

In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

I.F.T.U. Postpones Meeting In the Midst of Crisis

The increasingly sharpened character of political events appear to have paralyzed completely the bureaucrats of the International Federation of Trade Unions.

A regular meeting of the Executive of the I.F.T.U. was due in March. Hitler was taking Czechoslovakia and Memel, Franco was entering Madrid and Valencia. With such heat on the Citrines and Schevenels decided . . . to postpone their meeting!

It was not by accident that the only international working class organization meeting in the midst of the crisis last September and issuing its call to action was the Fourth International. While the social reformists and Stalinists become petrified by the impact of the crisis, the revolutionists of the Fourth International loom as the only hope of action for the world's workers.

How They Worked To "Save Spain"

A pamphlet written by Jean Rous, French Fourth Internationalist who spent many months in Spain between July 1936 and the conclusion of the civil war, has just been published in France under the title "Spain 1936—Spain 1939: The Revolution Assassinated." It covers the whole period with an amazing mass of detail.

The Rous pamphlet should be of particular value in making clear the criminally mistaken line of the P.O.U.M. The impotence of its centrist policies is clarified throughout by the mere recital of events and the P.O.U.M.'s reaction to them. The victimization of this party by the Stalinists and their People's Front allies should not, despite our sympathy and solidarity with the victims, close anyone's eyes to its false politics.

Rous cites a letter of May 25, 1937 written by

the socialist War Minister of the Loyalist government, Prieto, to his party comrade, the Loyalist ambassador to the United States, Fernando de los Rios. This letter shows with what zeal these "socialists" went about saving Spain . . . by crushing the Spanish working class organizations.

"Finally," says Prieto in one of the passages, "the most important part of our mopping-up process in the rear has been concluded. At Barcelona, as well as in the rest of the province, the wheels of the F.A.I. and the C.N.T. (the anarchist mass organizations—Ed.) have been completely stopped, their most dangerous elements are either dead or imprisoned. What's even more important, is the fact that those who have come to their senses are today either convinced or at the very least more moderate. . . . We haven't yet finished mopping up completely. We have decided, among other things, to transfer these elements to the most dangerous fronts. In this manner, the disrupters will aid us in perfecting our mopping-up process, for which we should be very thankful to them. . . . In following this line of conduct, we shall, as you know, please the three countries who have aided us most and who, quite recently, have demanded such a course from us."

We learn from the press that de los Rios has formally resigned his post as ambassador and that he is joining the teaching staff of the New School for Social Research, where he will no doubt lecture on how to fight fascism. This is no more than fitting. For, as Bernard Shaw once remarked, "He who can, does; he who can't, teaches."

Labour Party Branches Flock to "Anti-Register" Opposition

Thirty-nine branches of the British Labour Party have officially flocked to the growing rank and file opposition against the National Register conscription scheme, the development of which has been recorded regularly in this column.

(Concluded from Mar. 31 issue)

Despite the high cost of medical services in the mining camps almost no provisions exist for preventive medicine. Very rarely does a woman have any pre-natal care; there are almost no visiting nurses; few children are vaccinated until they reach school age; no dental care is provided; not a single class health or hygiene was found in the whole territory.

Yet for camp medical services, including extra charges, the average cost to 100 men each year is \$2,980, not including hospital fees. The Bureau of Cooperative Medicine which conducted the investigation under invitation from the United Mine Workers believes that this sum is more than sufficient for an excellent service with first rate doctors, nurses, and medicines if the money were handled in an effective and responsible manner. At present a large proportion of the funds are diverted directly into the company treasuries.

HOSPITAL CONDITIONS EVEN MORE SHOCKING

The picture of hospitalization for the miners shows, if anything, even more shocking conditions. The companies deduct the funds from the worker's pay check, generally taking \$1.25 a month from each man, and making absolutely no accounting of how it is expended. In cases where they turn it over to contracting hospitals, the hospitals have no means of ascertaining whether the sum actually represents the whole amount collected.

In almost every case investigated, the company retained no less than 10 per cent, calling it a "nominal charge" for collecting the money." The Bureau estimates that for every 100 workers, about \$1500 is collected for the hospital after the men have already contributed \$2,980 for the camp doctor. This amount is increased by \$500 through extra charges.

HOSPITALS LACK BEDS

United States Government figures indicate that the minimum adequate standard is 4.5 general hospital beds for 1,000 population. In the area investigated there are only about 2.5 beds for 1,000, and the men are paying exorbitant rates for their support. According to an investigation made by the West

Virginia Legislature in 1931, the miners often pay \$5,000 for a service that at most should cost \$1,000.

