

**Coming:**  
**What's Happened to the Russian Revolution?**  
By Jay Lovestone

# Workers Age

HIGH COURT DECISIONS SHOW ARBITRARY POWERS OF N.L.R.B. Page 2  
ON THE NATIONALITIES QUESTION  
by Rosa Luxemburg Page 4

Weekly Paper of the Independent Labor League of America

Vol. 9, No. 3.

NEW YORK, N. Y., SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 1940.

5 CENTS

## Behind the Headlines:

### Against the Stream

By JAY LOVESTONE

IN these cataclysmic days, words often lose their meaning or come to mean the very opposite. Formulas with definite connotation for decades are faring no better. Slogans and battle-cries which once rallied aspiring armies have been meeting the same fate. In fine, the present hour demands unceasing, cautious scrutiny, not only in the realm of platitudes and personalities but also in the world of principles, ideas and ideals. We stress this approach in order to insure a wholesome, critical attitude in these days of kaleidoscopic changes when totalitarianism, cynicism and ideological nihilism are so rampant.

Let's look at some recent events to bring home our point in the concrete. Hitler, the high-priest of fascist totalitarianism, issues a proclamation to usher in the new year. Its big noise centers around the call for the "socialist millennium." Pope Pius, dictator of the first and foremost fortress of totalitarianism—the Roman Catholic Church, with its traditions of the Inquisitorial mind and torture—fervently reveals to the world that the "Church sees with clarity and favors with indefatigable zeal the imperative duty of that 'redemption of the proletariat' that had already begun in the grotto of Bethlehem." Words, words, words—smoke, smoke, smoke—but not a ray of light to lead out of the darkness of capitalist reaction, bankruptcy and war.

Particularly in recent months have the unexpected and unforeseen held sway. Take the case of the character of the war. It has assumed the nature of a violent economic conflict in its initial stages. And the signs are multiplying to upset further the expert calculations about the severest military struggle immediately coming at the center instead of the periphery of European politics. More and more, it would seem that some decisive actions are at hand in Finland, the Scandinavian countries and the Balkans before the principal opponents will dare fling themselves at the Maginot Line or the West-Wall. Likewise, those countless prophets who, on the basis of the 1914 experience, counted so much on the world war instantly bringing prosperity to American agriculture and industry, must now throw overboard their cherished but refuted conclusions. The 1940 economic outlook for the American farmers and workers borders much too much on the bleak.

During these critical moments in the life of humanity, when affairs are so complex, and when so much of the weird prevails, it is imperative to watch the tides. But watching the tides of time and history doesn't at all mean that one must go along with them. Especially in days of confusion and reaction when men and movements have gone so berserk it is necessary often to swim against the tide. We must learn not to go with the momentarily prevailing current, in one stream or another, merely because it is dominant. Today, there is nothing more fatal to social progress than the ideological stampede—the loss of the capacity to differentiate, the destruction of the sense of discrimination, the tendency to fall in line—without regard to its direction—but solely because it is long and crowded and well-equipped. Such a tendency means accepting a lower standard regardless of the fact that it may appear to enhance the immediate comfort of the conformist. In every age, our own not excluded, there are some who render the greatest homage to mankind by refusing to accept the lower ethical, social, political and economic standards of their day.

The tragedy of Finland is all-revealing from the above viewpoint. Words fail us to condemn the crime of Stalin in his wanton attack on Finland. Not even for a split second have we wavered in this attitude. However, this does not mean that we must lose our sense of balance and discrimination, and join hands, as too many labor organizations have already done, with the Hoovers and the Roosevelts, the Chamberlains and the Daladiers, in their crocodile tears for "poor little Finland." Aneft this, we cite two meaningful types of comment which deserve most serious consideration. From the well-edited British weekly, the New Statesman and Nation, of December 9, 1939, we call the following timely excerpt:

"The sympathy of all that is progressive in the two hemispheres was one of the main defenses of the Soviet Union. If he (Stalin) sapped this defense by his purge, he has now almost destroyed it. While he lives and reigns, few of us will orient our praying-carpet towards Moscow. We shall do well, however, to bridge indignation. It would quickly place us in unwelcome company. Not the most vociferous friends of Finland can hope to compete in their moral wrath with the Duce. What the Albanians and Abyssinians felt is not recorded. In America, as in Europe, (Continued on page 4)

## Reaction Made Big Gains in State Legislatures in 1939

Organization, Collective Bargaining Rights Restricted

By J. ELWOOD

DURING the legislative year of 1939, important measures restricting the rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively were adopted in several states. Shortly after the passage of the Wagner Act in 1935, five states—Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah and Wisconsin—enacted labor-relations laws modeled after the federal act. During 1939, however, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania drastically changed their "Little Wagner Acts," while Michigan and Minnesota enacted new far-reaching legislation restricting workers in their rights to organize and bargain collectively. Wisconsin and Pennsylvania also changed their anti-injunction laws so that injunctions may now be granted more often in labor disputes. But, while 1939 state legislation on labor relations was mainly negative and restrictive, the record does include enactment of an anti-injunction law, modeled on the Norris-La Guardia Act, in Connecticut, while New Mexico limited court procedure in issuing anti-labor injunctions.

### OREGON SETS THE PACE

Starting with the adoption of an initiated measure in November 1938 in Oregon, there have been a series of enactments aimed at limiting labor rather than extending the right of labor to organize and engage in concerted activities. The Oregon measure regulates the conduct of strikes and boycotts and prohibits picketing at or near the premises of the employer unless a dispute is in progress involving a majority

of the workers at the plant concerning hours, wages and working conditions of the workers in the plant on strike. This virtually destroys the organizing power of the trade unions in the state and leaves them at the mercy of the employers.

Wisconsin repealed its 1937 "Little Wagner Act" and replaced it with an act which creates a new State Employment Relations Board. In addition to guaranteeing the right of employees to engage in lawful concerted activities, as provided in the former act, the new law specifically provides for the "right to refrain from such activities"—thus giving the employer a chance to play off one section of his employees against the other. According to the act, wherever a question of representation arises it must be determined by a secret ballot, and employees who have been found guilty of an unfair labor practice may be excluded from voting. The act defines unfair labor practices of employers so as to include the check-off of union dues unless authorized in writing. It also defines unfair practices of employees, thus taking the labor movement back to the eighteenth century court view of labor relations. The unfair practices of employees include coercion and intimidation, mass picketing, secondary boycotts, violation of a collective-bargaining agreement, picketing or boycotting unless a strike has been called, and taking unauthorized possession of the property of an employer. The law also provides that labor representatives are to keep a record of financial transactions and make reports to members.

The new anti-injunction law of Wisconsin is made applicable only to such controversies as involve an employer with the majority of his employees in a designated collective-bargaining unit. In other labor disputes, injunctions may now be granted. This is in contrast to the previous law under which an injunction could be used only in rare instances. Furthermore, this act virtually outlaws the bulk of strikes which usually occur in periods of organization, as it prohibits picketing by a union which does not represent a majority of the employees for which it is attempting to bargain. By amendments to the Pennsylvania State Labor Relations Act, the law was changed from the Wagner type to the so-called "equalizing" type, of a distinctly "anti-labor" character.

The amended act prohibits unfair labor practices of employers as well as of employees. The check-off is considered an unfair practice unless the employer is authorized by a majority vote of the employees and by the individual authorization of each employee. Sit-down strikes as well as attempts to "coerce" fellow-workers in matters of union membership or in the choice of a bargaining agent are forbidden.

