicious Decision

The decision of the National Labor Board was even more vicious. They proposed that 250 workers were to be taken back (900 had gone on strike), the others were to be placed on a preferential hiring list for one year. In this time the company was not to hire any outside help. The Regional Labor Board was to act as arbitrator in all cases of violence.

The strikers correctly rejected both of the proposals. The workers received a lesson which helped to maintain their morale for a time—that the only defense against the bosses was their own organization, the Anti-Friction Bearing Workers Union.

For 10 weeks the ranks of the strikers were solid. Until that time the only ones who were working in the plant were imported scabs who had been brought in by a scab agency of New York City on the third week of the strike after the Regional Labor Board's decision was rejected.

Police Terror

During this period the police terror, unequalled in the labor history of the city, was inaugurated by the head of the Department of "Public Safety", Le Strange. Pick-

eting around the plant during the beginning and end of the work-day was made impossible by the scabbers. Convoys of motorcycle cops guarded the scabs to and from work—300 cops were stationed around the plant during the day and were fed in the plant's cafeteria. Many were injured by the bluecoated brutes, one striker was shot, two were stabbed and more than a score injured with clubs. The city's public strike-breaking agency, the police force, was the most effective tool in smashing the strike.

On the 11th week of the strike about 150 workers went back to work. Realizing that in order to win the strike—that is to keep out scabs—support from other unions was necessary. Calls were sent out to all labor organizations.

Some offered financial assistance and a few pickets but the main body of the Central Labor Union sabotaged the strike.

Labor Sees Boycott Strike

Since there wasn't any organized leftwing that could challenge the conservative and reactionary leaders, this treachery to the strikers heightened the audacity of the firm while the workers became demoralized. After that it was merely a question of how long the workers could hold out against the overwhelming odds.

Though the strike hadn't been called off, as time wore on quite a few workers went back to their jobs. On Monday, July 9 the strike was officially ended.

From this strike we can learn that militancy in both the leadership and the membership of an independent union is insufficient to win. By being separate from the main stream of organized labor, the A. F. of L. the union was cut off from the aid of other locals in the A. F. of L. The Minneapolis strike shines out like a beacon—a militant left-wing trade union within the A. F. of L. forced the conservative trade-unions into workers' solidarity and into giving united aid against the bosses.

—LOU ROBERTS.

QUESTION BOX

Send questions to "Question Box Editor", c/o The Militant. State the name under which you wish your answers to appear.

COMRADE G-d-n, Brownsville.—Here, briefly, is the story of the Prussian "red" referendum.

On March 5, 1931, 42,000 members of the Stahlhelm, the nationalistic, reactionary league of war veterans, petitioned the Prussian government, headed by Otto Braun, Premier and Dr. Carl Severing, Minister of the Interior, both Socialists, demanding the calling of a popular initiative on the dissolution of the Prussian Diet. All the parties to the right of the government, particularly the Nationalists and National Socialists, signified their intention of supporting the initiative, thus indicating who stood to gain by it. By about April the initiative, which required about 5,000,000 votes was carried. The Diet then had the choice of either voting on its own dissolution or submitting the matter to a popular referendum. It chose the latter course.

Now the Stalinists step on the scene. "On July 21, the Central Committee addressed itself to the Prussian Government with the demand for democratic and social concessions, threatening otherwise to come out for the referendum. Advancing its demands, the Stalinist bureaucracy in actuality addressed itself to the upper stratum of the Social Democratic party with the proposal for a united front against the Fascists under certain conditions. When the Social Democracy rejected the proposed conditions, the Stalinists formed a united front with the Fascists against the Social Democracy.

The vote was taken on August 9, 1931; the plebiscite failing, receiving about 10,000,000 votes out of a required 13,500,000. The voting was not done by parties, all the votes being merged, so that no accurate measure was available as to how each party voted. The Stalinists, however, claimed that the showing was due to them and accused the Fascists of having "sabotaged" the voting.

The Stalinists defended their position by claiming that it was not their fault if, in voting correctly, the Fascists voted their way. To this we replied: "The question of the coincidence of the voting with the Fascists is . . . viewed by us not from the point of view of some abstract principle, but from the point of view of the actual struggle of the classes for power, and the relationship of forces at a given stage. . . . To come out into the streets with the slogan 'Down with the Bruening-Braun government' at a time when according to the relation of forces, it can only be replaced by a government of Hitler, Eugen, is the sheerest adventurism." By taking such a position under the circumstances "the Communists . . . appear in the eyes of the masses as the aids of reaction."