Sharp competition exists between different hospitals. This condition is fostered by the operators. Not only is there cutthroat bidding between the hospitals but bribing is frequently resorted to and rebates are given to the coal operators.

COMPANIES CONTROL THROUGH CHECK-OFF

Control of the check-off gives the companies control of the hospitals. In one instance the investigators were told that the construction of a new hospital building was financed through an increase in the men's wage deductions but the operators kept the deed and later turned it over to a group of doctors.

As a result of the check-off and the fact that the fewer the patients the higher the profits, most hospitals are reluctant to admit patients. Furthermore, patients are discharged as quickly as possible, sometimes with very serious results.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST COLORED MINERS

The quality of service is very poor in the whole area there are existing four distinct contagious diseases,—no matter how serious such cases may be, they must therefore be taken care of at home. There are no children's wards whatever. Colored miners and their families who pay just as much as the white are usually cared for in very inferior wards. Although the equipment is fairly good for emergency surgery, in other respects it is wretched. There is little or no equipment for physiotherapy or X-Ray treatment. There is not a single artificial fever machine or "iron lung" in the entire territory.

Each "list" patient's treatment is made as cheap as possible. The mine doctor is discouraged from sending in patients, and is regarded as a "buck-passer" and the chief enemy of the hospital if he does so. The Bureau's investigators did not find a single instance where there was really adequate nursing care. Wards are crowded to extremes to increase the profits, even when there are other empty wards in the same building. In the words of one miner, "the hospital calls us

'charity patients' and treats us worse than that, and yet it is our money that keeps it going."

EXTRA CHARGES FORCED ON PATIENTS

On top of this, every excuse is used to force extra charges upon the patients. Maternity cases and contagious diseases are never included in the contract. For special medicines, serums, drugs, special surgery—even of the most ordinary kind, there is always an extra charge, usually at an exorbitant rate. The Bureau estimates that extra charges bring the total yearly hospital expenditures to about \$2,000 for each 100 men. With competition between hospitals eliminated and with costly equipment utilized to its fullest extent in large, well-planned units of two or three hundred beds, this sum could furnish ward hospitalization, laboratory and X-Ray service, and, in addition, contribute toward much-needed specialists and post-graduate training for many camp physicians.

ESPECIALLY VICIOUS IN COMPENSATION CASES

In preventing injured workers from obtaining compensation legally due them, the hospitals and mine doctors are used as especially vicious weapons of the coal operators. Rates for compensation insurance, the premium of which must be paid by the companies, varies according to the seriousness of the accidents and their frequency. It is company policy as a result to minimize every accident, no matter how serious the consequences to the injured worker. Doctors are entitled to remuneration from the state compensation fund for services rendered in any accident case, but a doctor can send a bill to the fund only on peril of his job, because if bills are sent the company's insurance premiums increase. As a result the miners must pay for this service out of the check-off from their wages. In the same way the men pay for hospital care that should be paid for by the compensation fund.

DOCTORS COMPELLED TO FALSIFY REPORTS

The service rendered to injured men is gauged entirely by company interests. Since the hospitals derive little extra income from compensation work, they treat accident cases as cheaply and as briefly as possible. Men are sent home before they are able to walk. Sometimes a leg is amputated because it is easier and cheaper than trying to save it. The extreme was reached when the Bureau was told, in one instance, that men are sometimes allowed to die because death benefits are only \$4,000 while total permanent disability is \$6,000.

It is for this reason that mine doctors are compelled to falsify death certificates and accident reports to conform with company desires. One mine doctor in West Virginia recently lost his job because he certified that a man's death was due to carbon monoxide poisoning instead of "heart failure" or "stomach trouble," as the company insisted. Often, too, the foremen try to show that the injury did not occur on the job, or was the result of breaking a safety rule.

WORKERS' CONTROL THE ONLY WAY OUT

It is doubtful that John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers, who is now negotiating contracts with the employers, will of his own accord see fit to disturb coal company profits by insisting that all funds collected for medical services be placed strictly in control of the union.

For the miners there is no other possible solution. Strict union control alone can eliminate the evils. So long as the employers make off with the wage deductions, disease, accidents, and death will continue to be a lucrative source of profits for the stockholders of the mining companies.

Debate Shows Shaplen Condone 1919 Murders

"Yes, the Social-Democrats shot down the Communists! And why not?" were the brutal words shouted by Joseph Shaplen, spokesman for the Social-Democratic Federation in a debate with the Socialist Party, last Friday night at the Rand School.