## House Passes Anti-Lynch Bill, 251-132

But Faces Prospect of Long Filibuster In Senate by Southern Democrats

Washington, D. C. The Gavanon anti-lynching bill was passed by the House of Representatives last week after three days of bitter attack by spokesmen from the southern states. The vote in the House was 251 to 132.

The bill was then sent to the Senate where a majority of nearly two to one is said to favor it. The prospects are, however, that it will meet with a filibuster conducted by a group of southern Senators. In past sessions, such a filibuster was enough to kill the bill. Whether this will be the case at the present session is not certain, but some such outcome is feared. Senator Wagner is the sponsor of the anti-lynching measure in the Senate.

The House vote was as follows: 108 Democrats, 140 Republicans, 1 American Laborite, and 2 Progressives voted for it; 124 Democrats and 8 Republicans opposed it.

The bill, the third of its kind to pass the House since 1922, would impose fines on county and state officials found negligent in protecting persons within their custody and in allowing them to be seized by mobs and killed or injured. Federal courts would have jurisdiction to try suits against counties for damages to persons so injured, or to relatives of those killed, the maximum amount being \$10,000.

After passing the bill, the House struck out a provision exempting labor violence from the penalties. Representative Gavanon of New York,

## Clark Urges Ban on Ship Transfers

Senator Introduces Bill To Bar Evasion of Neutrality Restrictions on Shipping

Washington, D. C. Senator Bennett Champ Clark introduced a bill last week to prohibit the transfer of American ships to foreign registry by sale, lease or any other method.

The measure was introduced for Clark, who is ill, by his Missouri colleague, Harry Truman. It was said to be designed to stop transfers such as the recent sale by the United States Lines of several of its vessels to a Norwegian corporation, of whose stock the U. S. Lines holds 40%, and the same firm's earlier unsuccessful effort to transfer eight of its ships to Panamanian registry.

author of the bill in the House, offered, the motion by which the provision was struck out. Considerable anxiety was felt in labor circles as to the meaning and possible interpretation of this amendment.

The first move to kill the bill in the Senate will come in an attempt to keep it locked up in committee until the end of the session. Should the measure reach the floor, a group of southern Democrats, headed by Senator Connally of Texas, has threatened to stage a prolonged filibuster.

The Wagner-Gavanon bill is backed by a wide array of labor, liberal and civil-rights organizations. Particularly energetic in its support has been the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

## Fight for Wagner Health Bill Pushed

Washington, D. C. Despite an indication that the Administration has grown cold towards the Wagner health bill, proponents of the measure will fight hard for its adoption, it was said here as Congress convened.

The President's announced substitute of construction of small hospitals in poorer communities by the federal government does not meet with the approval of labor nor of those Congressmen who see the need of a real health program.

Labor's attitude is that just putting up hospitals in poor communities without providing funds for their servicing wouldn't guarantee needed services for the sick, as the communities would have no money with which to operate them.

Meanwhile, Senator Wagner is preparing a new draft of his bill which will be ready for study by the Senate Education and Labor Committee early in January.

Washington, D. C. The Army and Navy Register said last week that President Roosevelt will be called on to decide an army-initiated proposal to employ Civilian Conservation Corps volunteers as troop auxiliaries.

The military proposal said a proposal to this effect was advanced by General George C. Marshall, chief of staff, and was rejected by James J. McEntee, acting C. C. C. director.

General Marshall was said to have suggested that the C. C. C. initiate military training on a voluntary basis and that the volunteers be established in special camps near army posts and training centers such as Fort Benning, Ge

Relations Act also curtails the State Labor Board's power to invalidate contracts between employer and employees—a familiar way of protecting company-dominated unions.

### MEDIATION ACTS AGAINST STRIKES

Michigan and Minnesota adopted mediation acts with required three periods before strikes and lock-outs, in order to allow time for negotiation and mediation. In public utilities and other vital industries, the truce period is 30 days; in other occupations, varying from 5 to 10 days. These acts also prohibit certain unfair labor practices, including coercion of employees by either employers, "other employees or labor organizations," in the exercise of their rights to join unions or strike. The Minnesota law prohibits picketing in the absence of a strike and requires that a majority of pickets be employees of the plant or establishment.

In 1934, 44 of the state legislatures met in regular session. In 22 of these states, bills were introduced with the aim of imposing serious restrictions on labor's right to strike, pickets and bargain collectively. In four states, Oregon excluded, these reactionary measures were adopted. It is obvious that what the employers were not able to accomplish in the form of emasculatory amendments to the Wagner Act during last year's Congressional session, they strove to accomplish in the state legislatures. To some extent, they succeeded in no small measure due to the division within the organized labor movement and the embitterment and alienation of public opinion resulting therefrom.

It is generally predicted that an anti-labor drive will sweep the state legislatures this coming Spring. Unless labor can compose its differences by then, in order to stop the wave of reaction, the labor movement will wake up too late to find out that most of its basic rights, gained thru many years of struggle, have been drastically curtailed.

## War Costs 150 Millions a Day

Paris, France. THE war is costing Europe around \$150,000,000 daily above ordinary budgetary expenditures, a statistical survey made here last week showed. The estimates, originating in French sources and subject to a degree of speculation in regard to German and Russian expenditures, follow: Great Britain, \$33,000,000; France, \$22,500,000; Germany, \$45,000,000; Russia, \$22,500,000. Finland and small neutral nations which have mobilized for self-defense are estimated to be spending \$30,000,000 daily.

## Anti-Russia Lineup Grows in Balkans

Italy Inspires Moves With Approval Of Allies; Soviet Reverses Continue

Soviet Russia's international position grew markedly worse last week as signs multiplied that in various parts of Europe diplomatic alignments were emerging that were not only anti-Russian in themselves but that seemed destined to be combined sooner or later into a general front against Russia, perhaps even into a joint assault upon that country. Chief developments last week, the

nineteenth week since the outbreak of hostilities, were in the Balkans and in southeastern Europe. In Venice, the two-day conference between Italian Foreign Minister Ciano and Hungarian Foreign Minister Csaky resulted in an agreement to block Russian penetration in the Balkans by military force if necessary. The hostility to Moscow was undisguised, even in official pronouncements.

Two days later, reports from Belgrade asserted that Yugoslavia had entered the anti-Russian front by promising to permit the passage of Italian troops thru the country in case of military action resulting from any Russian move. There was a hint that the Italo-Yugoslavian accord might go much farther along the same lines.

During the same week, secret conferences were held between king Carol of Rumania and Regent Prince Paul of Yugoslavia. The Rumanian king had already hurled sharp defiance at Russian threats to Bessarabia in an address the previous week. Rumania's adherence to the anti-Russian front in the Balkans was regarded as certain.

In Turkey, too, anti-Moscow sentiment grew stronger and more pronounced. The only country in southeastern Europe which maintained a less hostile attitude was Bulgaria, which apparently hoped for the aid of Russia in making good some of its claims against Rumania.

The conference of the Balkan Entente on February 2 is expected to give some sort of indication of how far the new anti-Russian line-up will go. The whole development has come in the wake of the fiasco of the Russian invasion of Finland and the sudden deflation of the prestige of Russia's military might.

