

LABOR-MANAGEMENT TODAY

INSIDE AMERICA'S INDUSTRIAL WORLD with LOUIS F. BUDENZ

This is the eleventh of a series of timely articles of labor-management relations by Mr. Budenz, former editor of the Communist newspaper, The Daily Worker, who has returned to the Catholic Church. He is now professor of economics at Fordham University.

XI: The Law and Labor

In the recently concluded strike of employees on the New York Stock Exchange a new and grim game was played. It might be called: "When is the Union Shop not the Union Shop?" And the answer might well be: "When it is assured by the Taft-Hartley Act."

This latest piece of legislation dealing with labor-management relations provides that the union shop shall not apply unless the majority of those working in a particular "organizing unit" vote for it. Thus we well know by now that the Wall Street walkout preliminaries revealed was that if this majority is obtained, and that is not too easy, then the union can only "demand" the union shop. The employers may still reject it, and the workers have no protection from the National Labor Relations Board.

THE EMPLOYEES of the New York Stock Exchange voted overwhelmingly for the union shop, but then without any further ado they voted to reject it. The employees may do this, and all the workers in the world may do this, but the provision does not increase the possibility of further friction between unions of management and labor.

It is only in the atmosphere of peaceful and calm co-existence in which this kind of half-down other provisions in the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 were written.

It may well be asked, as a matter of fact, "How can any sort of permanent, healthy relations in the labor-management field be obtained if the union shop is to be handicapped in this way?"

If the workers are not permitted to vote on union security, they will certainly not be able to give that cooperation in production which is so easily required by present conditions. Particular in view of the case when they have to pay wages in return for their cooperation in many in-

A Skeptic in the Holy Land

Study of Christ Led Him To Faith, Convert Editor Reveals

By T. EVERETT HARRE

How Fulton Oursler, famous editor, novelist and radio author was led to the Catholic Church is related for the first time in an article by T. Everett Harre in the current May issue of the Catholic Home Messenger, a national family monthly published by the Society of St. Paul, at St. Paul Monastery, Canfield, Ohio.

MR. OURSLER was received into the Catholic Church in the Spring of 1943. One of the most impressive conversions of an intellectual since that of G. K. Chesterton, another result of Mr. Oursler's becoming a Catholic is his recently published book The Precious Secret, a spiritual, psychological and scientific interpretation of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount as applicable in present-day life. His life of Christ, The Greatest Story Ever Told, on which the radio broadcast is based, will be published next Fall.

Excerpts from Mr. Harre's article in the Catholic Home Messenger follow:

"Born in Baltimore January 22, 1893, of Baptist parents and baptized at the age of ten in that sect, after two years study of law becoming a reporter on the Baltimore American Fulton Oursler went through varied metamorphoses in editorial and writing experience until at the age of 38 he became editor-in-chief of Liberty and editorial director of eleven magazines in the group of the MacFadden Publications having a combined circulation of 16,000,000 copies a month.

"Gifted with an exceptional capacity for work, besides his job of editing, Oursler wrote sixteen novels, two biographies, six plays.

"In his writings Oursler revealed an understanding of the complexities of human nature, a sympathy for its weaknesses and faith in its highest potentialities.

"But he had long forgotten his

states and in the United States courts as the unquestioned rule.

For more than one hundred years, then, there has been no challenge to the legality of the labor organizations as such. But we know very well that large employing interests all through the intervening years could not be made to respect that legality. Hence, the basis for the tooth and claw warfare which existed so long in the labor field.

THE EMPLOYING interests held two weapons in their hands — their superior economic power and the fact that the operations of the law were favorable to their efforts against the unions.

It is true that as early as 1893 the state of Indiana had sought to curb these anti-union activities by the adoption of a famous statute. This made it unlawful for any firm or its agent to prevent employees from forming unions and made it equally unlawful "to exact a pledge from workmen that they will not become members of a labor organization as a consideration of employment." Thus, the "yellow dog contract" was thereby made illegal as well as coercion of any sort to keep a worker from joining a labor organization.

But that law was unoperative because the United States Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional in the noted case of Coppage vs. Kansas. It was then, passing upon a Kansas statute similar to that previously adopted in Indiana that

the Supreme Court drew upon the Fourteenth Amendment for the defense of the corporate and employing interests. That amendment, designed to protect the rights of the freed Negro slaves, was said to protect the right of the corporation to require the signing of anti-union contracts. Otherwise the "liberty" and "property" of the corporations would be interfered with, declared the Supreme Court.

IN 1917 CAME the decisive case between the United Mine Workers and the Hitchman Coal and Coke Co., in which the Supreme Court gave the title of legality to the "yellow dog" contract even when oral in character. The anti-union contract and the injunction based upon it now became the familiar methods for crushing most attempts at self-organization by the working people.

