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THE MILITANT

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Philadelphia Gripped by Transport Strike

NRA and Labor Leaders Combine to "Outlaw" Workers' Fight for Bread

Philadelphia.—Philadelphia is labor's latest battlefield. Class struggle looks horns with class collaboration and outright strike-breaking. The movement of the workers demonstrates its inherent strength, unspent vitality and capacity for struggle by breaking out of the bounds set for it by labor's administration "friends" and "leaders". And, also it is refuting those disciplines who for years have been shouting "all is dead in the A. F. of L. company unions." Pushing upward against tremendous pressure 15,000 workers in various fields of transportation are out on strike. The entire police force is on "riot mobilization", howls are up for U. S. Marines, the leading gentry of the National Labor Board plead for "peace and patience", the local "friendly" Record shouts "Do Not Strike". To finish it off in classic manner, Daniel J. Tobin, International President of the Union denounces the strike as "outlaw".

Causes of the Strike

What is this strike? In short it is a revolt against the conditions the NRA is defending. With inevitable logic the organized workers found their way to class struggle. The urgent need of labor to protect itself and its organizations made this action imperative. The NRA is demonstrating the hollow-ness of its impartiality and defense of labor. Facing the realities of class conflict it can betray and betray, but not with impunity nor for long without a crack-up. This is what is happening.

Three weeks ago the drivers of the "Yellow", "Quaker" and "Brown and White" taxicab companies went out on strike in defense of their union, one hundred percent. The cab companies are all part of Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co.—the transit trust here—backbone of the open shop and company union (Mitten plan). The taxi men are organized into the Taxi Drivers Union of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen and Helpers of the A. F. of L. and have socialist influence. A militant strike policy and sympathy of the city's workers found the P. R. T.—bankers—Vare machine combine adamant. Attacked from all sides—police and gangsters on one hand, and pressure of the National Labor Board on the other, the union agreed to arbitration. The P. R. T. rejected the offer and refused to reinstate the strikers to their jobs.

The Workers' Strike Back.

Aroused to a fight against this arrogant attitude of the bosses the workers struck back. Despite the

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Hold Torgler Despite Fire Trial Verdict

The Leipzig Supreme Court has found Torgler, Dimitroff, Popoff and Tanev not guilty in the infamous Reichstag fire-trial recently concluded in Nazi Germany. The flimsy character of the frame-up against these comrades was clear to all. Even the world capitalist press was compelled to admit the innocence of the defendants.

The decision of the Leipzig Court is a maneuver to quiet the rising wave of protest against Hitler terror. It further attempts to whitewash the German Fascist Party, which according to all available evidence, is directly responsible for the notorious Reichstag fire. The self-confessed culprit, Van Der Lubbe, has been sentenced to death. The verdict does not mean the freedom of Torgler, Dimitroff, Popoff and Tanev. Their lives are still in danger. The Nazis blood-hounds will release these working class prisoners only under the greatest pressure. Already, reports in the press tell of Hitler's plan to put Torgler on trial for "high treason". The threats of Goebels, Rosenberg and other Fascist murderers against the four defendants can only be frustrated by the active protest of all workers and workers' organizations.

A movement has been set on foot which demands "the immediate and safe release of Dimitroff, Torgler, Tanev, and Popoff into the hands of the International Committee now in Leipzig." The existing "National Committee to Aid the Victims of German Fascism" should be broadened into a genuine united front of all workers' organizations which will be able to arouse the American working class in defense of Torgler, Dimitroff, Popoff and Tanev.

OPEN FORUM

MAX SHACHTMAN
ON
THE WAR AROUND INFLATION
at
Sunday, January 7, 1934
8:15 P. M.
International Workers School Hall
126 East 16th Street, or Irving Pl.
Auspices: Manhattan Branch, Communist League of America (Opp.)
Questions — Discussion
ADMISSION 15 CENTS

Roosevelt's "Planned Work" A Worker's Report

"Six months of this and I'll be fit for the lunatic asylum"—this remark of a former taxicab driver sums up the attitude of the C. W. A. workers to the degrading nonsense which they must go through in order to qualify for the Roosevelt Dole in Prospect Park, Brooklyn.

It is not that we are forced to do hard work, for long hours at low wages. No, we spend 8 hours a day going through the motions of work. Shovelling dirt on a truck only to see it dumped back exactly where it was taken from. Carrying sand in shovels for about 25 yards while wheel-barrows to say nothing of trucks are lying idle. Then being told "don't take a full shovel, that piles got to do you, men, for the rest of the day"—Then when we gather in a group to talk the foreman again speaks. "Say boys, don't stand around talking, you'll be getting me in wrong. Take it easy but act as though you were doing something." So, we start to "work"—push the shovel slowly into the pile of earth, lean upon it for a while, pick it up, dump half the dirt off and with slow and measured tread carry a couple of hand-fuls of earth some 25 yards.

