

**A. C. W. Convention**

# Hillman's Record for Toronto

It is now over five years since the Right wing has been in complete control in the Amalgamated. Have conditions of the workers been improved? No! Conditions in New York are worse today than ever. The clothing workers work under the most inhuman conditions. Hillman went a step further than "standards of production", and reductions in wages. With the aid of local politicians he forced piece work on the New York tailors, although the workers rejected it at meetings. The liberal and socialist press hailed this move as a victory for the workers.

The Times not long ago carried an article by Louis Stark: "Amalgamated union and employers celebrate this week the success of the 'impartial machinery' which has improved industrial relations and settled disputes."

**Hillman's Kind of Labor Unity**

"Next Wednesday evening the New York Clothing Manufacturer's Exchange will be host at a dinner to about 1,000 engaged in the manufacturing of men's clothing, leading officers of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and a group of distinguished guests interested in human relations in industry.

"The dinner will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the founding of the impartial machinery of the men's clothing industry in New York under the chairmanship of Jacob Billikoff, economist, social worker and pioneer in industrial relations.

"Without strikes or lockouts the impartial machinery, sometimes called 'a laboratory of human understanding', has functioned smoothly and efficiently because the union has embraced the labor view of constructive rights and responsibilities to industry and because the employers have welcomed such a constructive cooperation.

"The discussion on the question of piece work continued for three years during the course of which the inadequacies of the system of production standards became apparent to both sides. A year and a half ago the union consented to the revolutionary step of going on a piece work basis." (See the New York Times, Special Features, December 1, 1929).

"This article by Louis Stark shows that the Amalgamated officers together with the employers celebrated the victory they had achieved at the expense of the workers. Yes, the Amalgamated doesn't believe in strikes any more. The impartial machinery works smoothly and efficiently. This is true. For whom? For the bosses! Yes, the employers have welcomed Hillman's constructive cooperation. It pays the employers. I agree with Louis Stark when he said Hillman's union "consented to the revolutionary step of going on a piece work basis." Have the workers given their consent? No! What the employers could not get when they fought the Amalgamated for 26 weeks in 1921, they got through Hillman's good will and constructive leadership. It is no wonder that Hillman gets medals from capitalist institutions while the workers get matzohs for Passover.

Not long ago I saw a circular sent out to the clothing workers by the three largest local unions, 5, 3 and 2, signed by the secretaries and local officers. In the circular they stated, "Brothers, arise! do not stand aside. A movement to lift the tailor from his deplorable conditions began through the united three Jewish Executive Boards. The time is not far distant when our trade will be lifted up again to the extent that we could with pride recall the name 'Amalgamated' in the city of New York. We need your help and cooperation."

These local unions have been controlled by the Right wing for the last few years since Hillman began his expulsion policies. These local officers helped Hillman to force on the workers the piece work system. These charlatans who are responsible for the present conditions because they helped Hillman to bring about these miserable conditions, ask the tailors for help and cooperation.

Moreover, letters can be seen daily in the Right wing press, the Forward and the Day, about the intolerable conditions piece work brought to the workers. I will quote one half of a letter. "I was a long time a member of the Amalgamated. A lot of workers know me well. I was one of the best workers and earned a good living. But when the union began her business ventures, and neglected the union, I could no longer make a living, and had to leave New York.

"Now I am in a small town of 1,500 inhabitants, only Gentiles. I am the only Jew. If I were in New York today, with the Amalgamated, I would surely be in the same position and would need relief for Passover. I am very sorry that they made a beggar out of the tailor." (The Day, March 26, 1930). These facts prove what Hillman and his henchmen made out of the Amalgamated under their regime. Hillman not only destroyed the best of the workers in the Amalgamated, he destroyed its very soul.

The only ones who are making a living in the Amalgamated today are the staff, the editors and the boosters (I mean the pen slaves).

The outside world and the intellectuals still consider the Amalgamated a radical and progressive organization. Where do they get their information? They go to lunches, and dinners given by the employers in conjunction with the union officials. They interview Hillman, Billikoff, the president of the Clothing Manufacturers Exchange, etc. This is how they get their information. Then they edit journals and claim they give their readers facts, that they are the authorities on labor problems, also on research work. How can these people give facts when they were never in a shop, and never investigated conditions? These professors or economists merely repeat what one person, Hillman told them when they dined together. At least they should go into a few shops and interview employers and workers alike. If not they ought to go into different union offices where workers assemble, talk to them, hear their grievances and sentiments. This I would call facts and research. Otherwise they deceive their readers when they say they give them facts. This stuff they give their readers is fake, not facts.

