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NRA BATTERS DOWN WAGES

CAPITOL NEWS LETTER

By JACK ELDER
WASHINGTON.—Judge Niels' decision in the Weirton case put the finishing touch to the National Run Around to which the iron and steel workers have been subjected ever since the summer of 1933. Section 7a, the DuPont benchmark discovered, was not constitutional. Congress has the power to regulate "interstate commerce". But the manufacture of iron and steel does not involve "interstate commerce". Thus although the iron and steel employers are free to make whatever use they can of the monopoly features of the code—price fixing, basing points, production quotas—they are exempt from the force of the collective bargaining requirements.

At the same time, the court ruled, it was an outrage to maintain that H. T. Weir has "imposed" the company union upon his employees. They participate in the company union of their own free will. It is an ideal little device, all within the family, for settling grievances and getting justice done. Even if Section 7a were constitutional, the labor boards have no right to annoy this good and benevolent employer. The language of the decision is a beautiful illustration of how class loyalty and class interests determine the supposed logic of the law. To say that workers and employers have interests at variance, the learned judge advances, is to accept "Old World" ideas, non-American and outward. The interests of bosses and wage slaves are as one. Instead of fighting one another, they should co-operate and collaborate. Out with the trade union, therefore and long live the company union. Unfortunately for the judge, you can't get rid of class war by announcing, judicially, that there "ain't no such animal".

THE LABOR DISPUTES BILL.
Senator Wagner, it is said, is prepared to reintroduce the Labor Disputes bill which failed to come to a vote in the last session of Congress. The bill has the support of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats who would much rather trust to labor boards than to militant labor action. It lacks the support of the President, who wants the labor boards to be strike-breaking agencies pure and simple, rather than to lay down the law of collective bargaining to big business.

The chances of Congress' enacting the bill are slim, unless a new upsurge of strikes smashes the whole apparatus of labor boards. In that event, the bill will probably go through, subject to major modifications. These modifications will probably limit the right to strike and require compulsory arbitration. So far as concerns labor, it is a case of heads you win, tails I lose.

WHAT SOCIALISM WOULD DO
Joseph B. Eastman, Federal Co-ordinator of Transportation, has just put forward various proposals intended to "rationalize" the American railway system. If put into effect, these proposals would reduce still further the number of workers attached to the railroad industry.

In a truly socialized economy, it would no doubt be wise to remove surplus workers from the railroad industry and to transfer them to other regions, occupations, and trades. Under capitalism, however, you can't get much further than the original disattachments: the workers lose their jobs, use up their "dismissal wages", and sink back into the industrial reserve army of the unemployed.

The Railway Labor Executives' Association

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James Rorty Ouster Goes To Congress

Conditions among the agricultural slaves in the Imperial Valley of California will be brought before Congress, as the result of the arrest on suspicion of communistic activities and ejection from the valley of James Rorty, newspaper and magazine writer, last week. Rorty has been summoned to appear March 13 before the House Labor Committee, as the second witness in the hearings on the Wagner labor disputes bill.

Tentative plans to bring suit against Sheriff Ware of Imperial Valley for false arrest, on Rorty's behalf, are being made by the Los Angeles American Civil Liberties Union.

Arrested and "deported" with Rorty was Charles Malemuth, lecturer. Rorty is making a trip through the country, reporting on conditions to the New York Post and the Nation. His business in El Centro, where he was arrested, as he pointed out to the sheriff, was journalistic. The fact that his sympathies are communistic and that he had in his possession a letter from Arne Swabeck (Industrial organizer for the Workers Party) on Communist League of America stationery and addressed to "Comrade Rorty", was beside the point, Rorty stated to Sheriff Ware.

Arrested without warrant, fingerprinted, "mugged", Rorty and Malemuth were held in jail at El Centro overnight on suspicion of being Communists, then were informed no charges would be filed against them if they left the Imperial Valley. Rorty and Malemuth agreed to accept a police escort to Yuma, Arizona, just over the California border, as they recognized the real danger of attack by vigilantes. Later Sheriff Ware wrote to the New York Post, in answer to inquiries about the arrest of Rorty: "If you fellows in New York would check up on these enemies of our government as we do here, the country might get somewhere."