That did not bring peace nor did it contribute to the increase of production on any assured basis. Labor fought and labor organizers went to jail and strikes blazed up and working forces sulked until the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 made the injunction in labor disputes "practically" impossible. That was the forerunner of the National Labor Relations Act.

With the adoption of that measure the junglelike character of the contest did change. Some may greet that statement with a large share of doubt. They who do that have forgotten too soon the conditions brought out in the La Follette reports in a general comparative few years ago.

It will have to be readily admitted that the Wagner Act did not halt strikes. The second world war and the cooperation around the National War Labor Board did more than anything else toward that end for the duration of the military conflict. With the coming of V-J Day, however, open battle between the unions and big management broke out in intense fury and went on into the year 1946.

Blame was thus put on the Wagner Act as being too favorable to labor. Within the various states law after law hampering labor organization was adopted. And in the nation the Labor-Management Act (Taft-Hartley Law) became law under the plea that a better balance had to be established.

A symbol of this was the addition to the unfair labor practices protecting labor of a new series of unfair labor practices defending the employer.



FULTON OURSLER "I was an unbeliever..."

boyhood faith in God. "How a chance visit to the Holy Land where Jesus had walked and talked in His earthly life a visit that came in the course of a Mediterranean cruise without object except to enjoy a vacation led him back finally to his conviction of the reality of Jesus, the very authenticity of Christianity, cannot be better told than as Fulton Oursler himself related it to me.

"FOR NEARLY thirty-five years of my life I was an unbeliever," said Oursler. "I disbelieved in the existence of Jesus Christ. Whom I considered the figure of a beautiful myth, and in Christianity, which I regarded

as based upon mere legends. At the age of 45, a kindly skeptic as it were, I had absolutely no religious faith.

"After ten years of arduous work in editing, writing editorials, stories and articles, and producing ten novels and six plays, deciding upon a three months' vacation, my wife and I planned a winter cruise to the Mediterranean leading to the Near East and finally the Holy Land. We sailed from New York in February 1935, taking with us our two children, April, aged 9, and Tony, aged 3, and a governess.

"From all I had previously read in newspapers and travelogues, I'd got the impression that the Holy Land was a place of cheapness, fake shrines and commercialization. Well, I found that wasn't so for me. As we followed the historic trail of the footsteps of the old Biblical prophets and of Jesus and His disciples, the old story became alive.

"I HAD COME to the Holy Land with the feeling that nothing there I was still a doubter, but with what a change! My feeling was that, oh, how I wish this were true!

"When I got back to New York I sat down and quickly wrote a book, A Sceptic in the Holy Land. By the time I finish the last chapter, I was really no longer a sceptic. Then I decided to write a life of Christ for Biblical literates, whom I ascertained numbered one-half of the population of the United States.

"In preparation for my intended book I started a research that, in the course of three years, included the reading of over one thousand volumes dealing with Jesus and the development of Christianity, ranging from modern books to the writings of the earliest Church Fathers. The more I read backward, the more I began to feel that the story was true. My research convinced my mind of the truth of what my visit to the Holy Land had caused me to wish. At times I wondered whether I had come under some kind of spell. So I decided to make a test.

"In 1938 I started back to the Holy Land. There I was able to visit all the old places, so much more vivid to me now because of my researches. Following the trail from Bethlehem to Calvary, covering the scenes from His birth to His death, I saw the signs of Christ everywhere. I became on fire with conviction of the truth of Christianity.

"I RETURNED home resolved to start my book on the life of Jesus and began the writing early in 1939. I thought I could write such a book in a year. It was to take me ten years to do.

"I hadn't written more than one-third of the book, covering the early years of Christ's ministry, when I got to feel I must become a Catholic. All my readings, all that I'd come to feel, had convinced me of the historical authenticity and spiritual validity of the Catholic faith. After over a year's instructions, I was received into the Catholic Church in the spring of 1943.

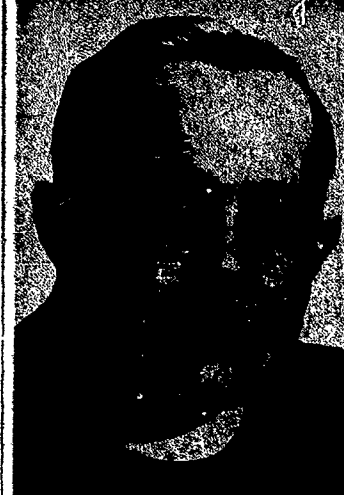
"For confirmation at St. Francis Xavier's Church I was the only adult in a class of a hundred boys and girls. On the Sunday before Easter in 1943 the confirmation ceremony was performed by the Most Rev. J. Francis A. McIntyre, then Arch-bishop of New York. Having gone through instructions and been baptized before, by 1943, old Tony was in the confirmation class and what an added joy it was! — was received into the Church with me."

"Oursler has been for four years religious editor of Reader's Digest. This coming summer he will be heard on the air in a series of talks for the Sunday evening Catholic Hour."

