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A National, Sane Labor Paper

True Confidence and Understanding Between Employer and Employee Absolutely Necessary to Industrial Peace.

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## Violence Only Begets Violence--Aimable Industrial Relationship Should Prevail

(James M. Lynch, former President of the International Typographical Union and former Industrial Commissioner for the State of New York.)

In one of these articles there was set forth an instance of extreme violence on the part of a union. Now it is proposed to record some of the violence directed against organized labor and its representatives by employers.

### Many Quarrels

There have been many bitter and relentless quarrels between capital and labor, disagreements that have left scars that took years to eradicate. Some of these scars will remain for years to come. Notable among these instances of violence by employers was that at Bisbee. Strikers were placed on cars and ordered out of town, others told to hike, all emphasized by the use of firearms. Women and children were not spared. That story engaged public attention for many months. The Bisbee mob defenders tried to justify the evictions. The old-time favorite excuse was made to do duty--the strikers and their sympathizers were guilty of violation of the law.

A labor dispute that was once nationally known came to an end recently. Its zone was in the northern Arkansas or Ozark mountain region. The strike began in February, 1921, when union men walked out in protest against a twenty per cent. reduction in wages, which the employer, the Missouri and North Arkansas railroad, then in the hands of a receiver, declared it was necessary if operations were to continue. About 450 employees and 365 miles of track were affected.

### Riots Not Uncommon

The strikers were charged with riot and depredations. A mob of 10,000 persons compelled officers of the four brotherhoods to leave Harrison, Ark. The railroad did not make much progress against the strikers, and so charging sabotage announced operations would have to be discontinued on account of the strike. The citizens several times sought to force the road to resume train service, and several strikers were arrested and prosecuted, but conditions did not grow any better.

The following spring another attempt was made to resume operations, after the strikers had refused to accept terms offered by the receiver. Interference with train service developed, however, culminating in January, 1923, in the burning of half a dozen bridges within less than a week. This was, of course, charged to the men on strike.

### Law Displaced

The citizens, thereupon, formed a "law and order league" and displaced the legal authorities. Open warfare was declared upon the strikers, and many of them and their sympathizers were publicly whipped. The town marshal of Harrison and his deputies were compelled to resign, and the marshal was ordered out of town. A citizens' committee of 1,000 took charge and began sending out for strikers for questioning.

Strike sympathizers asserted later that many of the members of this committee were brought to Harrison from nearby towns on a special train placed at their disposal by the officials of the railroad.

### Cases of Lynching

Some resistance was met in Harrison and a few shots were fired on the citizens' organizations when they invaded homes. C. C. Gregor, a striker suspected of burning bridges, was taken before the committee's "court." He declined to give information, or answer questions concerning other suspected men. The next day his body was found hanging from a railroad bridge.

The citizens' court declared it had nothing to do with the lynching of Gregor, asserting that an armed and masked band had taken him from the hall in which he was being held. Testimony later before a legislative investigating committee showed that Gregor was innocent of the specific bridge-burning charges against him.

The night that Gregor disappeared, a hotel owner and small-town capitalist, who had furnished bail for many strikers, charged with sabotage, was taken from his home and whipped. The night marshal, accused by the committee of being a strike sympathizer, was flogged and order to leave town.

### Forced to Leave Homes

Armed business men patrolled the town, while the citizens' court became an all powerful body, sitting as judge, jury and executioner of its own decrees. Nearly 200 persons were forced to leave the community; many strikers, their wives and children, left on foot, carrying what they could, in their hurry to cross the mountains and flee the section. It was return to work or get out for the most active of the strikers.

Similar committees were formed in other towns along the line of the railroad, and strikers in disfavor in these places also left, some after being beaten.

One of the earliest cases of violence was associated with a representative of the cigarmakers' union, commissioned to organize the workers in Florida cigar centres. He was most brutally treated and driven out of the state, dying shortly thereafter because of his injuries.