Behind the network of diplomatic maneuvering in the Balkans Italian Foreign Office, who...ivities are meeting with undisguised approval in London, Paris and Washington. Should the efforts to turn the present war into a general assault upon Russia, now being pushed by certain forces in various European capitals, come to something, the new alignments in the Balkans would easily fit into the plan as a whole.

In Finland, the sixth week of the invasion was marked by continued Russian reverses. A far-reaching shake-up in the Russian armies and the "recall" of over a hundred officers were reported. In Moscow, Mikhail M. Kaganovitch, head of the aviation industry, was removed and "transferred to another post." M. M. Kaganovitch is the brother of Lazar M. Kaganovitch, very high up in the Soviet bureaucracy. According to Finnish reports, picked troops of the G.P.U., or Russian secret police, were sent into action on the Suomussalmi front in a vain attempt to retrieve something from the disaster suffered by the Russians recently.

Jerry Voorhis, with the cooperation of Casey and Dempsey, inserted into the report such statements as the following:

"Every modern democratic nation is confronted by two pressing problems. The first is the preservation of the constitutional liberties which their people have gained thru the years of struggle."

"It is at least equally important that in combating subversive groups of this character nothing should be done which would undermine the fundamental structure of constitutional liberty itself."

"If the findings of this committee were to be used as a pretext for the building of an un-American movement of any sort on the excuse that such a movement were 'necessary to combat such-and-such a danger to the country', clearly a disservice to our democratic institutions would have been done."

"We owe them (the people of the country) a solution of the economic and social problem of unnecessary poverty in the midst of possible plenty."

This is not Martin Dies speaking! What the Workers Age said, editorially, two weeks ago about this gentleman is accurate and sound. The New Dealers are trying to get the committee reconstituted with some one like T. V. Smith as the chairman. Some of them think the committee has done its job and is not needed any longer but they know that the country overwhelmingly favors its continuation. Therefore, they will go along after doing their best to make sure that the Voorhis type of Congressman is dominant in the committee membership. This will absolutely insure reports and procedure in line with this final, well-worded report of the committee, they say.

## "Cannon Before Butter" — American Version

WE do not intend to follow the example of certain foreign nations—President Roosevelt assured us in his message to Congress last week—and look to an armaments boom to solve our unemployment problem. That was what he said. But what he did in the way of allotting governmental expenditures in next year's federal budget was something else again. As one observer remarked, he damned the doctor, but took the medicine.

Unemployment is now higher than it has ever been since 1933. There is no prospect whatever of any industrial boom taking up a measurable proportion of the slack in the near future. Indeed, every economist now recognizes that, under present conditions, even a big rise in the level of production would not by any means imply an appreciable let-up in unemployment. How many jobs there are in the country is not exactly known; about ten million would be a fair estimate. And ten million it is likely to remain for the next year or two at least; just as it has remained at about this level for the past decade.

How does the President's budget reflect this critical situation? The sums allotted to W.P.A. and other forms of relief are slashed to the bone. This year's already scandalously reduced W.P.A. outlay of \$1,400,000,000 is to be further cut by another \$400,000,000, thus bringing the total down to just about a billion. During the course of this year, half a million workers were dropped from W.P.A. rolls in a series of ruthless purges; on the basis of the 1941 budget, another half million at least are to be dropped and deprived of the work-relief on which they depend for their subsistence.

And the C.C.C. and N.Y.A. are to suffer the same drastic retrenchments as the W.P.A. As for public housing, on which great store was set as a way out of the depression, the subject was not even mentioned by the President. There is every indication that expenditures in this field will be reduced to insignificant proportions.

But there is one type of spending that will not be stinted, and that is spending for the army and navy. The 1941 budget drives expenditures for relief, public works and farm aid, in short, expenditures for socially useful purposes, down to record lows for the seven years of the New Deal, but it sends armament outlays hurtling upward to record peace-time highs. According to the official figures, military-naval expenditures are to reach \$2,336,000,000, as against the already record high of \$1,760,000,000 for the current year, with the likelihood that before the fiscal year 1941 is over, the armament figure will approach three billion.

These are the official figures as presented by President Roosevelt himself. Slashes in relief and public works—skyrocketing increases in arms spending. Yet the President denies that the Administration is seeking salvation in an armaments boom!

The slogan of an arms economy is: "Cannon before butter!" Every thing must be cut to the bone for the sake of the arms budget! This slogan, already dominant in Europe, totalitarian and "democratic" alike, now bids fair to become the guiding star of the Administration that once proclaimed a New Deal for America.

## Chance for Anti-Lynch Bill in Senate Seen

Pressure of Election Year May Count

By FRANK HOWARD

Washington, D. C. THE biggest news down here this week is not the Jackson Day Dinner speeches or the new Presidential appointments but the revival of the anti-lynching bill and its passage in the House. It is freely predicted that it will have a better chance of passing the Senate this election year than ever before. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is on the job and predicts that Jack Garner has seen the handwriting on the wall and will favor it this time. By the time you read this letter, you will have heard of some rich oratory on this issue which I am sure will be forthcoming from stalwart members of Franklin Roosevelt's party. Most of the opposition will come from Democrats from the South. There is no doubt that the Republicans are gleeful at this opportunity to embarrass the majority party once more. However, the President shows little enthusiasm for elementary civil rights for 15,000,000 fellow-citizens when he does not speak militantly in favor of this bill. I will bet you any amount that he remains silent on this fundamental matter; I will bet you almost as much that, during the same period, he will make another statement on the necessity of preserving democracy in the world. This may be good politics in an election year but it is hardly a sign of robust progressivism, not to speak of radicalism. Many New Dealers are wearing exceedingly long faces around Wash-

ington because of the slashing attacks on all social-service budgets which have been initiated by the White House—not merely approved. F.D.R.'s strategy seems to be to bet everything on his pro-British foreign policy, on which Garner and Co. find themselves in entire agreement with him. With this much of the "line" in common, the hope of the third-termers is that the emasculated New Deal for the home front can be disguised and sugar-coated in such a way as to make it palatable by the time the Democratic convention rolls around. Whether this strategy will win is being seriously questioned by those New Dealers who are heads of agencies which are suffering most as the result of the proposed budget cuts. They do not believe that Jack Garner will be fooled by all of this mumbo-jumbo and they say that F.D.R. and the New Deal would be more certain of winning if they pulled out all of the stops and played with abandon.

That many Rooseveltians suffered a distinct shock when they read the Dies Committee report is clear. They expected a report measuring up to the usual erratic performance of Mr. Dies. Instead, they found themselves reading a New Deal document, adopted unanimously. Mr. Dies was sick in Texas!

It is important to read the report, if you have not done so. Copies can be obtained from the committee. It mirrors the present New Deal attitude on Stalinism and its works as well as any document I have. Everyone knows, of course, that it is anti-Nazi, so I make no comment on the aspect of the report. You may be sure that, by some sleight-of-hand,

High Court Decisions Show Arbitrary Powers of N.L.R.B.

Labor Disunity Multiplies Peril of Encroachment

By ROBERT WALTERS

THE decisions of the United States Supreme Court in the three labor-relations cases that came before it two weeks ago undoubtedly strengthen the legal position of the National Labor Relations Board in the administration of the Wagner Act.

ISSUES BEFORE THE COURT

The two cases—the West Coast Longshoremen's case and the Consumers Power Company case—involve essentially the same principle and were treated as belonging together by the Supreme Court.

