

THE sit-down strikes reached a new peak, both numerically and in effectiveness, during the week, with workers from coast to coast employing the militant new tactic. Despite these widespread strikes, however, the eyes of the nation were centered upon Detroit, where 200,000 automobile workers, aroused over the court eviction orders granted to the Chrysler Corp. last week against 6000 employees holding nine plants, waited determinedly for a general strike call. Adding fuel to the fire, Detroit police ignored the general strike threat and continued their eviction of workers from Chrysler and Hudson plants. Homer Martin, president of the Automobile Workers' Union, in a letter to Governor Murphy, demanded a square deal for the workers, and insisted that the Chrysler Corp. abide by the Wagner Labor Act. Murphy had previously been attacked by progressive union leaders throughout the country for his threat to use militia; his words reversed his stand in the first General Motors sit-down strike of a month ago.

With labor taking the lead in Detroit, workers elsewhere responded to the surge of militancy in dozens of cities and industries. A general retail store strike, excepting only food and drug shops, was won in Providence, R. I. The five-and-dime store strikes, which began in Detroit and Chicago a month ago and then spread to the Grand chain in New York, continued to grow, with Woolworth girls sitting down to demand a \$20-a-week minimum wage and a reduction in working hours. In one of the Woolworth stores, police arrested fifty-six strikers and three union officials. The C.I.O., guiding spirit of the sit-downs, opened its campaign to organize the million and a quarter textile workers of the nation. In New Jersey, workers at the Belber Trunk & Bag Co. belonging to the Suitcase, Bag, & Portfolio Workers' Union signed an agreement with the company, further advancing the C.I.O.'s inroads into New Jersey industry in the face of Governor Hoffman's threatened opposition.

IN New London, Tex., a mass of blood-covered bricks, and the dismembered bodies of almost five hundred pupils ranging in age from six to eighteen, were the monument and tomb of "the richest rural school in the world," which crashed when gas seepage from adjoining oil wells (owned by the Rockefellers) exploded. Doctors stated that only sixty or seventy of the injured pupils were expected to live. Gas odors had been detected in the building for many months, but there was no state law requiring periodic inspection of schools. At an investigation under way as this issue went to press, school officials admitted that a "tapped" gas line was responsible for the catastrophe.

Following this disaster, while mass burials were in progress throughout the stricken region, an announcement was made by the C.I.O. that its drive to organize the oil fields would be initiated at a meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Oil Field, Gas Well, & Refinery Workers' Union



Covering the events of the week ending March 22, 1937

to be held in Houston, Tex., on April 5. Preparations were under way for the creation of a staff of 200 organizers under the direction of the Oil Workers' Organizing Committee, set up by the recent C.I.O. meeting in Washington.

THE unparalleled wave of sit-downs was not without repercussions in Washington—and for the most part they were repercussions of an ominous sort. The Senate, which had been carefully avoiding the delicate subject, let loose a sudden flurry of denunciation when Senator Johnson (R., Cal.), out of a clear sky, warned darkly of the fascist menace. "The most ominous thing in our national economic life today," said the New Deal Republican, "is the sit-down strike. . . . If the sit-down strike is carried on with the connivance or the sympathy of the public authorities, then the warning signals are out, and down that road lurks dictatorship."

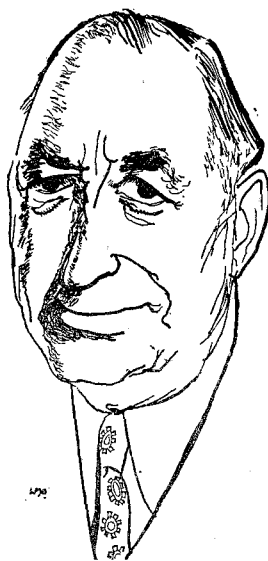
Seconding Johnson's veiled invitation to the administration to step in and smash the rising C.I.O., Senator Lewis (D., Ill.) asked: "Is the United States a government? If these strikes and protests against any and every form of order in society or government circumvent the due processes of peaceful government, what will be the end?" Answering his own question, Lewis predicted "an assault upon every form of peaceful government in Amer-

ica," and reminded the Senate that "in every hour such as this there awaits another Hitler and there lurks another Mussolini." Agreeing with his colleagues that the sit-down was "unlawful," Senator Robinson (D., Ark.) differed only on the question of blaming the administration. "Until the Supreme Court has passed upon the validity of the statute," he said, referring to the Wagner Labor Relations Act, "it is exceedingly difficult to make advancement."