Did Hillman ever tell his publicity agents about corruption and graft that is going on in his organization? A few months ago Hillman removed Harry Cohen with his gang for taking graft. Hillman just discovered that Harry Cohen is a crook. I mentioned with quotations (see last Militant) from the Advance that Cohen was tried and condemned by a committee for taking checks. Who took H. Cohen back into the Amalgamated to sell out the worker? Hillman took him back. H. Cohen sold cotton and unionism to the clothing manufacturers. Nevertheless, without returning to the trade, Cohen was installed once more on the union payroll within a short period after the Chicago Convention. During the Cohen affair in 1921 Hillman at a meeting in Manhattan Lyceum said, "H. Cohen can never come back into the organization without stepping over my dead body." Schlossberg said he would resign before he would sign pay checks for H. Cohen. You can see how they kept their promise. Are they doing it for principle?

After seven years of taking graft and helping to destroy the New York organization, Harry Cohen was again removed with his staff for taking graft. H. Cohen ignored the summons and did not appear before the committee. The question is, why did not Hillman try these grafters? The answer must be that Hillman did not want the outside world and those intellectuals to know how much dirt there is in the Amalgamated. H. Cohen left enough grafters in the union to go on with their work without fear. J. B. Hardman, the pen slave, writes about cleanliness in the Amalgamated. Can you beat it? Do the liberal

and intellectual boosters know anything about it?

The ninth biennial convention will be held in May, in Toronto, Canada. What are the achievements the Amalgamated can show for the last few years? The publicity agents, the pen slaves, will do their best for their masters. They will show the wonders the Amalgamated has done in the Philadelphia campaign and the unemployment insurance which Hillman's union brought the workers for the last few years. Let us examine the Philadelphia situation first.

What have the workers gained since the Amalgamated came into Philadelphia? The Amalgamated press and the boosters could not show what the workers gained. When I was in Philadelphia I met a former manager of the Amalgamated in a restaurant, for the last few years a manager for the clothing manufacturers. He took an active part in the Amalgamated campaign in Philadelphia and made a dollar or two. I asked him how it was possible to organize the Philadelphia market. He answered, "The Amalgamated spent over a million dollars and we made the workers join the union." I asked him what have the workers gained by it? He answered again, "Fool, don't you know the Amalgamated must convince the employers it will pay them to deal with the union?" I asked him, How will the Amalgamated get back the money they spent? "Through dues and taxes," he answered. Now I understand what the workers in Philadelphia gained: the check-off system, speed up and efficiency which will throw a few hundred workers out of the shops.

What about unemployment insurance? Well, unemployment insurance is a good thing but the way it is conducted in the Amalgamated is only of use to the crooks, not the majority of the workers. I will cite a fact and let the pen prostitutes of the Amalgamated deny it. In New York, each local received a sum of money to pay out to the workers in unemployment insurance. So Harry Cohen's gang received \$5,000. They paid out \$5,000 to all the workers and took \$3,000 for themselves. Do you see how smoothly things work in the Amalgamated? These are the achievements with which the union comes to the Toronto convention.

Hillman comes to the Toronto convention when thousands of workers are suffering from unemployment. The best workers have been expelled or squeezed out through Hillman's "efficiency". There will be no opposition at this convention because all opposition was crushed by Hillman and because the Left wing had either a bad policy or none at all.

No opposition, except the rivalry between Beckerman and the Forward gang on the one hand and the Hillman machine on the other. The serious business of the convention is to be a "new balance of power" between these rivals.

What can the workers expect from this convention? Nothing! The boys and their guests will have a good time at the expense of the tailors, playing whoopee, banqueting and boozing. It is the after-convention period that is important for that is when the Left wing will again be confronted with the need of organizing for the fight. Let the lessons of the past be our guide to the future. —A. SCHNEIDER

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## THE WEEK

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Hughes, a Negro, in the local court house vault. Like the National Guard and State Militiamen in other states, the Texas Ranger are always available at a moment's notice, with pistols, machine guns and tear bombs, to charge into the ranks of workers striking or fighting for a minimum living standard. That is what they exist for: the defense of bosses "law" and the "order" of capitalism. But when bloodthirsty monsters are on a lynching bee, the law-abiding Rangers—if they are on hand at all—exercise their book-sworn duty by seeing that the savage mob conducts the lynching in as quiet and undisturbed a manne as possible. Needless to add that

nobody will pay the penalty for the barbarous murder. Lynching is not only the approved "extra-legal method of the Bourbon South, but also of democratic Massachusetts and pioneer Washington. George, Hughes, Wesley Everest, Sacco and Vanzetti are all victims of an identical capitalist justice. The greater brutality of the South is provoked by the anxiety of the Southern bourgeoisie to keep the Negroes terrorized in order to prevent them from coordinating their enormous potential strength for the overthrow of wage slavery. Better than the white worker, the white masters know the Negro can be our strongest ally in struggle. A common, bitter struggle of white and Negro labor against the horror of lynching and Jim Crowism therefore, is imperatively necessary.