Last year, we may remember, the National Labor Relations Board ruled that the appropriate collective-bargaining unit for the longshoremen on the Pacific Coast was the coast as a whole—that is, all longshoremen employed by companies doing business on the West Coast were to constitute a single group and as a group vote to decide which union, if any, they wanted to represent them.

The I.L.A. thereupon appealed to the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, petitioning the review of the Board's action and to set it aside.

GROUND OF THE COURT'S ACTION

But on what ground did the Supreme Court affirm the stand taken by the court of appeals? On the purely technical and procedural ground that the Wagner Act as it stands does not give federal courts the power to review certifications of collective-bargaining representation issued by the Board.

"Here it is evident that the entire structure of the act emphasizes, for purposes of review, the distinction between an 'order' of the Board restraining an unfair labor practice and a certification in representation proceedings. The one, authorized by Section 10, may be reviewed by the court on petition of the Board for enforcement of the order, or of a person aggrieved, in conformity to the procedure laid down in Section 10, which says nothing of certification.

"The other, authorized by Section 9, is nowhere spoken of as an order, and no procedure is prescribed for its review apart from an order prohibiting an unfair labor practice."

In other words, a Board order restraining unfair labor practices may be brought to the courts for review by an employer who doesn't like the order, but a Board decision on what kind of unit is appropriate for collective bargaining is not thus reviewable; in short, it is final!

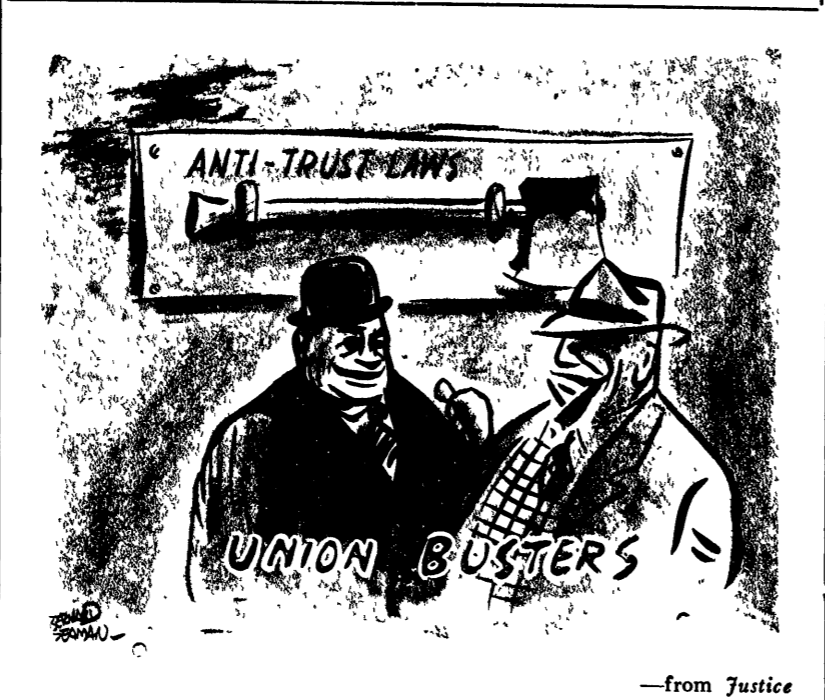
So there you are—the Board decides how workers shall be grouped for bargaining and there is very little anyone can do about it. The Supreme Court opinion makes it abundantly clear that the A. F. of L. complaint as to its members in many cities on the West Coast being actually denied the right to have collective bargaining representatives of their own choosing, is substantially grounded in fact. But the court insists it can grant no relief because the law is clear and precise on the point.

POWER TO FIX THE BALLOT

How far the arbitrary power of the Board may go appears very

To be more precise, there is a way for such Board decisions to come under court review. If an order restraining an unfair labor practice comes up for review, then all Board decisions as to certification, etc., involved in the case are also subject to review. But a Board order can come before a court only if the Board asks the court to enforce it or the employer appeals against it. If neither of these things happens, Board decisions on bargaining unit and the like are not subject to appeal or review.

"LET'S GET THAT OLD AXE DOWN!"



—from Justice

strikingly in the second of the two cases, the Consumers Power case, which in its various stages has been much discussed in these columns. An election of the employees of this company was held in January 1939, with the following results: 1,164 for the C.I.O.'s Utility Workers Organizing Committee, 1,072 for the A. F. of L.'s International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and 570 against both unions or for neither one. Since no majority was apparent, the Board thereupon decided to hold a run-off election. But on the ballot for the run-off election it placed designations only for or against the C.I.O. union and altogether omitted the A. F. of L. union, although the latter had received almost as many votes as its rival (92 less out of a total of 2,806)! The A. F. of L. immediately appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. The court took

the case under review and set aside the Board direction on the run-off election. But when the matter came up before the Supreme Court, the circuit court was reversed and the power of the Board to arrange the run-off ballot in its own way upheld.

The decision here—Justice Stone, who delivered the high court's opinion, pointed out—was controlled by the decision in the West Coast Longshoremen's case. "The direction for an election is but part of the representation proceeding authorized by Section 9(c) and is no more subject to review under Section 10(f) than is a certification, which is the final step in such a proceeding and which we have just held Congress has excluded from the review afforded by that subdivision."

So there you are again—not only

Background of Policy Behind Wagner Act

Progress Thru Century Showed Way

By WM. M. LEISERSON

IN our own country, until about a century ago, it was not only an unfair labor practice for working people to organize to improve their conditions of employment by bargaining with their employers; it was a crime. The members of a society of shoemakers in Philadelphia in 1803 were found "guilty" of a combination to raise their wages, fined and assessed costs. In 1842, however, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, reversing a conviction for labor conspiracy, ruled that a combination of employees to improve their conditions is not essentially different from a combination of people to fight the evils of intemperance. As working men may join together and refuse to work in a shop where liquor is furnished or refuse to work with any employee who habitually uses liquor, the court reasoned, so also may they combine to refuse to work for wages they consider too low or to work with an employee who will accept lower wages.

Other courts subsequently took the same view, and for nearly a hundred years, the legality of labor organizations has not been questioned. But until recently, the freedom of working people to organize meant only freedom from prosecution by the government. Employers were free to destroy unions by spying on those who joined them, discharging members, refusing employment to union men, imposing yellow-dog contracts on employees, and organizing company unions with forced memberships. Management, bargaining collectively for great numbers of stockholders, was protected in its right to insist on bargaining individually with helpless workers in need of jobs.

SUPREME COURT BLOCKS REFORM

The legal rights favored the employer. Congress and the states attempted to put employees and employers on the basis of equality before the law in the matter of bargaining, but the Supreme Court declared the early efforts unconstitutional. In the cases of Adair v. the United States and Croppage v. Kansas the Court held that an employer's property right in his business included the right to discharge or discriminate against employees for any or no reason. Apparently, neither Congress nor the state legislatures could protect employees against employers who used their economic position to trespass on the rights of those who worked for them. Courts could not hear cases of employees discharged for exercising their legal right to join labor organizations.

