

After the A. C. W. Convention

It is three months since the convention of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers was held in Toronto. Are the clothing workers better off today than before the convention? The answer of the workers will be, No! The conditions of the workers are becoming worse day after day.

Let us analyze for a moment what happened at the convention. The writer, in a series of articles in the Militant last May, foretold not to expect anything from the convention, because the rank and file were not represented there.

Convention Accomplishment

What did the convention accomplish except banquetting and boozing? The convention was opened with "God Save the King" and the "Star Spangled Banner." Then came greetings and praise from the chiefs of the organization for not having a militant Left wing opposition present. There was not a single delegate at this convention who had the guts to take the floor and challenge the present administration for the deplorable conditions of the workers. Everything at this convention was decided unanimously.

There were two cliques at the convention, which fought for control of the New York organization: the Forward-Beckerman clique and the Hillman clique. Both fought to keep the workers in submission. When the question of the New York organization came before the convention, Beckerman took the floor and made a speech. He showed how the workers in N.Y. suffer, and that the organization is in a critical condition. There was no one to laugh at him, and it would be proper were not the conditions of the tailors so tragic. This is the man responsible for most of the evils in the N.Y. organization, such as the introduction of piece work systems, reductions in wages every season, throwing workers off the job, blackjacking them, etc., and he was the one to oppose the administration. This was merely a political maneuver. Beckerman's speech proved one thing; he was compelled to admit that the workers in New York suffer and work under the most inhuman conditions.

It did not take the shrewd politician, Hillman, long to patch things up and make peace between the two cliques and divide the spoils among them. With this the opposition came to an end.

The convention went on record for life insurance, which means the protection of the workers when they are dead, not when they are alive. The convention also went on record for the 40-hour week, an organizational campaign in every center, and the strengthening of the New York organization. Has Hillman made any attempt to carry through these decisions? No!

The New York Lock-out

In the New York organization, a serious situation developed. Three branches of the industry were locked-out: canvas makers, kneepants makers and children's jacket makers. The employers asked a reduction in wages from the already meager earnings of the workers. Hillman, instead of mobilizing the workers for a strike and demanding the 40-hour week, the abolition of piece work, production standards and reduction of wages, is doing everything in his power with the aid of his paid agents to send the workers back to work with reductions in wages.

Who is responsible for the lock-out of the jacket makers? Max Kaplan, the manager of the contractors' association. This man was expelled years ago from local 12 for being a scab agent and breaking a strike of the Journeymen's Tailors' Union. He was exposed in Hillman's office and Hillman has been dealing with him for the past few years (see *Fortschritt*, official A.C.W. organ of August 11, 1916, page 3.) The Amalgamated fought a lockout for 26 weeks in 1920-21 and Hillman refused to negotiate with the manufacturers' association until lawyer Gordon was withdrawn. For the past few years now Hillman has been dealing with a scab agent.

Is it to be wondered at that the workers have to yield reductions and production and starve under such a bunch of parasites that call themselves union officers? What have the pen-slaves and professional boosters to say about this?

Were Hillman sincere and interested in the suffering of the workers he would declare a general strike and help improve the workers' conditions. But Hillman's union is kept up with the aid of the employers. How can he proceed against the interests of the employers? Although the last three conventions have gone on record for the 40-hour week, Hillman has never made any effort to carry the decision through.

Hillman, you know, is a democrat, a wise statesman, an intelligent leader, a respectable banker. He doesn't believe in calling strikes. We in the Amalgamated are better off than the workers in the other needle trades. We only work 20 and 30 hours a week due to Hillman's efficiency and speed-up system. In reality, the workers in the contracting shops work 46 and 47 hours a week, and the officers of the Joint Board know about it.

The "Organizational Campaign"

What about the organizational campaign? Hillman will surely show wonders, just as he did in Philadelphia where the workers were forced to give a reduction of from 20 to 40 percent under the union agreement. We reproduce here a letter from the Toronto firm of Wm. H. Leishman and Co., signed by president John I. Mills, and dated May 6:

"From investigation, it appears that quite a number of our group are desirous that our shop be a Preferential Union Shop. We have given a good deal of thought to this proposition and have come to the conclusion that to avoid serious disturbance, it is advisable that we carry out your suggestion by entering into an agreement with the Union and subscribe to the Market Agreement now in force with the greater majority of the Toronto manufacturers....

"We have arranged with the Union that the reduced rates offered our Group will be available to any or all of our employees who wish to join them at this time. You will realize that in order to be employed

Maurice Malkin Stands with the Opposition!

Maurice Malkin, now serving a sentence in Comstock prison for his activities in the furriers' strike of a few years ago, was the first rank and file worker to rally to the banner of the Left Opposition upon its expulsion from the Party. His incessant agitation and general activity for our movement was a source of permanent irritation to the Party bureaucrats. They tried to end his activities by gangster methods, but without success. It was only after comrade Malkin was sentenced and had already begun to serve his term that the Stalinist clique began to exert a different kind of pressure upon him.

In October, 1929, the *Daily Worker* triumphantly published a statement allegedly written in prison by comrade Malkin, in which he was to have repudiated the Opposition and returned to the Stalinist camp. We wrote at that time, in the face of this "repudiation" that Malkin had been an Opposition fighter and would remain one; that when the whole story of this "statement" was made known it would expose the Party and I.L.D. bureaucracy in a disgraceful light. We are now in a position to make the truth known, and that on the basis of comrade Malkin's own letter to us.

The statement printed in the *Daily Worker* last year was obtained in a manner which set a precedent—and a despicable one—in the labor and revolutionary movement.

