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Workers Press for Action in Spain

Shuffle New War Cards at London

Revolutionary Working Class Can Upset Applecart of Capitalist Politicians and Warmakers

Statesmen and diplomats of the Powers met at London this week not to decide the issue of war or peace in Europe, but to decide, if they could, how and by whom and against whom the inevitable war shall be waged.

Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland and his open offer of a bloc of western powers against the Soviet Union has once more precipitated the bubbling and uneasy solution of European alignments and forced the search for a new formula and a new compound. Irritants abound and the hurried chemists at London feared momentarily to see their whole laboratory go up in the smoke and thunder of a shattering explosion carrying issues, conflicts and men beyond their control.

Nazi Army on the March

For while diplomats parleyed at London, Germany was marching more thousands into the Rhineland. The French War office claimed that 90,000 German soldiers now stood poised at the French frontier. Estimates which included the Storm Troops, labor corps and police carried the total to more than 200,000.

Along the French border into the chain of mighty forts that France has built since the last war, more than 150,000 troops were moved and the border towns placed on a war footing. From Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania and Italy came reports of mobilizations, preparations and the wheels of the whole war machine of Europe started to turn more rapidly.

At London the ironic comedy of imperialist horse trading was being played on with a number of important changes in the dramatic scene.

Only a few months ago French imperialism was the buffer between Britain and Italy over the issue of Ethiopia. Today it is Britain who stands with arm upraised to protect the Third Reich from the blows of an angry France. Italy is carefully straddling while she waits for one side or the other to pull her chestnut, an Ethiopian settlement, from the fire. While three months ago it was Italy who thundered threats to quit the League, today it is France who says she will bolt if in this crisis the League fails to serve her purposes.

By marching into the Rhineland ten days ago Hitler set the long and tangled European fuse spluttering. It splutters still and no man can say whether today or tomorrow it will end in the weak pop of a firecracker or blow up the works. Meanwhile what is going on today is the scramble for safe positions.

Main Positions in Rhine Conflict

At present it is possible to summarize the main positions somewhat as follows:

France would like to crack down on Hitler if it were possible to do so without throwing either Britain or Italy or both to Germany's side. This being unlikely, France will retreat to its second line of defense, which demands of Britain a hard and fast military alliance with automatic guarantees of British military aid the moment Germany attacks. At the same time France will move to wean Italy away from the dangerous threat of an Italo-German rapprochement and possible alliance by forcing a settlement of the East African issue on Mussolini's terms. Lastly, France will announce that the "collective security" racket has petered out and continue to build its armaments and alliances to the maximum extent possible.

Britain fundamentally would like to come to terms with Hitler and at the same time retain the indispensable friendship of France by weaning the latter away from Moscow and giving Hitler a free hand in the East. In other words, while French imperialism considers a re-armed Reich on its borders as its immediate enemy, Britain sees more logic in tying the Third Reich into a series of pacts which will consummate Hitler's offer to preserve the Western European status quo and open the valve to let off steam at the expense of the Soviet Union. An inter-imperialist war will hasten the disintegration of the British Empire. Nowhere is that better realized than at No. 10 Downing Street. Whatever the zig-zags or middle roads it takes, British imperialism will orientate itself

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Goodyear Picket Line Retains Firm Control; Prepared to Counter Bosses' Vigilante Terror

Union Plans to Mobilize All Ex-Soldiers

AKRON, Ohio.—In its fifth week the furious struggle, conducted by the Goodyear rubber workers for the right to have a union of their own choice, enters a crucial stage. On Saturday, March 14, the union rejected the so-called settlement proposal advanced by the company, as promptly as it had previously rejected the McGrady conciliation proposal. The company thereupon again served notice that it intended to reopen the plants, and that it would refuse employment to all strikers. The next morning at 4 A.M. more than 6,000 men were on the picket line.

Vigilante forces which have been organizing under cover for some time have now come out in the open under the high sounding name of a citizens "law and order league." The former Mayor in a prepared statement has announced his acceptance of an invitation to lead strike-breakers into the plants through action of these vigilantes. Ominously there appear simultaneous reports that a quantity of guns and ammunition has disappeared from the national guard armory.

The company's offer included: Return of all employees without discrimination; meeting with all groups (this would ostensibly include the company union); notice to be given of wage changes; negotiation on working hours; advance notice of layoffs.

While the union did not place itself in the position of rejecting all of the points in this offer it nevertheless declared for non-acceptance in view of its most pressing demands being ignored. These demands were reiterated at the Saturday meeting and they include: Restoration of all wage reductions since Jan. 1; a uniform thirty-six hour week; straight seniority rights notice of layoffs. However, it is now clear that the company never meant to negotiate in the first place. It should be remembered that last spring the company agreed to meet representatives of the workers and then promptly made a farce out of it.