The labor-relation acts changed all this. The basis for the change was laid by the Supreme Court in 1980 in the Texas and New Orleans case already mentioned (in the first article of this series.—Editor), when

it ruled that the decisions in Adair v. United States and Croppage v. Kansas were not applicable because employers had no constitutional rights to trespass on the rights of employees. In making this decision, the court considered a contention of the employer that no property interest was involved in the right of employees to choose their own representatives for bargaining. The answer of the court was that if it is necessary to show a property interest, then "we are of the opinion that there was such an interest with respect to the selection of representatives to confer with the employer in relation to contracts of service." Citing this decision, a United States District Court ruled in 1935 in the Virginian Railway case that "the right of self-organization and representation in the matter of rates of pay, hours of labor and working conditions is a property right, the loss of which would result in irreparable damage to complainants." This decision later was upheld both in the Circuit Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

LABOR POLICY CHANGES

In a hundred years, therefore, the labor policy of the United States has been developed and changed by slow steps from one in which organization for collective bargaining was held to be a crime to one in which it is protected by law as a property right with the sanctions that surround private ownership of property. Shall we now undo all this development and retrace our steps so that the property rights thus achieved may be taken away from employees by their employers? Fairness and justice in labor relations cannot be achieved or maintained without regarding the property rights of employees every bit as sacred as the property rights of employers. The three acts of Congress—Norris-LaGuardia, Railway Labor and Labor Relations Act—together with the supporting decisions of the courts, are designed, I take it, to establish and maintain a national labor policy of treating the employees property rights as equal in sanctity to the employers property rights.

Turning now to the specific provisions of the Labor Relations Act, the meat of them is contained in Section 8, which lists five prohibited unfair labor practices. These are:

- 1. Employers must not interfere with, restrain or coerce employees in the exercise of their right to self-organization, to form or join labor organizations, to bargain collectively thru representatives of their own choosing.
2. They must not dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute to the financial or other support of it. That refers to the well-known company unions.
3. They must not discriminate in

Poor Families Held to Bare Necessities

OF every dollar the "average" worker finds in his pay envelope, he spends 33.5 cents for food, 24.2 cents for housing and fuel, 10.6 cents for clothing, 8.3 cents for transportation, and has 23.4 cents left to cover medical and personal care, education, and other miscellaneous costs.

These are the findings of a survey made by U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics covering 14,469 families in 42 cities during 12 months in 1934-35. Families covered were those of "employed wage-earners and clerical workers who had received no relief during the year," had at least one employed member, and a minimum income for the year of \$500.

Average number of persons per family in this group was 3.6. And average annual income of the group was \$1,515 per year, but median income was only \$1,458, that is, half of the families had less than this amount.

Keep in mind, when considering the figures in Table A, that they are annual average expenditures of this group of employed workers.

Some 53.3% of the families covered in this survey had less than the average income given in the table above and many millions, of course, have substantially less to live on. For these poorer families a larger share of their income goes for food, housing and clothing, leaving them much less for other necessities. This is indicated in Table B showing, for the lower-income groups, the proportions of their income spent for the three essentials.

In other words, for the "average" worker's family covered in the survey, 33.5 cents out of every dollar went for food. But for those earning from \$600 to \$900 per year, food expenditures consumed 37 cents out of every dollar, and for those with incomes from \$500 to \$600, it took 38.4 cents. It is clear from such figures that any rises in food prices, caused by the war, hit hardest the poorest people.

AVERAGE ANNUAL CURRENT EXPENDITURES OF ALL FAMILIES

Table A: Average Annual Current Expenditures of All Families. Columns: Amount, % of Total. Rows: Food, Clothing, Housing, Fuel, light and refrigeration, Other household operation, Furnishings and equipment, Personal care, Transportation, Medical care, Recreation, Education, Vocation, Community welfare, Gifts and contributions to persons outside the economic family, Other items, ALL ITEMS.

Table B: Families with annual net income of \$500 to \$1500. Columns: \$500-\$600, \$600-\$900, \$900-\$1200, \$1200-\$1500. Rows: Food, Clothing, Housing, Fuel, light, refrigeration, Other household operation, Total, Balance for all other expenses.

hiring, discharge or any condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization.

4. They must not discharge or otherwise discriminate against employees who file charges or give testimony under the act.

5. They must not refuse to bargain collectively with representatives of employees designated in accordance with the act.

UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES

Congress was not original in making up this list of practices. It did not just think them up as a good list to prohibit. It found that employers had been practicing all these things; they had become established practices in American industry in order to prevent employees from organizing and bargaining collectively.

Many investigations had established the facts, and there was much complaint against the unfairness and injustice of the practices. Industrial managers had every opportunity to rid themselves of the practices. They would not do so, and the working people of the country turned to the government to make them get rid of the practices. Certainly the workers did not act hastily in the matter. They waited patiently for many years, and only as a last resort did they use their votes to remove an intolerable condition.

The fifth unfair labor practice makes it necessary that the employer shall know who is the true representative of the employees duly designated and selected in accordance with the act. Section 9 deals with this problem. It provides that a majority of the employees in any unit appropriate for collective bargaining shall have the right to designate or select an exclusive representative of all the employees in such unit. Then it authorizes the National Labor Relations Board to decide in each case whether the bargaining unit shall be the employer

N. Y. Teachers Union Shifts on War Issue

Stalinist Clique Follows Moscow New Line

By D. BENJAMIN

New York City.

AT the January 5 Delegate Assembly meeting of Teachers Union, Local 5, New York, the Stalinist-controlled administration presented a resolution for adoption, to the effect "that our country be not involved in the wars of other nations and that the attention of our government be directed to the internal problems of unemployment, social security, educational opportunity and civil liberties. . . . and that the Teachers Union expresses its opposition to huge armament budgets and the militarization of the young people of our country."

What has happened to bring about such a change of policy on the part of the Teachers Union administration? Has there been an honest change of heart? Did the Independent Group achieve the impossible and convince the administration or its supporters? The answer must unfortunately be no. The real, the sole reason was the same that brought about the sudden disaffiliation of Local 5 from the American League for Peace and Democracy. The reason can be stated in three words—the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Whereas in previous years and months, up to very recent days, the administration filled the meeting halls with cries against fascism, "defeat the aggressors," "concerted action against the scourge of Hitlerism," the united front of the "great democracies" (England, France, Russia, United States)

against Nazism, support of Roosevelt in "quarantining the aggressors," unequivocal and unquestioning support of the New Deal Administration, and so on—at the January 5 meeting these slogans were conspicuous by their absence and in their place we find arguments against the imperialism of the "great democracies," the war-like moves and tendencies of the Roosevelt Administration, the dangerous effects of growing armaments here upon education and the social services (how we were scoffed at when we said that but a few months ago!) but not a word about fascism, the invasion of Poland by Hitler-Stalin, the attack upon Finland by Stalinist Russia.

The reporter for the administration made no effort to explain the real cause of the change of policy and the real nature of the present policy. It devolved upon the Independent Group spokesmen to do that. The real cause, it was pointed out, lay in the fact that Stalin, instead of depending essentially upon the support of the Russian masses and of the international working class for Soviet defense, relied rather upon alliances with the big imperialist states—first, the "democracies," England and France; and then, Nazi Germany. The change from the Stalin-Laval pact to the Stalin-Hitler pact brought about a parallel change of policy in the New York Teachers Union—from a t a c k against Hitler to attack against the "democratic" imperialism, from advocacy of American entry into the "broad, democratic anti-fascist front" to opposition to American involvement in war as part of that very "democratic" front.

Actually, the Local 5 administration's policy is not real opposition to war but rather support to the diplomatic and military policy of Stalin by keeping the U. S. A. from joining the enemies of the Stalin-Hitler block.