It is doubtful whether Congress will do anything more than "investigate" in the usual hopeless manner the bloody peonage in this American valley. General Pelham D. Glasford (of the bonus army fame) has already made a report as investigator for the U.S. Labor Department, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Labor Board in which he exposes the boss alliance, the corrupt political machine, and the violence exerted to keep its slave labor subjected. The government knows and has long known that Imperial Valley for a long time.

WIN 62 1/2 PERCENT RAISE IN WAGE-RELIEF WAGE

DECATUR, Ill. (FP)—Instead of 40c an hour tufting mattresses, workers on this Decatur relief project are now getting 65c, a boost of 62 1/2%. The Decatur Trades and Labor Assembly and Local 46 of the Illinois Workers Alliance got the relief authorities to come across, on the prevailing wage regulation. Unskilled mattress workers were raised to 50c an hour.

BOSS PRESS SUBSIDIZED

Advertisers subsidized the daily newspapers of the United States to the extent of \$490,000,000 in 1934, according to lineage estimates by a recognized trade journal. Using 1929 advertising expenditures in daily papers as normals, the estimate for 1934 makes the \$490,000,000 as 62.1 percent of normal while 1933 was 56.2 percent and 1932 was 61.4 percent.—Federated Press.

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State League Formed in Kentucky

Johnson Urges Fight for Harlan Miners

CATLETTSBURG, Ky.—The solidarity of the unemployed with the employed—Negro and white—was the keynote of the first convention of the Kentucky Unemployed League held here Feb. 22.

G. D. Hayes, president of the Kentucky League, pointed out that only the solidarity of all workers—irrespective of race, color, or creed—can win any rights for the unemployed. He said that in September 1934 the average relief per family in Kentucky was \$7.74 for the entire month, making it the second worst state in the country in regard to relief standards.

Arnold Johnson, Workers Party member and national secretary of the National Unemployed League,

Civil Liberties Union Charges C. P. with Disrupting Sacramento Defense

Following right on the heels of the statement adopted by the State Executive Committee of the Socialist Party in California on the disruptive conduct of the Communist Party in the Sacramento case united front, a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union on Monday, March 4, unanimously adopted the declaration of the Northern California Committee of the A.C.L.U. which deals with the breaking up of the united front on the West coast, and charges that "the Communist Party representatives forced the break deliberately, for reasons that to them seemed good, but that to most of the others present continue to appear inadequate".

Charges Against C. P. Confirmed

Like the statement of the Socialist Party quoted in last week's issue of the New Militant, the Civil Liberties Union statement furnishes complete confirmation, from objective and non-partisan sources, of the policy, the conduct, and the charges leveled against the Stalinists by the Workers Party and the Non-Partisan Labor Defense Committee, which have been active in the united front movement to defend the labor leaders and workers now being tried in Sacramento for "criminal syndicalism".

In frenzied desperation at the discrediting of its disgraceful course throughout the Sacramento case, the C. P. officialdom is now striving to cover up its record with a poisonous barrage against the "Workers Party stool-pigeons" and the "Trotskyist disruption".

The record of ignominy which is reached in a statement published in the Daily Worker of March 5 which, like the rest of the "defense work" of the C. P. and the I.L.D., is concerned from beginning to end with a vicious attack upon the Workers Party and the Non-Partisan Labor Defense Committee. The Stalinist case is not improved but rather made more despicable by the fact that the C. P. was able to coerce or cajole all but two of the defendants into signing a statement which can only react to the detriment of the labor movement in general and of the Sacramento defense in particular.