### No Place to Meet

In the recent steel strike the men affected could not hire halls in which to meet, and the police dispersed gatherings in the streets. The violence of the authorities in the steel towns directed at the strikers was notorious. The local courts sustained the police.

There are many hundreds of other cases of employer and official violence against the representatives of the unions engaged in organizing work. The non-union coal fields of West Virginia furnish a mass of evidence.

No attempt is here made to defend strikers guilty of violence or other crimes, but it is asserted that if crimes are alleged, then the procedure should be through the channels provided by the law. The employers or the mob have no right to supersede the legal tribunals.

### Bad Example Infections

A good example is contagious. A bad example is infectious. Let those who rail at the unions and charge them with violence ponder on the acts of employers resorted to in an effort to defeat a strike, and where women and children are not spared. The guillotine was not invented by the revolutionists. It was ready to their hand.

Violence begets violence. It takes many forms. Men on strike too often yield readily to provocation. Frequently they are taught in the employers' school.

There is a better way to promote amicable industrial relations and satisfactory conditions. It will not be reached through the denial of the right to organize.

## French Injustice in Occupied Territory

The I.F.T.U. Press Service publishes a letter from one of the many German comrades who have been condemned to long sentences of imprisonment for their conduct in connection with the Ruhr conflict. These comrades are still languishing in the French prisons for political offenders in Germany. The writer of the letter first gives personal information which we will not repeat, lest the defenceless victim should be identified, and should suffer for its publication. He then goes on to say: "I had been working little more than a month in Occupied Territory, when I was betrayed into the hands of the French. I was arrested while attending a meeting of the executive. I was accused of inciting the workers to strike, of paying out money. (I had only paid the families of our arrested officials their salaries, and that, of course, from union funds), and of an infraction of the passport regulations. I was condemned to four years' imprisonment. The sentences passed on the colleagues whose places I had taken, have, in some cases, been as long as 10 years. Seventeen of us received sentences which aggregated 96 1/2 years. The trials were conducted

broken. Later, we hope to be once more fighting shoulder to shoulder with our comrades against reaction and against anemic democracy.

"Dear friend and comrade! You will know best how to read and use these few lines; there is no need for me to use fine words and express fine sentiments.

"Remember me in the old way to all comrades."

## New Assault Upon Italian Trade Unions

In no country have the trade unions had so much to suffer in recent times as in Italy. The reactionary policy of the Government, and, still worse, the lawless violence of the Fascists and the Fascist trade unions, supported as they are by the Government and the employers, have already brought things to a terrible pass; but thanks to the canvassing for the recent elections, the situation has now gone from bad to worse.

The most violent and intemperate elements are now bringing all their forces into play against the unions. The Government itself has set the pace. This it has done by publishing in the official gazette the Ministerial Decree against the workers' organizations, which was discussed and approved as far back as September last. Such publication is equivalent to putting into practice, or until publication takes place, such decrees remain in a state of suspended animation. As so long a time has passed since it was approved, it would cer-

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ed in private; no German counsel was allowed, a single French lawyer having been appointed for the defence by the French court-martial.

"I have now been nearly a year in prison. I need not tell you, who are old campaigners, what that means: at 48 a man's powers of resistance are not what they are when he is younger. Besides the physical sufferings, there is the mental torture--the separation from wife, children and friends, and the necessity of looking on helplessly at the desperate struggles of the German working classes.

"After my father's death, my mother now 86 years of age, was left to face the world alone, with my crippled sister, who is 41 years of age, and absolutely helpless. I asked for a few days' leave to go to my father's funeral, and to help my mother and sister, but permission was refused by the French authorities; although one of my three grown-up sons offered to stay in prison as hostage for me during the days of my absence.

"There is no chance of a general amnesty for the Rhine and Ruhr prisoners. The French Government has recently made a statement to that effect, and we prisoners have been told so, also. France wants to keep her hold of us, her living mortgages, which she has seized. The number of political prisoners now in our prison is 86: they are officials of various ranks, and workers; six of them are labor leaders. The total number of the Rhine and Ruhr political prisoners is said to be about 2,000.