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WPA - 1936 Football

(Special to the New Militant)

By JAMES EVANS
WASHINGTON, D.C.—There is a degree of prosperity—in political speeches. Certainly, the President himself is a picture of prosperity. Just take a look, folks, at that great big smile which will increase in breadth from now until the November election. Of course, the Democratic jackass has gone a bit lame under Franklin's jockeying; but depend on Old Doc Farley to get the beast in prime shape for the coming sweepstakes.

The other side of the picture is considerably darker. In an article, last week, I commented upon the decision of Federal Administrator Harry L. Hopkins to fire 700,000 WPA workers, under the pretense that the majority would be re-employed by private industry. It is not necessary for us to go into an extensive analysis of this lie. Roosevelt's own Bureau of Labor Statistics reported an unemployment increase of 650,000 in private industry during January of this year. The National Industrial Conference Board went the Bureau one better by estimating the increase at 700,000. Finally, the conservative statisticians of the American Federation of Labor declared that 1,200,000 workers were dismissed in January, the largest turn-over in five months. Profits, incidentally, increased fourteen percent during 1935.

Roosevelt finds himself faced with a dilemma. Opposition to his new tax bill, an exceedingly mild measure, must be muffled by firing enough relief workers to balance any increase in taxes. At the same time, WPA must be used as a

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Extracts from the Rabble-Rousing Radio Speech of Former Mayor of Akron

AKRON, Ohio, March 15.—The speech was devoted mainly to an attack on "labor agitators and Communist leaders who brought with them all the tricks of their trade necessary to create riots and civil commotion, lawlessness and disorder in our peaceful and law abiding community. I could not address them as fellow citizens, nor could I stretch a point and call them fellow Americans."

No one before, he said, has come to the radio "and told you the real truth about what is back of the whole strike problem here in Akron." The henchmen of these outside agitators "were busy arming the pickets with clubs, iron pipes and revolvers. . . . They came into our community with the sole intent to either make the Akron rubber industry 100 percent unionized or to wreck the industry! And wreck the city in the effort! . . . Patience has ceased to be a virtue."

He stated that Sparks, a private citizen, had a right to speak the same as any private citizen on this matter affecting the whole community. He also represented Goodyear men loyal workers who had asked him to speak. "The specter of sickness and hunger now makes it imperative that these men go to work."

"For the past three weeks there has been no semblance of law and order nor any apparent desire on the part of those in authority to correct the situation. Homes have been bombed, windows smashed. Thereupon Sparks mentioned about twenty alleged instances of 'violence' ascribed to the strikers. 'Right at this moment out of town leaders and agitators are

Appeal Hearings on Sac'to C. S. Cases Expected Soon

Final steps toward obtaining a transcript of the record of the trial of the Sacramento criminal syndicalism prisoners are being taken this week by the defense, and the attorneys will begin work on the appeal briefs in a few days. It is expected that date for the appeal hearing will be set in the near future.

Repeated efforts by the defense to force the State to provide several copies of the transcript were blocked by the prosecution. Attorney Raymond W. Henderson, retained by the National Sacramento Appeal Committee on behalf of Norman Mini, tried to compel enforcement of all the prisoners' rights to copies of the transcript. He, as well as Leo Gallagher acting for the other prisoners, was denied relief by the higher courts of California.

In effect the court's attitude would deny the defendants their right to appeal. The only alternative has been for all the defendants to waive their right to separate copies of the transcript and to unite in applying for the single copy which the State is willing to provide.

Defense Difficulties Overcome

Some time ago Attorneys Henderson and Gallagher agreed to apply jointly for this transcript on behalf of Norman Mini and two prisoners represented by Gallagher. This did not break the log-jam, however, because five other prisoners, defended by the I.L.D., were technically representing themselves rather than retaining an attorney. A short time ago the I.L.D. finally agreed to advise these self-defendants to give Gallagher a retainer as the only way to realizing an appeal. They have now done so.

The hearing of the State Board of Prison Terms, at which sentence will be set for Norman Mini and the other prisoners, has been postponed for a few weeks. In the meantime, the N.S.A.C. is pushing its drive to win support for the idea of minimum sentences for all the Sacramento prisoners. A number of trade unions are sending resolutions to the Board, and petitions and other resolutions.

As part of its campaign on behalf of all the Sacramento prisoners, the N.S.A.C. is supplying friends with post-card appeals to the State Board of Prison Terms. Last week the League for Industrial Democracy distributed 3,000 such cards to

Gum Miners Reject Bad Settlement

By PAUL FIELDING

AKRON, O., Mar. 15.—"No, no, a thousand times no, 'I'd rather stay out than say yes!'"

Some five thousand Goodyear strikers in answer to the company's proposal to go back to work.

Five thousand fighting gum miners, on strike for the fourth week, shouted down a plan to go back to their jobs with nothing, and left for the plant to tighten the picket lines.

For two hours the men stood in line, braving rain and snow, waiting to get into the Akron Armory, the largest auditorium in the city. But it even it was too small. They formed a double line around the building, and when they finally got in the hall, they packed the seats and aisles, and stood on the window sills and balcony.