The question that has to be answered now is: "Do all the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Law attain the end intended?" And in the provisions dealing with union security, the proper answer seems to be: "No."

NEXT WEEK: "Future of Labor-Management Relations." Copyright, 1946, by Courier-Journal

C.P.-A. Speakers



Delegates to the 38th annual convention of the Catholic Press Association, at Cleveland, May 20 and 21, will hear the Rev. William J. Smith, S.J., (upper photo) founder and director of Crown Heights Associated Activities, Brooklyn, discuss "The Basic Problem in Industrial Relations." Dr. Wilhelm Solzbacher (lower photo) research secretary for the Center of Information Pro Deo, New York, will speak on "Secularism and the Christian West." (NC Photos)

A Look at Labor Wages and Prices

By A. C. Tuckey

NAGGING WIVES have achieved quite a reputation in this country. The husband complains. The neighbors complain. The children complain. "Why doesn't that woman leave that man alone?" For leave that man alone? For the wife can be heard bawling at her husband. She can be heard, so she is blamed for the trouble.

The husband, however, even though he is a "street angel," may be a "house devil." He may not give enough money to the wife to run the home. He may not be a good companion.

But his faults are hidden. His wife can be heard. She is blamed.

CURRENT LABOR strife is everywhere in evidence. Workers are already on the picket lines or are soon to march. There will be a great deal of noise, a lot of publicity. Perhaps, there will be a fight. The police may bash a few skulls.

Like the proverbial wife, organized labor is going to be blamed. Labor can be seen and heard. Management works behind locked doors. Management in this case, is a street angel.

The high cost of living explains the reason why labor is now on the march for a third round of wage increases. Why has the cost of living gone so high? In part, because we are still in a "seller's market." This means that there is more money in circulation than there is goods. A producer can still charge \$3,000 for a \$2,000 car and get away with it.

Is labor responsible for this condition? The National Association of Manufacturers by itself was responsible for the complete abolition of price controls. Organized labor and the government in 1946 felt that some controls should be maintained.

The argument of the N.A.M., however, seemed compelling to Congress. It was this: "Let competition and the law

of supply and demand operate. Prices will be high for awhile. But in a few months prices will come down. Free enterprise will see that they come down."

BUT PRICES have not come down. The law of supply and demand has not operated in the way the N.A.M. or Congress said it would.

In the meantime, many American families have been pinched by rising prices. Organized workers have not suffered as much as the unorganized white collar employees, because they are strong.

Walter Reuther spoke for millions of salaried employees when he said last year: "How long do the American workers have to go hungry waiting for competition to work?"

Organized labor wants two things: "First, it wants enough wages to meet the rising cost of living. Secondly, it does not want to give up the higher standard of living which it has enjoyed since the war. What family wants to give up the refrigerator, the radio, the roller top, which it has been able to enjoy since 1940?"

MANAGEMENT in the other hand, is now saying that prices are too high. They must come down. But they must come down at the expense of wages. Any demand that profits be cut is dismissed as "un-American." Some enter prices have cut prices, but the price cuts have been insignificant. They do not compare with the increases the same company have made in the past year.

The main value of these price cuts to the corporations is that they become a good public reason for denying further wage increases.

Collective bargaining is now going on. It is not the union leaders alone who are asking for increased wages. Rank and file workers are putting pressure on their leaders for more money.

What the unions are asking can be read in the public press. What management says in return is known only to those who sit in smoke-filled rooms in the General Motors Building in 1946 one witness before a Congressional Committee reported: "When you get hungry enough you can come back on our terms."

Best Sellers

- A moral evaluation of current books, published by "Best Sellers." The University of Scranton, Scranton, Pa. I—Suitable for any class of reader: A Catholic Reader—Brady, Fire Stewart, A Russian Journal—Steinbeck, I Saw Poland Betrayed—Lane, Image of His Maker—Brenner, Jim Farley's Story—Farley, Lost Boundaries—White, No Trumpet Before Him—White, Pilgrim's Inn—Gaugle, So You Want To Get Married?—Grant, The American Past—Butterfield, The Blank Wall—Holding, The Dry Wood House—Lander, The Great Rehearsal—Van Doren, The Hour of Spring—Deasy, These Neumann—Schimberg, Three Generations—Burton. II—Suitable for ADULTS ONLY because content and style too advanced for adolescents: Communism and Conscience of the West—Magr. Sheen, House Divided—Williams.

- 'America's' List Of Best Sellers: These Neumann Schimberg, Our Lady of Fatima—Walsh, Our Lady of Light—Barthas, Glory of The People—Simon, Communism and Conscience of the West—Magr. Sheen, Pardon and Peace—Wilson, The Dry Wood House—Lander, Michael, A Tale of the Masterful Monk—Ludley, This Tremendous Lover—Boylan, Behold This Heart—Heagney.

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