"That statement was not made by me," writes comrade Malkin, "but by some of Lovestone's agents in the D.W. office or one of the Stalinist leaders in the national office of the Party. I challenge the Party officials to publish the original statement with the one printed in October which was extorted from me and then falsified so that as soon as I read it in the *Worker* I immediately wrote Wm. Z. Foster demanding that the original be printed. It had been squeezed out of me under threats and pressure from the I.L.D. and Party leadership to the effect that they would stop my defense and economic support of my parents unless I made a statement."

Comrade Malkin's parents are of course so advanced in years that they are totally

be a member.

"If there is any information that you require, Mr. Black (the vice-president of the firm) will be glad to have any of you come to his office and discuss any matter that you are not clear on."

Years ago the workers were fired for joining a union; today, the employers urge their workers to join the Amalgamated. Isn't this in the nature of a miracle? I am sure "comrade" J. B. S. Hardman-Salutsky will write an editorial for his boss to prove that the Amalgamated is still a militant union, as he has done on many occasions when the union officialdom forced reductions in wages upon the workers and introduced the piece work system.

Where is the Left Wing?

Who is to be blamed, essentially, for not having a strong Left wing militant group in the Amalgamated? The peanut politicians of the "third period" who, instead of mobilizing the workers and preparing them for a fight inside the union, are calling upon the workers to join the Industrial Union—which simply doesn't work under the present relationship of forces. This policy will only cause a few more victims to lose their jobs and that is the end again. The next day they tell the workers to participate in elections which is advocated by the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyists".

The Left wing must mobilize the workers inside the Amalgamated and fight for policies of the class struggle, as we have pointed out in the *Militant* a number of times. The Left wing's zig-zag policy of praising Hillman to the skies one day and pulling isolated members out of the union the next day—that is what Hillman and his machine want. This will keep the machine in power and the workers will be left the prey of Hillman, Salutsky and Beckerman. Let us unite our forces inside the organization and do away with the Hillman machine as we once did away with Tom Rickert of the United Garment Workers.

—A. SCHNEIDER

(This article was written during the recent lockout of a few branches of the New York men's clothing workers.—Ed.)

James McInerney

The news of the death in Walla Walla, Wash. penitentiary of James McInerney has come as a shock to every class conscious worker in the country. McInerney was one of the famous Centralia I.W.W. defendants sentenced by a bosses' court to from 20 years to life imprisonment for having defended their hall and lives, weapons in hand, against a mob of uniformed American Legion gunmen who raided it on Armistice day, 1919, with murder in their eyes. Wesley Everest, one of the I.W.W. members, was lynched by the mob after having been unspeakably tortured and finally castrated by the masked cowards.

McInerney, one of the finest types of revolutionary workers in the country, was himself tortured bestially. With the bullet wound received in the famous Verona battle, the tortures in Centralia, and the destructive regime in prison the last ten years, even his usually robust health was undermined. He died of tuberculosis and spinal meningitis—his blood on the hands and head of the lumber barons, their Legionaries and their corrupted courts.

Upon receipt of the tragic news, the I.W.W. throughout the country organized memorial demonstrations. In New York over a thousand workers gathered on two days notice at 14th Street and University. Speakers representing the Lovestone group, the Lore organization, the Socialist party, the Proletarian party, the anarchists, spoke from the platform. Max Shachtman spoke for the Communist League (Opposition) and Herbert Mahler, the chairman, and W.I. Fisher spoke for the I.W.W. The leaders of the Communist Party and the "non-partisan" I.L.D. refused to participate or send a speaker on the grounds that they would not occupy the same platform "with Trotskyists and Lovestoneites"! This act of spiteful and criminal sabotage did not raise the prestige of the Party among the sympathetic workers; it was only greeted with bitter indignation.

In the meantime the balance of the Centralia men are still imprisoned, all of them under the threat of McInerney's martyr death. They are among the men that have created one of the sturdiest traditions of the American labor and revolutionary movement. Their continued imprisonment remains a rebuke to the workers—particularly the militants among them. The untimely death of McInerney is a startling reminder of the obligations the working class, for whom these fighters worked so loyally, has toward them.

Are our prisoners to die in their cells, like trapped rats? Shall the hand of death alone release them from imprisonment, or shall it be the linked arms of labor battering down the steel and stone that holds them?

CASE OF COLD FEET

KANSAS CITY—

N. Sorenson, D.O. of K.C. was advertised to speak August 1st at 15th and The Paseo. When time came to call the meeting N. Sorenson, the D.O. fails to appear.

Comrade Jenne Rovinsky, who remains a loyal (but honest) Stalinite, gets up on the box and addresses the 40 or more workers who turned out to hear the D.O. of Kansas City.

How Jennie Rovinsky who is a sincere and courageous fighter can have any confidence in these bluffers like N. Sorenson and the Browders is a mystery.

N. Sorenson shows up August 2nd and says he was held by the police. Fear of exposure made him change to county officials. We have found on investigation that no N. Sorenson (or alias) was held by city police or county officials on August 1st. Sorenson will have a hard time to explain his actions to the comrades here in K.C.

N. Sorenson, D.O. of K.C. has left the city and put E. Peterson in charge as acting D. O.

E. Peterson two years ago defied the D.O. and District Committee—when asked to make a financial report as District Literature Agent. When pressed later on he admitted he was short over \$100.00 in his account. He has been looking for a Party job for over four years now. At last temporarily he is a big job holder.

Faking, bluffing and misappropriating Party funds is not going to build a Communist Party in the U.S.A.

—A. A. BUEHLER