Across the street company men watched the crowd, and went back to their bosses with an unfavorable report.

The meeting climaxed a week of jockeying between the company and the union leaders. But the strikers were ready for anything. As each union official entered the hall—from the highest generalissimo to the lowest petty officer—the men shouted NO!

Secret Ballot Howled Down
It had been planned to cast secret ballots, but the workers flatly refused. Each time they spied the ballot boxes, a howl went up: "Take them out! Take them out!"—shouts rose to the rafters. The meeting could not go on until the boxes were taken from the building.

The company plan was put before the group. A rank and filer took the floor and substituted a resolution which rejected some points, amended others, and proposed new ones. All in all, it was little more than Goodyear had proposed a week before but had withdrawn.

"Those supporting the resolution raise their hands," John House, union president, said. Every hand but one went up. "Those opposed?" One lone hand rose

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Soil & Profits 'Conserved'

(Special to the New Militant)

By JAMES EVANS

MEMPHIS, Tenn., March 7.—Their immaculate clothing flecked with the blood of the share-croppers, the wealthy planters and landlords of this region gathered here to make a deal, under the guise of "soil conservation," with the Department of Agriculture. The participants spoke to each other in soft, insistent voices; the air being heavy with Southern courtesy and the smoke from two-bit cigars. It was a gentlemen's gathering, sub! The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, representing 25,000 croppers and having headquarters in this city, was not invited to send any delegates. The gentlemen lost their temper only once: when the representative of the Department insisted upon paying them five, instead of six, cents per pound for unground cotton.

United States Senator-elect Allen Ellender, of Louisiana, did offer a resolution asking Secretary Wallace to give "due consideration to the small farmers." Nobody took AI's resolution very seriously, not even AI himself. Everybody knew that the Senator had to make some sort of gesture in order to keep Huey Long's political machine going. A round dozen of the smaller landlords voted for AI's proposal on a standing poll.

Dividing the Spoils
The conference recommended a division of benefit payments that naturally gives the tenant zero. Thirty per cent will go the person responsible for the "conservation," and, needless to say, tenants will claim such responsibilities will be endangering their lives. Thirty-

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Azana Lays Ground For Suppression

Leaders Still Playing Fatal Game with Republicans

By ALFREDO ROJAS

The first sessions of the Spanish Cortes are taking place in the midst of wide, but still sporadic, battles of the workers and peasants against landowners, police and troops. Partly concealed by the press censorship of the Azana government, and especially suppressed by the bourgeois news-services to other countries, the clashes have grown in extent throughout the month since the elections.

The continued initiative of the masses is especially evident in the south of Spain, where the landed estates predominate and where the land-workers and peasants have been exploited most bitterly. To say, however, that the masses are seizing the land would be an exaggeration. Powerful demonstrations involving the whole population have demanded the expropriation of the land, in many places in the southern provinces, and these demonstrations have often gone over to popular raids on the estates of particularly-hated landowners, some of whom have been killed in such clashes.

Peasants Waiting

The raiders have usually withdrawn even before police and troops have arrived; for, by and large, the peasants believe that the new Cortes will decree the land to them and are waiting for that. When they discover that Azana's land program is merely a repetition of that of 1931—division of a few grandees' estates and the Jesuits', preceded by interminable legal steps plus a scheme for government purchase of estates for distribution; in other words, no serious move toward solving the agrarian problem—there is no doubt that the peasants will overrun the estates.

Whether they will thereafter be decimated and driven off the land or whether they will remain on the land depends primarily on whether they are backed up by the workers in the cities, which can only happen if the workers' parties take the road of intransigent struggle against the bourgeois regime of Azana.

The workers' struggles in the cities have received more attention in both the Spanish and the American press, these facts being less easily suppressed. What has not been made clear is that in practically every instance where a worker has been killed, the proletarian organizations have answered not only with huge mass funerals but with 24-hour general strikes in the localities involved.

The Firing of Churches

In an effort to stir up resentment against the workers, the world press has widely publicized the burning of churches by demonstrators. The press has naturally concealed the peculiar role of the church in Spain, which is not merely a reactionary institution serving to bind the masses spiritually to their masters, but is the most powerful landowner and industrialist in the country and the cruellest in its domination of its land-workers and wage-slaves.

For peasants and workers to burn a church in Spain today, is the exact equivalent of the burning of the castle or manor of a hated lord in feudal France. The brutality of the Spanish priesthood evokes spontaneous retaliation from the masses they oppress; but we can be assured that the mere loss of a church here and there is as nothing to the frenzy which the clergy will display when they are threatened with no bodily violence at all but with systematic expropriation by the organized proletariat.

Azana Consolidating Power

Azana follows a clever strategy of superficial conciliatoriness toward the proletariat, biding his time until his government has been consolidated. Arrests of the handful of those who officially term themselves Fascists, a mild censorship of the Right press—but also of the labor press—numerous declarations of loyalty to republican principles—Azana has given little more than this in return for solid support from the proletarian or-

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