For a more complete analysis of the question see the article by L. D. Trotsky in the Militant of September 19, 1931, from which the excerpts in quotation marks have been taken.

COMRADE B.A.N., New York.—The names of the countries where we have sections, and the names of the papers which they publish follows:

- Germany: Unser Wort
Holland: Baanbreker
France: Verite and Combat des Jeunes (youth)
Belgium: La Voix Communiste
Spain: Lucha de Clase and L'Antorcha
Greece: Pali ton Taxion
Poland: Proletariat
Bulgaria: Osvojudenie
England: Red Flag
Italy: Verita
U.S.A.: Militant, Young Spartacus (youth), and the New International (theoretical monthly)
Canada: Vanguard
Argentina: Nueva Etapa, Tribuna Leninista
Brazil: Lucha de Classe
Cuba: Rayo
Chile: Izquierda
U.S.S.R.: Bulletin of the Russian Opposition
Switzerland: Lithuania
Mexico:
In addition we have groups in China, Austria and other countries.

Com. Abramowitz Dead

Comrade Isaac Abramowitz, a member of the Communist League in New Haven died of cancer on Saturday, July 7. For the greater part of his life he was a fighter in the revolutionary and working class movement. Joining the movement in Russia he was one of the foundation members of the Communist Party of the United States. Expelled in 1928 for supporting the Marxist position in the party he has ever since been a staunch fighter for the Communist League. His death has greatly bereaved all the comrades that knew him.

The Crisis in the New York Painters Union

The widespread belief that the Brotherhood of Painters, District Council No. 9, with its thirteen locals in New York City is facing its gravest internal crisis in recent years, was substantiated by Phillip Zausner, fraudulently elected secretary of D. C. No. 9, in a sixty minute speech delivered last Friday, July 13, before the membership meeting of Local 442.

The New York Painters are in open revolt against the unconstitutional, fraudulent and strong-arm methods used in the elections on June 30 and they are determined to clean out the underworld elements from the ranks of the organization. Betrayed in the strike of last October, deprived of \$100,000 which was extorted from working members in the short space of a few months under the pretext of raising a strike fund and then having it spent just as quickly by Zausner and his "friends" who ignored the welfare of the painters and imposed on them a flock of human parasites who maintain their hold by intimidation, force and terror, the Brotherhood rank-and-file members have become definitely insurgent. And rightly so, as the conditions in the trade and in the shops are worse now than they have ever been.

The Steamroller in Action

During the last Fall "season", when the union treasury was bulging with cash, Zausner's clique felt itself firmly in the saddle of the union. The seeming stability soon led to mechanization of leadership. Next he found it easy to create a machine, which was transformed into a perfect steamroller that now dominates all the activities of the union,—at meetings and elections—flattening out opposition, balking protests. But the potential rise of new leaders, in time, under the stimulus of real divergences of policies and program is a real menace to the steamroller today.

Last Thursday evening seven hundred bona fide members of the Brotherhood marched in solid ranks to the headquarters of the D. C. on 14th St. and Eighth Ave. and impressed the gangsters and the police there with their militancy. Saturday a huge mass meeting was held in Irving Plaza where pledges were made and a resolution adopted to fight Zausnerism to the bitter end. Every honest painter is convinced that the Zausner gang occupies the office illegally, and the election was carried through by repeaters at the voting machines, by dishonesty and corruption—shortly in a fraudulent manner.

The chief demand was new elections and speaker after speaker directed his speech to that conclusion. "New elections" is a correct demand and since the case is in the hands of lawyers and courts it was also correct to demand that in the meantime the painters themselves take action and force Zausner from office.

A Bit of Fake Bravado

Here we were witness to the usual Stalinist hotbeddedness, where sentiments were allowed to run rampant and emotions take the place of sober reasoning. One of the main speakers, the I.L.D. lawyer Sacher, forgot himself completely and after admitting that he is "terribly interested in the painters" and a feeling had come over him to be one of the painters himself concluded his speech by a bravado: "If I was a painter I would go and bust up the whole outfit." When during the collection dollar bills were slow in coming in he pleaded with the audience that he personally had put up \$40 for police protection of the meeting and at least that amount should be made good. A few minutes later he burst out again and literally threatened to go out and "tear the gangsters to ribbons".

Louis Weinstein, the rank and file candidate for Zausner's office, as a main speaker also made many statements that didn't win the approval of the painters save the few Stalinists present. He proposed to the painters to violate the constitution whenever possible, since Zausner has also violated it. He spoke of building some new, mysterious union, the name of which he carefully omitted. Weinstein spoke about starving out the D. C.—"not a penny in per capita tax." He also urged the painters to "go back to your locals and give the gangsters their own medicine" with a full knowledge that the painters are not in a position to do so with the exception of his own local and probably one or two others.