Shaplen blurted out his damning admission when Shachtman, in response to Shaplen's tirade against Bolshevism for its "use of violence," had described the violence used by the German Social Democracy in 1919 against the German workers in order to preserve the bourgeois state. As shocked expressions of anger were heard in the audience, Shaplen jeered, "I repeat, why not?"

It was in this 1919 onslaught against the revolutionary workers that the reactionary army officers, turned loose against the workers by the Social Democratic government, murdered Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Slandering Red Army

In arguing the affirmative of the question, "Has Bolshevism Failed?" Shaplen repeated all the old slanders against the Russian Revolution. Claiming that Lenin and Trotsky in 1917 appealed to the "lowest, ignominious, and degraded masses," he repeatedly referring to the famous "Bread, Peace, and Land," summoning the workers, peasants, and soldiers to stop the imperialist war. Shaplen repeated several times that the Red Army that defeated the Allied and White Guard armies on twenty-two fronts was composed of the dregs of society—"the soldatesca, the ignorant, the declassed, lumpenproletariat," Shaplen called them.

At no time did Shaplen attempt to make the slightest analysis of the economic forces which have been exerting their pressure on the isolated Soviet Union during the last 22 years, and the effect of that pressure upon the internal situation there. His whole speech consisted of repeating that the political history of the Bolshevik movement is merely a constant struggle for power between the "ins and the outs."

"Al Capone" Theory Shachtman described Shaplen's outlook as the "Al Capone" theory of history, one in which great advances and retreats of the masses are understood by the Shaplens of the world only as power shifting from one "boss" to another. Shachtman recalled what the enemies of Bolshevism always choose to forget, that the Bolsheviks themselves—while not shrinking from the chance to

overthrow capitalism wherever the opportunity first came—had always emphasized that socialism could not be built in one country alone; that Lenin, Trotsky and others had predicted the degeneration of the Soviet Union if it was isolated. Wards are crowded to extremes to increase the profits, even when there are other empty wards in the same building. In the words of one miner, "the hospital calls us

The reformist social democratic parties of Europe that rushed to the help of their badly shaken capitalist governments in the disturbed period at the close of the World War and suppressed the worker's revolts, thus prevented any possibility of help from outside for the Soviet Union. Shachtman pointed out. Thus the social democrats were directly responsible for the Soviet Union's isolation and the subsequent degeneration of the Soviet regime as represented by Stalin.

Shachtman enraged his social democratic listeners with a pointed and detailed analysis of the close similarity between their program and the program of the Communist Party.

"The degeneration of the Communist Party has reached a final stage of corruption which places it side by side with the Social Democratic Party in every country of the globe where they yet exist," said Shachtman. "Each party remains loyal to its capitalist government and the national interests of that capitalist government, each loyally supports the war budgets of the capitalist world war, each entered Popular Fronts together in France and Spain on a common reformist program, each supports Roosevelt and the discredited New Deal."

Referring to the hypocrisy of Social Democratic devotion to "legality" and "abhorrence of violence," Shachtman described how in Spain the Socialist, Caballero, was overturned by the Socialist, Juan Negrin, who was himself ousted by violence by the Socialist, Julian Besteiro—all three belonging to the same party!—while the Socialist, Blum, strangled the "legal" Popular Front government all along with his arms blockade while Premier of France.

SOCIETY NOTES

Roughing It In The Caribbean

HAMILTON, Bermuda—Visitors, enjoying a Spring holiday on the Bermuda Isles, are turning to the sports calendar for their activity by day, and feasting visiting sports celebrities in the evening hours.

Many of the tennis stars of the United States are gathering here now to compete in the nineteenth annual Bermuda champion ships. Luncheons, teas, cocktail parties and dinner dancing will honor the players.

The Junior Service League members will serve tea for the players each day, before the guests go later on to cocktail parties at the various hotels and homes.

—New York Times

"Slashing Relief Is Good Economy"

MILWAUKEE, Wis.—Walter Monte boarded a streetcar near his home last night with a bundle in his arms. He transferred once and then walked into the coroner's office in the Safety Building. There he unwrapped the bundle—containing a tiny baby, dead.

"The baby was born to my wife at home this morning," Monte said, his face white and lined. "The Fire Department Rescue Squad worked twenty minutes to save it, but they couldn't. We are on relief and have no funds for burial, so I came here."

Coroner's assistants took Monte's burden. They told him to see relief authorities Monday about the burial.

—New York Herald Tribune

REFUGEES NEED CLOTHING SAYS AMERICAN FUND

The American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees has made an appeal for clothing for refugees. The need of the refugees is urgent: they cannot wait for clothes! If you have clothing of any kind which you can spare, you should bring it at once to the office of the American Fund, Room 1009, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York City, or inform the office, which will send someone to pick it up. All contributions will be welcome.