Two days later a similar storm broke when Senator Ellender (D., La.) denounced John L. Lewis as "a traitor to American ideals and a menace to the peace and prosperity of the nation." To which Senator Borah retorted: "We cannot properly appraise that situation by considering alone the physical fact of workmen holding possession of property not their own against the proper owner. We cannot appeal for law and order, or appeal for the majesty of the law, to one sector of the economic circle. . . . If you have an economic system which gathers in the dimes and quarters and the half-dollars from the common people of the United States through artificial prices and pours them into the coffers of a few great corporations . . . you cannot maintain a healthy economic or financial condition in this country." Senator Black (D., Ala.) placed the blame for the sit-downs squarely on the shoulders of the Supreme Court, which he saw as an "insuperable, impossible obstacle to the passage of laws which would correct the abuses that have brought on the strike in Michigan."

OF more immediate significance than the senators' reactionary attempts to check the swift-moving C.I.O. was the authoritative report that important labor legislation has been prepared by the administration for submission to Congress when and if the President's court proposal goes through. The new program, said to have been worked out after a careful study of foreign labor laws, calls for a government appeal board to which both labor and employer would turn in the event of failure to reach an agreement. Should either side refuse to abide by the board's decision, recourse would be taken to publicity, with public sentiment expected to "afford some sort of punishment in the event the public found either side to be in the wrong." Several large employers are said to have been consulted in working out the details of the plan and are reported to be sympathetic. No important labor leader appears to have had a hand in framing the program.

High spots of the week's battle to enlarge the Supreme Court were surprise statements by two of the justices. Speaking extemporaneously at a small gathering, Justice McReynolds hit a new low for judicial intelligence when he attempted to reduce the issue to a question of "sportsmanship." With a majority of the Court committed beforehand to a program of blocking any attempt to relieve the misery of millions of Americans, McReynolds could only conclude that "a man who has had a chance to present a fair case to a fair tri-



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Chrysler—Won court ouster

bunal must be a good sport and accept the outcome." The second statement came from Chief Justice Hughes, who, in a letter to Senator Wheeler, declared that the President's proposal "would not promote the efficiency of the court." Hughes confined his comments to the question of efficiency, "apart from any question of policy," and stated that Justices Van Devanter and Brandeis concurred in his view. The Court came in for a strong denunciation by Justice Ferdinand Pecora of the New York Supreme Court. While praising the Roosevelt court program before the Senate Judiciary committee, Pecora took occasion to defend the sit-down strikers of Michigan. "Never forget," he told the committee, "that sit-down strikes in defiance of law originated in the lofty seats of high finance before the technique was merely copied by working men and women." The judge referred particularly to violations of the Securities Act and the flat refusal of employers to abide by the Wagner Labor Relations Act.

ONE more instance of the importance the administration attaches to the court program came in a statement by Secretary of Agriculture Wallace, who warned that the country was headed for another boom and another collapse, even more drastic than that of 1929. "I think very definitely," said Wallace, "that the government does not have sufficient power now to effectively mitigate the wide swings of the business cycle." Substantiating the secretary's warning was a statement of the American Federation of Labor to the effect that the "danger signals" of another depression were already flying, owing to the policy followed by industry of boosting profits and dividends while offsetting wage increases by higher prices.

The House of Representatives gave itself another black eye during the week by adopting the McReynolds neutrality resolution, which, if approved by the Senate, will play directly into the hands of the fascists in the Spanish struggle. "This bill creates nothing but a partnership with aggressor nations," Representative Maas (R., Minn.) told the House. "If our policy becomes general, it means that a few militaristic powers can gobble up the rest of the world. The passage of this bill will usher in the greatest rampage of militaristic conquests the world has ever seen." And Representative Bernard (F.-L., Minn.) attacked both the McReynolds bill and the Pittman resolution in the Senate as lumping together "the robber and the robbed, the murderer and the murdered." Nevertheless, the vote in favor of the resolution was 374 to 12, with only two of the House progressives sticking to their guns.