The reasons offered by the administration for the anti-war resolution—disastrous effects of the growing armament economy and militarization upon schools, students, relief, rights of labor, civil liberties—all existed just as well a few months ago, a half-year ago, a year ago, as they do now. But resolutions and arguments offered by the Independent Group against militarization, against the trend of Roosevelt toward war, against unreserved support to the New Deal Administration, were voted down while their proponents were booed and jeered. The Independents supported the resolution but made clear their reasons for doing so. They also introduced a resolution for the war-referendum amendment, which the administration shamefacedly accepted, after having maligning the Independents for years because of their advocacy of that proposal. The Independents drove home the very important point that the whole course of events showed that democratic methods did not prevail in the union—that while majority voting existed, it existed on a factional and intolerant basis, on the basis of not giving earnest consideration to the minority of the union. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the position and analysis of the Independents on the war question had been fully confirmed.

Delegates listened more attentively than usual to what the minority had to say. In fact, there have been many signs lately, judging by letters of protest to the Executive Board, that more and more supporters of the administration are beginning to break with it and its policies.

Urges Local 22 Progressives To Include War Issue

New York City.

AS one who has been all his adult life a trade unionist and a progressive, and one who welcomes and agrees with every one of the points in the program of the Dressmakers Progressive Group of Local 22, I.L.G.W.U., published in your last issue, I wish to make a fraternal criticism of a serious deficiency in that program. No trade union today that has the interests of its members and of labor at heart, and no group of progressive trade unionists, has the right to be silent on the major question facing the organized labor movement and all American workers—the question of war and peace.

It seems to me that the progressives should work at least for the following things:

- 1. To keep this country out of war, since our entrance would mean a totalitarian military dictatorship in the United States, rising living costs, economic crisis, destruction of our inadequate and hard-won liberties.
2. Opposition to the proposed military-naval budget which is so big that it can have meaning only if the Administration is secretly preparing to plunge us into overseas war, and which proposes to cut down unemployment relief, farm relief, youth relief, etc., in favor of more battleships for what is already the world's largest navy.

Counts Declares C.P. Doesn't Sway Teachers Union

By GEORGE S. COUNTS

(We publish below an article by George S. Counts, "Is Our Union Controlled by Communists?" from the December issue of the American Teacher, official paper of the American Federation of Teachers. Dr. Counts is president of the AFT.—Editor)

PUBLIC charges have been made from time to time that the American Federation of Teachers is "controlled by the communists." Now the Dies Committee, for reasons of its own, has begun hearings on the affairs and politics of the union. The purpose, the moving forces and the consequences of this inquiry are by no means clear. Its pattern, like American life in general, is doubtless full of inconsistencies, contradictions and ambiguities. In this situation, amid the heat and passion of bitter partisan struggle, the maintenance of a calm and tranquil spirit is the counsel of wisdom. Nevertheless, we are under obligation both to the American people and to ourselves to make a clear and candid statement on the major issues involved.

It is true that members of the official Communist Party are enrolled in the American Federation of Teachers. It is also true that organized units of the party have operated in certain locals and in the national organization. Anyone at all familiar with the union, however, knows that the communists constitute but the smallest fraction of the total membership. On the other hand, because of their solidarity, their loyalty to the "party line," their tenacity of purpose, their unflinching zeal, their practice of anonymity and their methods of work generally, coupled with the indifference of many non-communist teachers, their influence always greatly exceeds their numbers.

In recent years, under the aegis of the "united front," they have seemed to achieve new heights of power. This achievement, however, the occasion of much self-congratulation on the part of party spokesmen, is essentially spurious. By outwardly abandoning many of their doctrines and deliberately advocating policies which they knew liberal-minded teachers would be inclined to support, the communists often deceived themselves into thinking that they were exercising the role of leadership when they were merely marching with the crowd. That they can actually deliver this crowd to any destiny of their own choosing has been proved false by the events of the last three months. The allegation that the party controls the Federation is clearly contrary to fact. At various times and places, along with other political factions and politically ambitious persons and groups, it has split locals by methods of manipulation, achieved a precarious temporary control in some communities, hampered the work of the national organization and driven teachers from the Federation. But to speak of control is to credit a boast which no sober communist would make unless he were reporting his successes in Moscow with the hope of being awarded the "Order of the Red Banner of Labor." The fact that, both as individuals and as an organization, they customarily resort to secrecy and anonymity reveals a deep sense of inadequacy and weakness. Openly working under the banners of communism, they would be quickly shorn of influence.

The American people, however, are entitled to know not only whether the communists control the Federation but also where the Federation stands on the entire question of totalitarianism. Although no official position has been taken formally on some of the points at issue, I am convinced in the light of innumerable

(Continued on Page 3)

Just Published! "In Stalin's Secret Service" By W. G. Krivitsky \$3.00 (including postage) WORKERS AGE BOOKSHOP 131 W. 33rd St., N. Y. C.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE



# Workers Age

Organ of the National Council, Independent Labor League of America, 131 West 33rd St., New York City. Published every Saturday by the Workers Age Publishing Association. Subscription Rates: \$1.50 per year; \$85 for six months; 5c a copy. Foreign Rates: \$2.50; Canada \$1.75 per year.

Entered as second class matter Nov. 5, 1934, at the Post Office New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879. Phone: LACKAWANNA 4-5282.

WILL HERBERG, Editor  
Editorial Board: Lyman D. Fraser, Jay Lovestone, M. S. Mautner, Bertram D. Wolfe, Charles S. Zimmerman.

VOL. 9. SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 1940. No. 3.

## ONCE IS PLENTY

LORD Lothian is British ambassador to the United States. Being an English gentleman, a noble lord and a British ambassador, he does not engage in propaganda. On dear no, certainly not! We must therefore assume that his recent address before the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations was just another piece of free advice to us on how to manage our affairs for our own good. The British ruling classes are rather distinguished for their big-hearted concern for other people's interests.

And what advice does Lord Lothian give us? With the appearance of off-hand candor that the British aristocracy carry so well, he assures us that the present war is just the latest round in the age-old struggle between the forces of light and darkness, between democracy and autocracy—autocracy being now known as totalitarianism. Britain, of course, is on the side of the angels, in the van of the forces of virtue and light and, the noble lord hints delicately but rather obviously, that it is the proper place for America as well.

Then the noble lord turns on his realistic, let's-face-the-facts manner. American security, he tells us, depends on British naval predominance. If we let Germany win in Europe, we're next. And then there's Japan in the Far East. . . . Obviously we just can't afford to leave good old England in the lurch.

Does his lordship suggest, then, that we should get into the war? Heavens forbid, no! That would be propaganda—and vulgar into the bargain. He merely indicates that it is our duty to ourselves and the universe to act in concert with the Allies. How far we are to go the noble lord graciously leaves to our own consciences and to what he calls the relentless march of events. How very nice of him!

The only trouble is, we've heard all that before. It may be irrelevant and not quite cricket to bring it up, but wasn't that line of talk tried on us in the years before we got into the world war in 1917? We tell you it in those days. We got into the war and helped the Allies win. What happened? Did we make the world safe for democracy? Did we "end war"? Not so you could notice it! The British and French bankers, industrialists and imperialists got theirs, in terms of territory, markets, resources, military power. But what did the American people get out of it? Several hundred thousands dead and wounded, billions gone up in smoke and shells, ten billions more in unpaid war debts, totalitarianism and war rampant throughout the world.