The response of the meeting was good, but not as good as it should have been. It is hard to reach all the painters. Despite the fact that during the last month, the Daily Worker has printed column after column on the situation only 700 out of 6,000 members could be mobilized for the parade and the mass meeting. The meeting also didn't seem to approve the petitioning for names and addresses that were to be sent to the Executive Board in Indianapolis. Many felt that this self-exposure would result in blacklisting.

Zausner on Offensive

Although the militant rank and file is ready to carry the battle to the D. C. door, Zausner's machine is far from sleeping. In fact he is taking the offensive and the odds

MARCH OF EVENTS

The United Front in France

The threat of Fascism in France is an even greater danger to the French proletariat at this moment than was the threat of Hitler's coming to power in 1932. That is clear when one considers, as every Communist must do, the international setting and the relations of the classes on the world arena. French Fascism strives for power after the catastrophic defeat of the German workers, after the betrayal of the Austrian working class, after the advent of Fascism in a whole string of countries. In their struggle the French proletariat cannot, therefore rely on the active support of the enslaved toilers in the countries given over to the bloody regime of reaction. Furthermore the bourgeoisie of France travel more readily over a road partly paved for them,—it is the bourgeoisie and not the working class that has been shown "how it is done", at least in this recent period. True, the recent happenings in Germany can but strengthen the determination of the masses of every land where reaction has not yet triumphed, not to permit the seizure of power by the Fascists. For that the masses of France, as of every other capitalist country, must be united for struggle.

The inception of the United Front against Fascism in France is at least a guarantee that the French workers will not capitulate without a fight, if such a guarantee were needed in a country with the tradition of leadership in every revolution in Europe except the Russian Revolution. Forced by the inexorable logic of events, the Socialists and the Stalinists, the parties of the betrayal of the German workers, have come to an agreement to fight together against French Fascism. Neither of these bankrupt bureaucracies could resist the over-riding demand and impulse of all the toilers for united action. Both these parties have alike suffered serious splits that threatened their disintegration. The St. Denis communist workers under the leadership of Doriot merely showed the way to the proletarians still under Stalinist influence. At least one motive of the Comintern in "authorizing" the policy of the United Front on an international scale, was to prevent further splits and possibly to win back the St. Denis insurgents.

The Psychology of Forgetting

Both the Socialists and the Stalinists would prefer to start a new page on the united front and to "forget" the past "mistakes". That is partly the meaning of the mutual guarantee not to criticize each other in the united front. The French Stalinists tried to impose as one condition for the united front that the Trotskyists, the International-Communists, be excluded. Indeed they had every reason for wishing this. But their double bookkeeping,—denunciation of the Trotskyists as counter-revolutionists in one column for having advocated the only correct policies (which would have made Hitler's coming to power impossible) in the struggle for power of the international proletariat, and sliding in of these very policies in another column (only half-heartedly) at least in the matter of the united front, without any announcement of change or analysis of their past—is the proof that the "new line" is only a false cover to be cast off for further betrayal at a later stage. For the united front can lead to nothing fruitful without correct policies to be advanced through the united front, itself merely a tactic. And until the reactionary theory of socialism in one country is destroyed root and branch (and this means inevitably the liquidation of the Stalinist cliques in every country) the Stalinist parties can only mislead the working class. Precisely because the unity in struggle of the workers permits the hegemony ultimately to pass to that party which advocates a correct course of action based on firm principles, precisely for this reason the Stalinists would like to exclude the Trotskyists whom they cannot face and withstand in open and free debate. They fear the Fourth International!

The United Front to Release Thaelmann

We fight for the release of all political prisoners of Hitler, Thaelmann included. (And do not forget the four German youths shamelessly abandoned to Hitler by the Stalinists.) But we cannot help voicing our utter repugnance to the propaganda of the Stalinists which, looking to this figure of "the leader", shamelessly speaks of the daily execution of one or two Communist workers by the Fascist scoundrels as merely the prelude to the killing of Thaelmann. And what of this is the irony of history that Blum and Thorez form a united front in France to help secure the release of Thaelmann who found it impossible (counter-revolutionary!) himself to unite with Wels, the collaborator of Blum in Germany, to prevent Hitler from coming to power and placing Thaelmann in jail. —JACK WEBER.