"The German Government recommends us to appeal individually to the French Government for pardon. Several of the prisoners in our prison have done so, but they have all been refused.

"Who and what can help us? The International Labor organizations, and the home and foreign press; possibly also questions in parliaments. Who will be the link between us and them? Who will appeal to justice and democracy against despotism and militarism?

"The Ruhr struggle ended six months ago. We surrendered unconditionally, but the victims of the struggle are still languishing behind prison bars; they are still being crushed both in body and mind.

"Why do I write this? To stimulate my dulled nerves, to give news of our sufferings to old friends. We do not complain; our hearts are hot with anger, our courage is still un-

tainly seem as if the putting of the decree into operation had been postponed until the moment when it could be used with the greatest effect, in the hope that the last remaining spark of freedom of opinion might thereby be extinguished. Hence it has been kept back until the moment of the elections. The Government is well aware that the Italian trade unions always confine their activities to their own sphere, and do not meddle with politics. In spite of this, its fear of their influencing the elections is the real reason for its renewing with increased intensity its policy of violence.

The new decree provides that all associations and corporations, of whatsoever nature, which derive their revenues from workers' contributions, and which furnish moral and material support to workers, shall be under the supervision of the political authorities of the province. This supervision may take practical shape on the most varied and vague pretexts, as, for instance, when the corporation is "under suspicion" of "abusing public confidence" when it "spends money to the prejudice of the members" for other purposes than the moral and material support of its members. If there is ground for any such suspicions, the provincial authorities may undertake a domiciliary visit; and they may even take over full control temporarily, entrusting the whole management of the offending association to the state commissary. This full control cannot be brought to an end until the Commissary in charge shall have sent in to the provincial authorities a detailed report on the situation. The authorities can then judge whether or not it is safe to allow the old officials to resume work.

Forcibly the authorities of Rome ordered an enquiry into the work and financial position of the National Landworkers' Union. The Commissary appointed by the Government then presented himself at the office of the organization Comrade Altobelli, the energetic woman secretary of the union (a member of the Executive of the International Landworkers' Federation), and Modigliani, the legal adviser of the union, duly protested against this illegal proceeding, and closed the office. The Commissary, however, obtained possession of the keys, and set to work to make an inventory of the papers of the union. This act has excited indignation among Democrat and Catholic as well as the unionists.

## Labor and War

By I. d'Aragona

(General Secretary of the Italian Federation of Trade Unions.)

Although great efforts have been made to give prominence to idealism and patriotic feeling in connection with the last war, no serious thinker can have any doubt that it was the result of antagonisms between the capitalist classes.

This view of the war is a clear indication to Labor of the path which it must pursue.

The antagonism between the interests of the various nations affects only the capitalist classes, and does not touch Labor; it sows discord between these classes, not between the workers. The capitalist classes incline towards nationalism, and use war as a weapon of offence and defence; it is for Labor to adopt internationalism as its slogan, and to seek to safeguard its interests through solidarity. This constitutes a very powerful reason why Labor should abhor the war; and it is reinforced, not merely by the purely humane sentiment which revolts from the horrors of war, but also by other very weighty arguments.

Temporarily at least, war between individual nations accelerates the intermingling of the various social classes within the borders of the countries engaged in it. When all classes take part in war, the result is co-operation in a destructive, and not a constructive sense. War modifies the struggle which under normal conditions Labor would wage in its own defence, and in the pursuit of its own aims against the capitalist classes. For this reason also war is opposed to the interest of Labor.