THE Mussolini myth of irresistible military prowess was punctured during the week by the panicky rout of four divisions of Italian "volunteers" on the Guadalajara front. For the first time, the fascist high command found it necessary to admit a "strategic retreat." But only a crushing defeat could ac-



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Pius XI—Dislikes Nordic myths

count for the "strategy" of leaving behind huge stores of war materials, including 2,000,000 cartridges, thousands of trucks, gas masks, and machine guns which were immediately turned on their former owners. Propaganda in the rebel trenches, superior air power, and the Garibaldi Battalion of Italian anti-fascists were given chief credit for the loyalists' victory. The latter not only recaptured all the territory gained by the rebels two weeks ago, but continued to push forward towards Sigüenza, chief insurgent base of operations in the entire region. London cables stated that Mussolini hurried home from Libya in order to spike final arrangements for the long-awaited blockade of Spanish ports so that he might rush reinforcements to avenge his injured pride. General Miaja, loyalist chief of staff, only made matters worse for the dictator's ego by making public a message sent by Mussolini to General Mancini, commanding the Italian "volunteers": "to crush the international forces will be a great success, especially in its political aspect," wrote Mussolini even as his legions were abandoning key positions. Added indications that anything but success, "especially in its political aspect," had resulted from this latest venture was British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's announcement that "urgent inquiries" would be made in Rome concerning official reports that Italy had violated the non-intervention agreement by landing "volunteers" in Cadiz on March 5, last.

EIGHT Puerto Rican nationalist leaders in Atlanta penitentiary proved that bars could not keep them from inspiring their people, thousands of miles away, to a demonstration which again put their cause on the front page. At least seven people were killed and about fifty wounded when police trained machine guns on the demonstrators in Ponce, second leading city in Puerto Rico. According to the official version, Mayor Ormes of Ponce granted a permit for the demonstration, but

Police Chief Enrique de Orbeta turned thumbs down; the nationalists, determined to attain the island's freedom from the United States, decided to go ahead with their plans. Spokesmen for the demonstrators claimed that the police were guilty of shooting into the crowd without provocation, and pointed to the fact that nobody opened fire until the demonstration had reached the heart of the city. It was added that the police would have stopped the demonstration at its inception had no provocation been intended.

"HERE speaks an illegal broadcasting station in Germany of the German Communist Party." Every night at ten, a high-powered radio station, heard throughout Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Germany, was reported broadcasting news about Spain, conditions in Hitler Germany, and the democratic tradition of Germany in the past. The station boasted that its broadcasts would be continued by another station if it was discovered and put out of business. This increase in Communist activity coincided with a renewed outburst of Catholic resentment against Nazi repression of religious belief. Pope Pius unexpectedly issued an encyclical charging that Nazis had violated the 1933 concordat with the Vatican and castigating the new fascist-encouraged "Nordic" mythology. The Pope's letter was read in practically all Catholic pulpits, though the Gestapo succeeded in confiscating a few copies of the message before it reached its destination. Hitler's personal mouthpiece, the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, struck back at the encyclical by hinting, rather broadly, that the Reich might break off relations with the Vatican. Communists and Catholics may be plaguing the Nazis from the outside, but there is also strong indication of dissension inside; Finance Minister Hjalmar Schacht was reappointed to his important post of president of the Reichsbank for one year instead of the usual four. Observers concluded that the Nazis did not want to have their hands tied for so long a period in case they soon decide to give Schacht the boot.

The stormy conflict between a People's Front demonstration and police at Clichy (see page 7) again put the dissolution of the fascist leagues on the order of the day in France. Communist deputy Maurice Thorez visited Premier Léon Blum in company with a delegation from the Left parties to press for the early end of the French Social Party, camouflaged substitute for Count Col. de la Rocque's Croix de Feu. As planned, 150,000 Paris workers went out on a general strike aimed at the fascists, not the government. "Enough blood spilled—we demand purification of the police and the administration," read one big banner. A printers' strike prevented de la Rocque from issuing his paper, but nothing prevented him from threatening Premier Blum with "immense uprisings" if the workers' demand for the dissolution of his armed gang were granted. It was considered doubtful that Premier Blum would take an early initiative towards this end.

Ireland's Easter Rebellion

The Irish Volunteers and the lads of the Red Hand of Ulster took to brother lead and sister steel in their defense against the tyrant Crown

By Blaine Owen

NIGHT in Dublin, April 22, 1916. A pair of Metropolitan Police stand silent in their heavy helmets, their brass buttons gleaming in the flickering carbon light which shines on a billboard behind them.

"Enlist!" scream the great letters of the billboard. "Save Catholic Belgium!"

Few people move about the streets of Dublin this night. The D.M.P. men move on slowly, swinging their batons, meet their sergeant, salute, move on again slowly. The quiet is unnatural, tense.

Three spots in Dublin are not quiet. In three scattered sections of the city, loud talk and strong words are being spoken behind locked doors.

Behind the barred windows of huge, gloomy Dublin Castle, General Maxwell strides up and down the great conference room in the natty uniform of the British army as he speaks to the gathered officers of the British Military Command and frock-coated Dublin Castle government officials.