Now his Lordship wants us to bite gain. That may be all right for the big-business imperialists on Wall Street or the Administration warmongers in Washington, who have their own ends to serve, but the great masses of the American people will say in emphatic, unmistakable, rather vulgar terms: "Nothing doing, buddy! Never again! Once is plenty!"

## STALIN'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

LESS than a year ago, a big majority of the American people felt that Nazi activities in this country warranted more investigation and attention on the part of the Dies Committee than the activities of the Communist Party. Today, about 70% of the people who have an opinion on the question feel that Stalinist activities should get major attention from the government and only 30% believe that Nazi activities are more reprehensible.

These are the results of surveys made eight months ago and last month by Dr. George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion.

A reversal of public sentiment so swift and so sharp is of more than ordinary significance. Stalin and all he stands for are now detested by the great masses of the American people far more widely than Hitler and his system, whereas not so long ago the Nazi leader was the prize devil and Stalin got off comparatively easy. Poland and especially Finland changed all that.

This is Stalin's Christmas gift to his American adorers. We hope they appreciate it.

## AGAINST THE STREAM

(Continued from Page 1)

the press of the more reactionary section of the owning class leads the chorus of calculating anger. It will fall on the more active section of the working class in France and the United States long before it can reach the Kremlin. . . .

And the New York World-Telegram of December 20, 1939, in its leading editorial, captioned "A Hint to the Rich," treats us to the following:

"Those who have been loudest in their hate of communism have been the ones who have the most to lose. Now is the time for them to show their sentiments with something more than red faces and profanity.

"For the rich this is something in the nature of a bargain. They can get more than a dollar for every dollar subscribed.

"By a ruling of the United States Treasury, donations to such causes as Finnish Relief, Inc., are deductible for income-tax purposes up to 15% of total net income.

"A word to the wise and a hint to the rich are sometimes sufficient. And as an insurance proposition for the rest of the world Finnish Relief, Inc., looks like the best in our lifetime—regardless of your income bracket."

What more sinister call to the colors for all forces of darkness could one issue! We sound the alarm in the hope that it is not too late. When times are out of joint, it is best to walk warily, to watch one's step, to see not only where we are going, but to see who goes with us and with whom we go. Labor in our country and everywhere else must play an INDEPENDENT role and not form partnerships with capitalist reaction of any stripe, regardless of how extreme the provocation may be. This is vital if humanity is to go forward and not be plunged into a long period of stagnation, recession and reaction.

THE Berlin correspondent of the well-informed Stockholm paper, Svenska Dagblad, reports that Joseph Stalin has awarded or is planning to award to Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Order of Lenin.

By Rosa Luxemburg:

# The Nationalities Question

(We continue publication of Rosa Luxemburg's "The Russian Revolution," written in 1918 and now for the first time translated in full in English by Bertram D. Wolfe—Editor)

THE Bolsheviks are in part responsible for the fact that the military defeat was transformed into the collapse and breakdown of Russia. Moreover, the Bolsheviks themselves have, to a great extent, sharpened the objective difficulties of this situation by a slogan which they placed in the foreground of their policies: the so-called right of self-determination of peoples, or—something which was really implicit in this slogan—the disintegration of Russia.

The formula of the right of the various nationalities of the Russian Empire to determine their fate independently "even to the point of the right of governmental separation from Russia," was proclaimed again with doctrinaire obstinacy as a special battle cry of Lenin and his comrades during their opposition against Miliukovist, and then Kerenskyan imperialism. It constituted the axis of their inner policy after the October Revolution also. And it constituted the entire platform of the Bolsheviks at Brest-Litovsk, all they had to oppose to the display of force by German imperialism.<sup>9</sup>

One is immediately struck with the obstinacy and rigid consistency with which Lenin and his comrades stuck to this slogan, a slogan which is in sharp contradiction to their otherwise outspoken centralism in politics as well as to the attitude they have assumed towards other democratic principles. While they showed a quite cool contempt for the Constituent Assembly, universal suffrage, freedom of press and assembly, in short, for the whole apparatus of the basic democratic liberties of the people which, taken all together, constituted the "right of self-determination" inside Russia, they treated the right of self-determination of peoples as a jewel of democratic policy for the sake of which all practical considerations of real criticism had to be stifled. While they did not permit themselves to be imposed upon in the slightest by the plebiscite for the Constituent Assembly in Russia, a plebiscite on the basis of the most democratic suffrage in the world, carried out in the full freedom of a popular republic, and while they simply declared this plebiscite null and void on the basis of a very sober evaluation of its results, still they championed the "popular vote" of the foreign nationalities of Russia on the question of which land they wanted to belong to, as the true palladium of all freedom and democracy, the unadulterated quintessence of the will of the peoples and as the court of last resort in questions of the political fate of nations.

The contradiction that is so obvious here is all the harder to understand since the democratic forms of political life in each land, as we shall see, actually involve the most valuable and even indispensable foundations of socialist policy, whereas the famous "right of self-determination of nations" is nothing but hollow, petty-bourgeois phraseology and humbug. Indeed, what is this right supposed to signify? It belongs to the ABC of socialist policy that socialism opposes every form of oppression, including also that of one nation by another. If, despite all this, such generally sober and critical politicians as Lenin and Trotsky and their friends, who have nothing but an ironical shrug for every sort of utopian phrase such as disarmament, league of nations, etc., have in this case made a hollow phrase of exactly the same kind into their special hobby, this arose, it seems to us, as a result of some kind of policy made to order for the occasion Lenin and his comrades clearly calculated that there was no surer method of binding the many foreign peoples within the Russian Empire to the cause of the revolution, to the cause of the socialist proletariat, than that of offering them, in the name of the revolution and of socialism, the most extreme and most unlimited freedom to determine their own fate. This was analogous to the policy of the Bolsheviks towards the Russian peasants, whose land-hunger was satisfied by the slogan of direct seizure of the noble estates and who were supposed to be bound thereby to the banner of the revolution and the proletarian government. In both cases, unfortunately, the calculation was entirely wrong.

While Lenin and his comrades clearly expected

that, as champions of national freedom even to the extent of "separation," they would turn Finland, the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, the Baltic countries, the Caucasus, etc., into so many faithful allies of the Russian Revolution, we have witnessed the opposite spectacle. One after another, these "nations" used the freshly granted freedom to ally themselves with German imperialism against the Russian Revolution as its mortal enemy, and, under German protection, to carry the banner of counter-revolution into Russia itself. The little game with the Ukraine at Brest, which caused a decisive turn of affairs in those negotiations and brought about the entire inner and outer political situation at present prevailing for the Bolsheviks, is a perfect case in point. The conduct of Finland, Poland, Lithuania, the Baltic lands, the peoples of the Caucasus, shows most convincingly that we are not dealing here with an exceptional case, but with a typical phenomenon.

To be sure, in all these cases, it was really not the "people" who engaged in these reactionary policies, but only the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes, who—in sharpest opposition to their own proletarian masses—perverted the "national right of self-determination" into an instrument of their counter-revolutionary class policies. But—and here we come to the very heart of the question—it is in this that the utopian, petty-bourgeois character of this nationalistic slogan resides that in the midst of the crude realities of class society and when class antagonisms are sharpened to the uttermost, it is simply converted into a means of bourgeois class rule. The Bolsheviks were to be taught to their own great hurt and that of the revolution, that under the rule of capitalism there is no self-determination of peoples, that in a class society each class of the nation strives to "determine itself" in a different fashion, and that, for the bourgeois classes, the standpoint of national freedom is fully subordinated to that of class rule. The Finnish bourgeoisie, like the Ukrainian bourgeoisie, were unanimous in preferring the violent rule of Germany to national freedom if the latter should be bound up with Bolshevism.