DUNNE SPEAKS AT ANTI-WAR STRIKE

MADISON, Wisconsin—V. R. Dunne, state organizer of the Minnesota section of the Socialist Workers Party, was the guest speaker at the anti-war strike held on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Madison on Thursday, April 6.

Dunne received the invitation to speak from the Student Anti-War Strike Committee, which asked him "to give the labor point of view on the present war situation."

The Wisconsin student strike committee, according to its chairman, Robert Rumsey, "is composed of all progressive anti-war elements on the campus who wish to militantly assert their stand against war and war preparations."

MASS. PRESSURE STALLS CANADA CONSCRIPT PLAN

Canadian capitalist spokesmen, under the rising anger and pressure of the anti-war sentiment of the Canadian workers and farmers, last week declared themselves against conscription.

"First Dr. Robert Manion, long a staunch imperialist and head of the Conservative Party, declared, 'A Canadian youth should not be conscripted to fight outside the borders of Canada.'"

Next, Mackenzie King, present Prime Minister and head of the Liberal Party, rose in the Dominion Parliament, and attempted to lull the suspicions of the Canadian masses, with a promise that his government would never conscript Canadians for service overseas.

The pledges of these politicians are no more real than Chamberlain's; furthermore, since Roosevelt's Kingston, Ontario speech last August, and its cordial reception by both the Liberal and Conservative parties, it has been absolutely clear that Canada's foreign policy will be determined from Washington, not London, and will be geared to Roosevelt's war program.

In his Parliament speech, Mackenzie King gratefully recalled Roosevelt's pledge to preserve Canada's territorial integrity, and emphasized that Canada must attach immensely more importance to the United States than 20 years ago. Behind all this rests Canada's dependence on the White House. When Roosevelt gives the word, promises made to the Canadian masses against conscription will be junked.

For the time being, however, both political parties have made statements calculated to quiet the resentment of the masses against the horror of another war, and to prevent the organization of that resentment into a mass anti-war movement which they could not control.

HOLLYWOOD MERRY-GO-ROUND

Pooh Bah Number One of the movies, Mr. Will Hays, reports to the public his annual report to the industry. Mr. Hays, whose function it is, among other things, to control trade practices in the industry, waxed cheerily patriotic over the future. Said the Grand Sachem: "We are entering into an American cycle under the impact of public opinion."

In other words, all the flag-waving on the screen that has been seen of late is merely a stumbling preliminary. Now that Mr. Hays has given his official blessing, there'll be more Yankee billywash distilled in the Hollywood frog-shops than ever a two-tailed gulton can thrive on.

And now that Mr. Hays has had the gracious good mind to forewarn us, we, for our part, can look into the future of the Americanism cycle.

Most preponderant of the lot will be the historical film, which will show Dollar Imperialism building its democratic empire. It is almost safe to assume that at least ten films will be released by the major studios during the first six months after the adoption of the new policy. Where the historical facts are a jumble of non-existent, Hollywood will invent them. The legend should read: It Might Have Happened.

Since the Hollywood savants have for some time now been producing historical films, ("Marie Antoinette," and "Gunga Din," etc.) we have come to know their time-tested formulas. For example, in the case of India, that rebellious colonial who lifts a rifle against His Majesty's Bengal Lancers is a downright bloody devil. In the case of the French Revolution, every Jacobin is a sloppy knave who should be put to the sword. A Bourbon princess before she is guillotined.

The Americanism films will follow the same pattern. Hollywood will be having a merry time of it these next months. Now that it is destined for high times, it need no longer confine itself to courageous attacks against the nation's mothers-in-law.

NAT LEVINE

'Tsar to Lenin' Shown at Forum

(Special to the Socialist Appeal) SOUTH BEND, Ind.—Close to 100 workers from South Bend, Mishawaka and Goshen, Ind., and Niles, Mich., attended the first showing in northern Indiana of the film "Tsar to Lenin" and the lecture given by Arne Swabeck on "The Lessons of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union Today."

Many questions were asked of the speaker. Considerable literature was sold, and a number of new contacts gained. The meeting was the first of a series of forums that will be held every other Sunday afternoon in the "Tsar to Lenin" series, which is being organized by the Saint Joseph County Branch of the S.W.P.

On the Line . . . with Bill Morgan

The case of Egbert Q. Rubberbone is not unusual. Almost everyday his little story appears somewhere in some newspaper—generally on page thirty-six. . . . It goes something like this:

"After thirty years of faithful, devoted service to the Snarl & Sweat Department Store, Mr. Egbert Q. Rubberbone, known to hundreds of local citizens as the assistant manager of the piano department, was awarded a gold watch at a testimonial dinner in his honor last night. The watch was presented by Mr. Snarl who said, 'We need more men like Rubberbone. . . .'