The Facts

To dignify the malicious accusations made in the statement by a detailed refutation, would only mean to cover the same ground which has already been covered so thoroughly and indisputably in the New Militant in the past. No amount of demagogic misrepresentation and outright falsehood can obliterate the following facts:

1. For months the C.P. and the I.L.D. failed to launch even the semblance of a campaign for the Sacramento defense cases.
2. For months, the "powerful" and well-fixed C.P. and I.L.D. failed to get the defendants out on bail.
3. For months, the C.P. and I.L.D. officialdom kept a number of leading defendants in jail because of political differences between the former and the latter, and in spite of the fact that the former had the financial means at its disposal to effect their release on bail.
4. The C. P. authorized Jack Warnick and Caroline Decker, two of its members, to accept bail bonds for their release offered by what they now denounce as the "treacherous and disruptive" Non-Partisan Labor Defense, after having first instructed them not to accept "counter-revolutionary" bail!
5. The most active initiators

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Statements Say Break Was Deliberate

STATEMENT OF AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

On Monday, March 4, 1935, the National Executive Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union adopted the following statement on the Sacramento criminal syndicalism case:

"In view of the fact that the defendants at Sacramento include members of both the Communist and Workers Parties, it seemed advisable to set up something like a 'united front' to handle common problems and to obviate the danger of political differences getting in the way of successful defense. A joint defense committee, growing out of meetings held from January 11 on, was in existence until January 26. The chairman of the Northern California Committee of the A.C.L.U. presided at the first informal discussions; later the Director of the A.C.L.U. was elected Temporary Chairman of the joint committee.

"The committee broke up on January 26. It is the opinion of the A.C.L.U. representatives that the Communist Party representatives forced the break deliberately, for reasons that to them seemed good, but that to most of the others present-

sent continue to appear inadequate. "The A.C.L.U. has refused to participate organizationally in any further efforts to create 'united fronts' on the case. . . ."

STATEMENT BY TRAVERS CLEMENT IN THE NATION

In the issue of March 13, the Nation will say in an article by the noted California author, Travers Clement:

"That it (the explanation of the revolutionary program in court) is not intellectually an insurmountable handicap was proved during the cross-examination of Mini, the first defendant to take the stand in his own behalf. Without hedging an inch on his convictions, he quietly deflated the 'red terror' fantasies of the prosecutor in a manner which won chuckles of appreciation from the spectators. The other defendants, occupying a somewhat less exposed position on this subject, than a Trotskyist, should be able to handle the clumsy McAllister with even less difficulty.

"Incidentally, the recent denunciation of Mini as a 'stool-pigeon' in the Communist Party press con-

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Green in Detroit Surveys His Ruin of Auto Union

Try Another Board, He Cries

By OUR DETROIT CORRESPONDENT
DETROIT, Mich.—Bill Green has come to Detroit, and has gone—and the situation remains just about what it was before he came. The president of the A. F. of L. in his speech Feb. 25, was to be the big gun in the month-long campaign of the United Automobile Workers of America. But the heavy artillery turned out to be a pop-gun as far as the auto workers are concerned, and nothing for the bosses to lose sleep over.

Any possible fears of the auto autocrats that Green, smarting under the rough treatment Roosevelt has been giving him recently, would preach strike action, were completely allayed. When he finally got around to mentioning strike, he spoke of it not as the only weapon to obtain better conditions, but as a means to be used "if necessary". And after what the workers have put up with under the NRA, they have some idea of how remote such "necessity" is to Bill Green's comfortable existence.

Bill's "Wisdom"

So satisfactory was Green's speech to the manufacturers, that their mouthpiece, the local press, ran long editorials praising Bill for his "wisdom" and "good judgment".

To the 150,000 or more auto workers in the Detroit area, suffering from the most intense exploitation in the history of modern American industry, he advised faith and confidence, not in their mass power, but in the National Industrial Relations Board. For, you see, the Auto Labor Board has betrayed the hope we placed in it—so now let's put our faith in another board!

The 2,000 men at the meeting heard the same old class-collaborationist tune—identity of the interests of workers and capitalists, arbitration and faith in the NRA. He came, he said, not to indict the auto bosses but to plead for fair play and humane consideration for the workers!

Does Green—many of his disgusted listeners wondered—actually believe that by raising the bogey of the strike "if necessary", "at some future date", he can scare the bosses into making some concessions through an "impartial" board?

A. F. of L. Weak in Detroit
To the manufacturers this is old bluff. They know Green is playing their game by supporting the Auto Code with its open-shop, merit-clause and company-union provisions, and the whole NRA machinery of arbitration.