An official paper lies on the table. "At last," they are saying among themselves, "we can go ahead." For the official document carries the order from London to disarm the Irish who have been defying his majesty's imperial rule, marching defiant through the streets of the city, and stopping trams and traffic for their parades.

Only half a mile away, across the River Liffey, Professor Eoin MacNeill strokes his reddish-gray, close-cropped beard, and speaks as commander-in-chief to the assembled leaders of the Irish Volunteers. Some shift in their seats, then rise and speak their minds.

"We've dallied too long," speaks up young Ned Daly, thin and stern. "And now," he says, "we must strike and keep faith with our men who have drilled for two long years, awaiting."

But the O'Rahilly shakes his head gravely. "MacNeill is right, boys, we've got to wait a while longer yet."

Decision and plans for strong action in Dublin Castle. Hesitancy, wavering, in Wynn's Hotel. Who then will sound the call to the people to go out and defend themselves against the order to disarm? . . .

FACING the riverfront, two quiet longshoremen stood before the narrow entrance of an old brick hotel, holding their rifles easily, their hat-brims pinned back with the Red Hand of Ulster insignia. Across the face of the building over their heads stretched a large sign: "We serve neither King nor Kaiser," the sign said, "but Ireland." Below this were the

words, "Liberty Hall. Office, Irish Transport and General Workers."

Inside, the broad shoulders of James Connolly threw a giant shadow across the marked and marred table where a draft of a "Proclamation of the Republic" was spread. Other leaders of the Citizens' Army clustered around, decisive, determined.

It was close to midnight when a small group of men marched up the riverfront and presented themselves to the sentries before Liberty Hall. "Volunteers," they said, and passed, Ned Daly in the lead, to take their places with the men inside.

All night they discussed, debated, and planned, these men of Ireland's army of the workers. The Citizens' Army, which they headed, had been formed three years before as a defense squad for the great Dublin Strike in 1913.

Guns had been smuggled to them by night from fellow-workers in other lands. Food had come to them from the mines and factories of England, Scotland, and Wales following Jim Larkin's "Fiery Cross" campaign. A righteous hatred of British oppression had been strengthened by a class hatred of the wealthy Irish allies of the Crown, when William Martin Murphy, the Heart of Ireland, had armed "scabs," and the Royal Irish Police had been sent against strikers.

Dawn of Easter Sunday saw three groups of messengers speeding from conference rooms. From Dublin Castle, Lancers galloped away carrying orders to captains and majors: "Disarm the Irish."

The O'Rahilly sped from Dublin by automobile, carrying the word for the priests of

the countryside to announce from the pulpits: "No Easter parade." This was the decision of Prof. Eoin MacNeill and most of his followers.

But from Liberty Hall, boys and girls of the Fianna (Irish Pioneers) ran out and cycled forth to the poorer sections of Dublin. Young Paul Reveres of the Citizens' Army, they carried the call to arms.

"We will march on Easter Monday," they said. "For Ireland."

This was not a quick decision of a handful of men, nor even a first step for freedom. Every generation in Ireland for close to two centuries had been stirred by desperate attempts to break the bonds of Britain's rule. Easter 1916 was a natural outcome of this almost continuous struggle.

TEN O'CLOCK in the morning, and sixteen hundred men stood about the union hall, gripping their guns, some of them laughing, some of them quiet and somber. Half wore the Sam Browne belts and the Red Hand of Ulster badge of the Citizens' Army. The others, mingled with them, wore the dark-green uniform of the Irish Volunteers and the round, bronze I. V. badge on their visored caps, the harp in the center.

Sean Connolly headed one column, waiting for the word to march. Jim came out of the hall, his round face haggard from the three days and nights of conferences and planning. "All right," he said.

Just then a small, dark-haired man broke past the guards calling, "Jim, hi there, Jim." It was a Jewish clothing worker, Wicks, who had taken the Easter holiday to come over from London and see his friend Jim Connolly. "What's up?" he wanted to know.

"We're going out to take a crack at the old empire," Connolly answered.

"I'm with you," Wicks came back. "Give me a rifle." And he dropped into line with the first column to march away, toward City Hall, Sean Connolly in the lead.

Seven blocks away, the rifles of the old empire blazed forth from the sentry boxes which flanked Dublin Castle, and little Wicks dropped face forward on the paving blocks of Paine Street. But Irish bullets answered quickly, and the column swung on to Dublin's City Hall.

The firing began in earnest on both sides, and the square was alive with whistling death. Suddenly a cheer went up from the doorways and windows about the square, and men paused in the act of loading or cocking just long enough to see Sean Connolly, standing



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