But there are other considerations. In time of war the other classes need not fear unduly the losses which the war must infallibly bring with it. They can console themselves with the hope that victory will bring them some desired position of vantage, will free them from foreign domination, or will make such domination impossible in the future. But whatever may be the issue of the war to the national of which it forms a part Labor will never reap from the advantages equivalent to the losses which it will suffer. For industry, victory may possibly win new markets or open up new colonial territories, so that there will be a greater demand for labor, and unemployment will diminish, and the wage level will be raised. But however high the estimate we may place upon these advantages, they are counterbalanced by the enhanced power of capitalism, against which Labor will once more have to take up its fight the moment the war is over. Other evils of war are the growth of militarism (an inevitable result of all war) and the financial and eco-

nomic burdens, which press much more heavily on the workers than on other classes, and invariably lead to a fall in their standard of living. All these are the inevitable accompaniments of war, and they all weaken the hands of Labor in its struggle for its own emancipation.

The recent war with its evil results (affecting the workers of all countries, victors as well as vanquished) affords very clear evidence of the truth of what has just been said.

We are not enemies of war in the sense of certain groups of pacifists, for whom the maintenance of peace is an end in itself, to which everything else must be subordinated. We are for ordered international relations, because such relations will help to promote other aims, and will foster the development of those forces which raise the social level of the workers and give rise to higher forms of civilization. The ebonds of international working-class solidarity are strengthened and the workers are rendered more acutely conscious of the class antagonisms which war, as already stated, tends to dull and destroy.

If we have not yet succeeded in preventing the terrifying growth of militarism in all the countries of Europe, if it is not yet possible to bring about a general cessation of the evil effects of the competition between the capitalist classes, let us at least draw one lesson from the horrors of the recent war, the results of which we shall feel for many a long year yet. That lesson is the following: "Let us help to eliminate all future causes of war." If we cannot succeed in doing this, our anti-militarist and international efforts will for any years to come be hampered by insuperable obstacles and we shall be exposed to fresh and very terrible for many years to come be hampered

In order to make our work successful, there must be zealous co-operation among all countries. In every land Labor must work for the same end; for only thus will it be possible to make the action taken in the individual countries sufficiently strong. We, to Labor if in one country it fails to recognize its duty. The result would be that all the efforts of the workers of other lands would be futile. The International Federation of Trade Unions must be able to rely upon the uniform and simultaneous action of the workers of all lands. Each National Federation must show its sister organizations its solidarity with them. The Labor movements of the various countries must endeavor, both directly and indirectly, to influence the foreign poli-

cy of their own country in the direction of agreement with other countries in order thus to avoid all causes of conflict which might lead to war. If the conflict has already broken out, and a war is in progress, it is not easy for Labor to inaugurate a movement towards peace. Confusion results, and the workers themselves. The workers must be vigilant and far-seeing, and must seek to kill the germs of war. But this is only possible when real practical influence can be exerted upon foreign politics.

## THE WORKERS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

As there is no Labor Party of any importance in the States, and the elections are completely dominated by the Democratic and Republican Parties, the workers lend their support at elections to individual candidates belonging to one or other of these two parties, who have shown their interest in Labor matters.

This year the American International Brotherhood of Bookbinders is inaugurating a great campaign in favor of George L. Berry, a Democrat candidate for the vice-presidency. George L. Berry is a typical example of an American self-made man. He began to earn his own living when he was only 8 years old. He worked successively as a gold-digger, railwayman, farmer, etc. He was sixteen before he could afford the luxury of learning to read and write. Soon after that he began to make rapid progress, and to-day he is the president of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America, which, under his leadership, has made notable progress. He has founded journals, established convalescent homes, managed large farms, and represented the American Federation of Labor and the American Government on many important missions. The chief plank in his political programme is the settlement of conflicts between employers and workers by means of arbitration.

## THE LATVIAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS

The Third Congress of the Latvian Trade Unions took place at Riga recently. The I.F.T.U. was represented by Secretary Sassenbach. 46 delegates took part in the congress; a proposal to admit representatives of the Left-Wing Trade Unions and to allow them a consultative vote having received only 14 votes. After unanimously approving the executive's report on activities, the Congress discussed the questions of taxation, the employers' attacks on the workers, and the best way of combating them, collective agreements, methods of organization, and changes in the rules. Nearly all the resolutions were carried unanimously, and the election of the new executive was also unanimous.

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