They know further that the A. F. of L. is numerically weak here and that its half-hearted organizational campaign has met with little response. They have seen how in the strikes in Lansing and at the Murray Body Plant the A. F. of L. was not attempted to use this opportunity to develop militant

widespread struggles. All in all, the bosses know they have nothing to fear from the A. F. of L. at this time.

As for the workers, their honey-moon with the Auto Labor Board is coming to an abrupt and disillusioning conclusion. Led on to accept the A.L.B. as the means whereby their wrongs would be redressed, since their representatives chosen in the recent A.L.B. elections are finding it impossible to adjust their grievances satisfactorily through the board or in direct negotiations with the bosses, they are coming to the realization that organization is the only way out.

Workers Waking Up

The men whom they represent are beginning to realize this, too. This realization, though still vague, is growing. How fast it will grow, whether it will emerge as an independent force or flow into the existing unions, is not yet evident. It is significant, however, that the A. F. of L. campaign has left these workers cold. They apparently do not think much of Green's suggestion that they exchange one board for another. The failure of the A.

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HUEY LONG WORKS HOSPITAL AIDS FOR 'KICKBACK'

NEW ORLEANS.—Charity hospital workers will have 5 percent taken out of their semi-monthly salaries for the rest of the year to provide Huey Long's organization with funds for the 1936 gubernatorial campaign.

The 5 percent kickback has been in effect for a month or so, and the workers thought that it was only a temporary levy. Members of the political administration, however, have informed them that it will continue at least through January 1936, when the gubernatorial campaigns held. About \$600 a month is obtained by the Long machine in this way.

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Building Union Leads Toledo FERA Strike

Special to New Militant

TOLEDO, Ohio, March 2.—Significant action was taken here today by the Building Trades Council, attached to the A. F. of L. Central Labor Union, with the calling of an FERA strike in Lucas county and the setting up of a general FERA organization, sponsored by the unions but not affiliated with the A. F. of L. This means that the B.T.C. is accepting leadership in a strike of non-union as well as union workers, of unemployed as well as employed.

The importance of this unusual move by an A. F. of L. body is seen in a statement by Oliver Meyers, secretary of the Toledo Building Trades Council and business representative of the electricians' union, as quoted in the Toledo Blade, that "by appealing to both the Ohio Federation of Labor and the A. F. of L. for support, it was entirely possible that the strike would become not only state-wide, but also national in its scope."

Character of Organization

The first meeting of the new FERA organization, which is to include all FERA workers, outside and office workers, was held today at C.I.U. headquarters, with approximately 500 in attendance. The majority were unorganized and unskilled workers. The meeting was conducted by the business agents of the B.T.C., with Meyers as secretary. Demands for better wages to FERA workers and plans for a joint strike committee of the B.T.C. and the FERA organization, and the official strike call, were agreed upon by the meeting.

Up to this time, the strike on FERA projects which has been in progress was called a "protest" against the budget system of relief, by the B.T.C., and officially only union men were out. The change in the attitude of the union is clear.

W.P. and O.U.L. Active

The Workers Party and the Ohio and National Unemployed Leagues have been active in the setting up of the new organization and the calling of the general FERA strike. Several of the most significant demands made by today's meetings, including the official call for the strike, were based on proposals made by Art Preis, of the Ohio Unemployed League, in his talk at the meeting.

There is also a common understanding, made by Meyers in response to a question from Comrade Preis, that there will be unofficial representation from the new organization upon the Building Trades Council. Comrade Preis was invited to attend a meeting of the B.T.C.

Motions Adopted

- The following motions were adopted by the meeting:
1. That demands be made for a minimum of three eight-hour days of work on FERA for skilled workers at prevailing union rates.
 2. That semi-skilled and office workers shall receive a minimum of 80 cents an hour and not less than \$20 per week.
 3. That common labor shall receive a minimum of 65 cents an hour with four eight-hour days' minimum of work per week.
 4. That the assembly go on record for all FERA organizations open to all workers not members of trade unions, to be a no-dues payment organization.
 5. That no organization, including the new organization, goes back on the job under separate agreement unless all go back on the job.
 6. That a joint strike committee

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But Profits Soar Gov't Board Says

WASHINGTON.—The NRA, by official administration figures, has served to increase capitalists' profits and lower workers' living standards. The recent report by the Division of Research and Planning on the "Operation of the NRA" blows to bits the fantastic pretense that the NRA codes have aided to transfer purchasing power from the capitalists, the haves, to the workers, the have-nots.