The hope of transforming these actual class relationships somehow into their opposite and of getting a majority vote for union with the Russian Revolution by depending on the revolutionary masses—if it was seriously meant by Lenin and Trotsky—represented an incomprehensible degree of optimism. And if it was only meant as a tactical flourish in the duel with the German politics of force, then it represented dangerous playing with fire. Even without German military occupation, the famous "popular plebiscite," supposing that it had come to that in the border states, would have yielded a result, in all probability, which would have given the Bolsheviks little cause for rejoicing; for we must take into consideration the psychology of the peasant masses and of great sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, and the thousand ways in which the bourgeoisie could have influenced the vote. Indeed, it can be taken as an unbreakable rule in these matters of plebiscites on the national question that the ruling class will either know how to prevent them where it doesn't suit their purpose, or where they somehow occur, will know how to influence their results by all sorts of means, big and little, the same means which make it impossible to introduce socialism by a popular vote.

The mere fact that the question of national aspirations and tendencies towards separation were injected at all into the midst of the revolutionary struggle, and were even pushed into the foreground and made into the shibboleth of socialist and revolutionary policy as a result of the Brest peace, has served to bring the greatest confusion into socialist ranks and has actually destroyed the position of the proletariat in the border countries.

(Concluded in next issue)

8 The governments of Miliukov and Kerensky were two regimes preceding that of the Bolsheviks during the earlier months of 1917, after the downfall of the Czar. Both of these governments attempted to continue the war for the imperialist objectives of the old Russian Empire and denied the right of the national minorities to separation from Russia.

9 Brest-Litovsk was the town in which the representatives of Soviet Russia conducted peace negotiations with the representatives of Germany early in 1918.

**Letters from Our Readers:**  
**It Goes Back Farther**  
New York City  
Editor, Workers Age:  
It does not spoil your criticism of Mr. Frey's objection to political contributions by the trade unions but, for the record, it should be noted that the attempt on the part of vested interests to hamper independent political action by the unions in Britain did not start after the general strike in 1926 but goes back to the Osborne Judgment of 1908. This judgment stopped the unions from making political levies to support the Labor Party.  
The situation was remedied by the Trade Union Act of 1913 but exemptions were permitted for members who filled out the necessary declara-

# What You Can Expect

(This forecast of political trends is from the United States News, January 5, 1940—Editor)

ESSENTIAL trends in the period just ahead will be conservative. The President will suggest little new . . . will again put emphasis on the need for this nation to be united.

Congress will shy away from most new ideas, will edge toward the business viewpoint. . . .

Resulting outlook is for:  
Some change in the Labor Relations Act to modify employer opposition.

Some change in the Wage-Hour Act to ease the 42-hour week now applying to white-collar workers.

No new taxes to provide money for continued farm-subsidy payments.

No new experiments that might offend private industry and finance. . . .

# Court Decisions Show Big Powers of N.L.R.B.

## Disunity of Labor Ranks Multiplies Danger

(Continued from Page 2)

can the Board decide in every case the appropriate unit for collective bargaining but it can also decide which unions are to be granted a place on the ballot in a run-off election, and its decisions on these questions, not being final orders restraining unfair labor practices of employers, are not subject to appeal or review.

## GRAVE DANGER TO LABOR

Such a situation is obviously intolerable not only from the standpoint of general democratic procedure but above all from the standpoint of the freedom of action of the trade-union movement. An appointed three-man board is vested with apparently final power over wide areas of trade-union functioning. And arbitrary power, too: in the Chrysler elections, the Board decided that each separate plant was an "appropriate" unit, but in the Pacific longshoremen's elections, the entire coast was such a unit! As it is, the exercise of such arbitrary, undefined powers has already brought a growing accumulation of abuses and complaints; just imagine what such powers might mean in the hands of an anti-labor board operating as an agency of a reactionary, anti-labor administration!

It is easier to depict the dangers of the situation than to suggest remedies. The Supreme Court, in its opinion, hinted that the A. F. of L. might turn to Congress for relief:

"It seems to be thought that this failure to provide for a court review is productive of peculiar hardships, in cases where the interests of rival unions are affected. But these are arguments to be addressed to Congress and not to the courts."

But would amendment of the Wagner Act really solve the problem? It might be possible to modify the procedure of run-off elections so as to avoid the glaring injustice of the Consumers Power case. But what about the central problem of appropriate bargaining unit. At present, the Board can fix it at its discretion, and the exercise of that discretion has frequently been obnoxious to either the A. F. of L. or the C.I.O., and sometimes even to both at once. Shall the type of unit be fixed mandatorily by law? Then it is certain to be regarded as an oppressive imposition by either one or the other of the two national labor federations, depending on which way it is fixed. Grant the courts the power, which at present they do not possess, of reviewing administrative decisions that are not "final orders"? That might be advisable but it would solve nothing, for it would merely shift to the federal courts the ultimate power in such matters as fixing the col-

2 According to the press, the AFL is trying out another avenue of approach in the Pacific longshoremen's case. The new line of attack is apparently an equity suit in the federal district court charging that the Board injured the A. F. of L. union "unlawfully" when it certified the CIO union for the whole coast. What this line of approach will bring is still uncertain.

apologize in any way for Stalin's bombing of the civil population of the big cities of that country. They went to Spain to fight against the invasion of Spain by Germany and Italy because they firmly believed that every nation has a right to decide for itself the form of government it desires. They felt that Germany and Italy were interfering with that desire of the great mass of Spanish people and for that reason answered the call for help from Loyalist Spain.

The majority of the veterans believe that a strengthening and furthering of the democratic rights of humanity is the need of a world which is today on the brink of mass slaughter and totalitarianism. But they also believe that even if Soviet Russia had any of these democratic rights to give to Finland, it can't be given on the point of the bayonet and explosion of the aerial bomb.

We say with knowledge and a firm belief that the majority of the veterans of the late Spanish civil war are behind the Finnish people and labor movement in their struggle to maintain national independence against the "yellow imperialism" of Stalinist Russia.

**BILL HARVEY**  
**BOB GLADNICK**  
Veterans of the  
Abraham Lincoln Brigade

**SPREAD THE WORKERS AGE**

## SUBSCRIBE NOW!

# WORKERS AGE

I enclose \$1.00 for a year's subscription

\$1.00 per year \$ .65 for six months

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

## JUST OUT!

### KEEP AMERICA OUT OF WAR

By Norman Thomas and Bertram D. Wolfe  
\$1.50

WORKERS AGE BOOKSHOP  
131 W. 33rd St., N. Y. C.

**Lincoln Brigade Vets Protest**  
(In the New York Times of December 27, 1939, there appeared an editorial, "Helsinki and Barcelona," upbraiding the Americans who fought for Loyalist Spain with the resolution recently adopted by the convention of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade justifying the Russian bombing of Helsinki. This letter is the reply of two veterans who served with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade—Editor)  
New York City.  
Editor, Workers Age:  
WHEN the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade issues any resolution, you may be