The Pledge Fund A Holy United Front in Mexico

THE PLEDGERS

- New York City (New members)
John Delaney pledges 50c monthly "for period of employment".
George Cooper pledges \$1 weekly "as long as job lasts".
M. M. pledges \$2 weekly "for as long as possible".
This is the same comrade who has disposed of 47 coupon books in the Organization-press Campaign. He has 10 more books, and will undoubtedly sell those too.
Manhattan
I Glade \$1.00 monthly
Leonard Lewis 1.00 weekly
Dorothy Morris 1.00 "
Clara Nelson 1.00 "
J. G. Wright .50 "
M. Spithos 1.00 monthly
S. Blecker .50 "
S. Gordon 2.00 "
Paul King 1.00 "
Florence Becker 2.00 "
J. Weber 2.00 "
Com. Tamas 1.00 "
F. Victor .50 "
M. Kling .50 "
E. Konikow 1.00 "
Harlem
E. Beecher .50 "
Colay .50 "
Cochrin .50 "
Jerry Marsh 1.00 "
T. Smith 2.00 "
Bronx
S. Eckstadt 1.00 "
M. Lifshitz 1.00 "
Others in New York City
H. Porter 1.00 monthly
E. Alby 1.00 "
E. E. C. 1.00 "
E. J. Conwit .50 "
Cornells 1.00 "
L. Haldous 1.00 "
Samuel, E. 1.00 "
The Geltmans 1.00 "
P. Miller 1.00 "
Sydney Moroff 1.00 "
A. McCabe 1.00 "
City Subway Worker 1.00 "
Edith Sher 1.00 "
Ann Toven 1.00 "
H. S. 1.00 weekly (paid for 25 weeks)
A Teacher 1.00 " (paid for 26 weeks)
Geo. Cooper 1.00 "
M. M. 2.00 "
John Delaney .50 monthly
Newark, N. J.
Geo. Holley 2.00 monthly
L. Nagy .50 "
G. Kotz 1.00 "
J. Becker 1.00 "
Lambert 1.00 "
A. Sympathizer .50 "
A. Social Worker 1.00 "
A. Clerk .50 "
Boston
E. Wiener .50 "
C. Shecket .50 "
W. Henderson .50 "
J. Chipowitz .50 "
A. Wolfe, New Haven 1.00 "
A. Friend, Youngtown 2.00 " (paid 4 months in advance)
A Steel Worker, W. Va., sends a donation to this fund whenever he can manage it. Thus far he has sent in \$15.
NEEDED—A few more friends like

Mexico City.—While considering counter-revolutionary all proposals of a united front with other workers' organizations not directly controlled by them, the Stalinists make no bones about the formation of united fronts with isolated intellectuals or intellectual groups, and at times in actual practice even with the Fascists as demonstrated by the Prussian "Red" Referendum in 1931. The prize example of all, however, seems to have been reserved for the Mexican Stalinists who today maintain a united front in action with the clerical forces on the issue of opposing sexual education in the public schools.

In an effort to cover up its inability to solve the problems of the Mexican revolution and distract attention from the non-fulfillment of the pompously announced educational projects, and the attacks on the standards of living of the school teachers and professors, the government of the bourgeoisie has brought forward through its Minister of Public Instruction, Nicholas Bassols, an elaborate and apparently very "revolutionary" project for sexual education to the children in the public schools.

Taking advantage of the prejudices of the most backward sections of the population, the Roman Catholic clergy has succeeded in mobilizing the parents' organizations under its control in a mass protest movement against this "unholy" proposal of the Rodriguez-Calles regime which, they point out is set on destroying the morals of their innocent offspring and corrupting the home with ideas about life and sex not yet accepted by the Holy See.

A substantial mass movement has been raised on this issue having its main support among fanatical housewives. And here is where the official Communist Party enters the scene with its complete collection of appendages and auxiliaries. The Y.C.L. and the Anti-Imperialist League are fighting in the street demonstrations side by side with the Catholic Youth Federation as the shock troops of reaction in this conflict.

As if there were nothing else to attack and criticize in the policies of the bourgeois government, and instead of emphasizing the demands for better conditions for the teachers and the fulfillment of the program for better conditions for the teachers and the fulfillment of the program or establishment and maintenance of schools in the countryside, raising the issue for free books and supplies to school children, the Stalinists pick the issue of sexual education, thereby giving the most direct support to the most reactionary forces in the country. No further comment is necessary. —C.C.

M.M. of the Bronx, the teacher in New York City and the steel worker from W. Va. in addition to our regular pledgers, whose contributions help greatly to lighten our financial burdens.

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