So damning is the evidence uncovered by investigators working on the report that the whole intent of the NRA—as announced originally—is twisted to make an apology for the results. The codes, we now learn, were by no means intended to augment the wages and shorten the hours of wage earners in general.

On the contrary, explains this rationalization, they had modest objectives, and "have probably" helped those whom they were especially designed to help; namely, those whose real incomes were already pitifully low, e.g. female laborers in the south. In other words, it is affirmed that "laborers getting less than \$10 a week had their weekly earnings raised substantially."

Higher Wages?

Perhaps this is true, though the argument is open to considerable question when we examine the most important industry which employs "female laborers" in the south—the cotton textile industry. We find that since the enactment of the code average weekly earnings and real purchasing power have both decreased!

True or false, the argument indicates the ingenuity of the "new deal" apologists when their own investigations drive them into a tight corner. When the NRA codes were first put into force it was pretended that their animating purpose was to augment the purchasing power of the wage-earning classes as a whole. This "purpose" is not accomplished. The Division of Research and Planning becomes aware of the failure. It advances a totally new argument—the NRA was designed to augment the purchasing power of an infinitesimal fraction of the total laboring population!

Share-the-Starvation

The extent of the NRA's failure to raise real wages and thus increase purchasing power is revealed in the figures.

First, we are told of an "increase in the spread between production and employment", which indicates an acceleration of share-the-work. The volume of production in the manufacturing industries, December 1934 was a full 20 percent lower than the volume in June 1933. But the index of employment has risen by 16 percent. In other words, a larger number of workers is consuming a smaller aggregate of goods and services. Share-the-work equals share-the-increasing-starvation.

But receivers of dividends and interest have nothing to worry about. For them, at least, the "new deal" has proved a blessing. Taking 1925 as 100, payrolls in December 1934 stood at an index of 60, while dividends and interest stood at 150. The national income, within eight years, had declined almost by half; the wage earners' share therein had been cut 40 percent, the capitalists' share had been raised by 55 percent.

Bosses Share-the-Profits

How gently and tactfully the report puts it by stating: "Clearly the recipients of profits have not failed to enjoy their proportionate share of the increase in industrial recovery!"

A few details will make clear what the report has in mind. Some 300 corporations, which had net profits of \$100,000 in 1932, had net profits of \$202,800,000 in 1933—a rise of almost 2,000 percent—and net profits, in 1934 of \$430,540,000—a total rise of about 4,500 percent. The automobile companies, which lost almost \$20,000,000 in 1932, gained \$96,000,000 in 1934. The steel companies, which lost \$100,000,000 in 1932, cut the loss to \$7,000,000 in 1934. Coal and coke, which lost almost \$4,000,000 in 1934, gained almost \$1,000,000 in 1934. The oil companies doubled their profits; so did the chemical and drug companies.

Meanwhile, what was happening to wage-earners? The National Emergency Council figures, most

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Strategic Labor Attack Triumphs

Waukegan Office Workers Stand by Mechanics

WAUKEGAN, Ill.—Solidarity of office and mechanical workers, rapid and well timed action, won a strike for four hundred workers at the Johnson Motors plant in Waukegan last week in short order. The strike marks the culmination of the second effort within a year to organize the workers in a Federal Auto Local. The first attempt was defeated when the company formed its own union and killed strike spirit with fancy promises. This time the union was well under way before the company woke up and fired three members for union activity.

A strike meeting was called immediately, 85 workers attending. By prompt and militant action they

pulled the night shift, and later the majority of the force. The company, in the middle of a three shift rush season, was unable to hold out against the strike. The settlement provided the re-employment of the three workers who were fired, and recognition of the union. Especially notable in the strike was the solidarity of the factory men with the office workers—the three who were fired for union activity were office workers.

The union has gained recognition by its strategic attack; it still faces a struggle to consolidate its ranks to present a firm and determined front to the bosses in the negotiations for wage increases.