Millions of people have read this little story but how many give it a second thought? Not many. Most folks merely grieve at the headline and then pass on to the crossword puzzle. But behind that headline is a story. Men like Rubberbone are not born everyday and their kind are rapidly passing into the pages of history. Soon they will be extinct like the Dodo.

And Mr. Snarl knew what he was talking about—without men like Rubberbone the system of heads-I-win-tails-you-lose would not last very long.

All For a Watch

For thirty years of faithful, devoted service. . . . For thirty long, dreary years of leaping out of bed like a hunted criminal every morning at seven a.m.—bolting down a cruller and a cup of muddy coffee—rushing down into a dark, dirty subway where he was jammed and shoved into a crowded stinking subway car—and up and up into the office to shove his time-card into the clock ten minutes early and then to put in eight or more solid hours on his feet and no time or place to rest. Home at night—to a stuffy flat in the suburbs where he falls asleep over the dinner table. Thirty years of this—for a watch. A watch worth twenty-five bucks in any hock-shop.

And Egbert is satisfied. If you ask him why he never becomes fed up with the life of a plough horse he is surprised. He says, "It's people like you who make all the trouble in this world. You always want to upset everything."

Egbert Doesn't Think

Egbert just doesn't stop to think why anyone should want to upset things. He never stops to ask questions and he never has any doubts about things. He accepts his boss's answers to everything. He even feels sorry for the boss. He says the boss couldn't get along without him and he couldn't get along without the boss. And Egbert is right again. . . . Egbert just doesn't know how right he is. . . . For thirty years he kept his place and never spoke out of turn. Whenever he felt ill he forced himself to the store and didn't mention it to a soul. His stomach suffered as a result of eating half rotten food in clutter-bang one arm lunch rooms.

When debts mounted and his wife couldn't pay the grocer or the electric bills, Egbert hesitated. After weeks of mental torture he crawled to the boss's office. Hat in hand and heart in mouth, he spoke softly and fearfully.

A SALUTE TO DAVID REY

By DOUGLAS CONLEY and MARY WILLS

A dispatch from Barcelona published in the French press reports that David Rey has been arrested by Franco's military police. This is the same Catalan worker who was held for one and a half years by the Stalinist police of the Loyalist government and who was charged, with other leaders of the P.O.U.M., of conniving with the fascists. His new arrest stands as definite proof, if such is still needed, of the absurdity of these charges.

We recall David Rey (his real name is Daniel Rebull) as one of the finest class-conscious worker-militants whom we have ever had the privilege of knowing. An old war horse of the revolutionary movement, he was always ready to serve his comrades and his party but, unlike the bulk of the younger POUM leaders with whom he was associated, he was never too old to learn. In the revolutionary enthusiasm of 1936, he still saw the necessity of deep self-criticism.

He supported the Left Wing of the P.O.U.M., led by his younger brother, Jose Rebull. This opposition, organized around its counter-theses of April, 1937, attacked Nin's policy of entry into the Catalan Generalitat and the centrist zig-zag of the P.O.U.M.'s Executive Committee.

This was not the first time David Rey had learned the lessons of the workers' movement from his own experiences. As a syndicalist in the Spanish trade union movement, he had years ago learned the need of political action, and had turned to the Communist Party. The ineptitude of the Third International eventually led him to join with Maurin in the split which created the Workers and Peasants' Bloc—which later fused with the Nin-Andrade group to form the P.O.U.M. David Rey sat on the Central Committee of the P.O.U.M. After July, 1936, he was assigned as manager of a workers' football team on an educational and money-raising tour to Mexico. It was during his absence that the P.O.U.M. abandoned

its revolutionary slogans to enter the government ministry. Soon after his return to Catalonia, his keen understanding and long experience with problems of the working class convinced him of his party's mistakes. He joined his brother, the able young business manager of La Batalla, who, with the April thesis, had taken the lead in self-criticism of the party line. We feel confident that had this Bolshevik self-criticism only arisen within the P.O.U.M. more promptly, the history of Spain would be different today, and such a courageous old militant as David Rey would not be in Franco's hands.

This Catalan worker stands as a symbol of the tens of thousands who have not given up the struggle, and who never shall, until the victory of the Spanish workers. His political courage, his firm stand against the opportunist stream, should serve as an example to American workers.

Salud to David Rey, symbol of the revolutionary workers of Barcelona!