What the Workers Talk About.

We walk back in a group and the mental confusion of the unemployed is revealed in the conversation. "Father Coughlin is right. What we need is to bring silver back." "You know Roosevelt is using some of Stalin's ideas." "What this country needs is two or three Mussolinis." In two things the great majority are agreed. 1. Roosevelt is doing his best for us. 2. The bankers are fighting Roosevelt and are also responsible for the crisis. The third most popular illusion is the wisdom, courage and militancy of Father Coughlin as a champion of the "people".

Our gang started to work November 1, just before the city election. We were all "relief cases". We are assigned to Prospect Park. Since our transfer to the C. W. A. we work 8 hours a day, three days a week and get \$15. The tasks are varied. Gathering leaves, planting trees, spreading a compost of earth and manure around trees, digging ditches, sweeping streets, etc., etc.

One of our first tasks under Roosevelt's "Five Year Plan" is characteristic of the rest. We were put to work on a pile of manure. The pile was quite large and of irregular shape, high in the center and sloping down towards ragged edges. A couple of men, with an "engineer" in charge, took stakes and cord and marked the pile off into a rectangle. Then with shovels and forks our gang of 25 went to work with a will. At the end of the day the manure pile was a beautiful rectangle, edges square and straight as a die, and of uniform height throughout.

A Pedestal of Manure

A pedestal of manure! A statue of the author of the New Deal from the same material would have com-

pleted the picture. Two or three days later the pile was carted away. "If you all take an interest in this here work, they'll promote you to the lunatic asylum", said a Negro worker after that incident.

"There'll be no work on Christmas but you'll have to come in another day to make up for it," we were told. "Give me some real work to do, and I'll make up for a week of Christmases in the next two hours", said an old man.

Former building trade workers, chauffeurs, bakers, clothing workers—we stand and question our own sanity for putting up with this nonsense. There is nothing to do, it is cold and miserable and we wait leaning on our shovels, waiting for quitting time. A whistle blows, we stop doing nothing and start for home.

At first we were under the jurisdiction of the City but have since been transferred to the C. W. A. Two weeks passed without pay. The word was passed around—"No pay, no work", and in short order a parade of about 50% of the entire crew were marching to the main office. There, with plenty of police around, the cause of the delay was explained. Similar and much more dramatic actions by other groups in the City and also throughout the nation show that the spirit of the unemployed is not of all broken and also reveal a deep dissatisfaction with the nature of the "work".

—RELIFF WORKER.

Vandals Wreck League Hall

Brooklyn.—In recent weeks two attempts were made to destroy the Brownsville headquarters of the Communist League. Last Wednesday morning, Dec. 20th, the banner on the wall reading: "For a New Communist International!" was burned; the wall itself displaying black marks of burning. No other part of the hall was touched showing that the vandals were frightened by their own deeds.

Wednesday, Dec. 27th, another raid of the headquarters took place. Banners, articles on the bulletin board, and pictures of Lenin and Trotsky were torn from the wall. The picture of the latter was torn in shreds. The tea-cups in the kitchen were broken. The literature closet was broken open, MILITANTS and pamphlets ripped, thrown over the floors and some stolen. Again some fear of discovery must have ended the raid at this point.

There is little doubt as to who is responsible for these raids. It is not the first time that the Stalinists have broken into headquarters of the Communist League and have stolen or destroyed some of its material.

Hotel Workers Driving Toward General Strike

Amalgamated Union Formulates Program of Demands

A LETTER FROM MOONEY

California State Prison
San Quentin, Calif.
November 18, 1933.
My dear Comrades and Fellow Unionists:

During the month of January of this year, I issued a call for a United Front of all working class organizations to send delegates to the Free Tom Mooney Congress, held in Chicago, April 29 to May 1, inclusive.

No Report of Congress

Out of the Free Tom Mooney Congress came the NATIONAL TOM MOONEY COUNCIL OF ACTION, with headquarters in New York City. This information I learned several weeks after the Congress adjourned. During the Congress, I received one telegram. I never did receive a report from the Congress, or any one connected with it, as to just what took place. I did not receive a copy of the Congress resolution, until three weeks after its adjournment. No one attending that Congress has taken the trouble to make a report to me of what actually happened there.

A month after the Congress adjourned, I was told that a debt of \$2,000 connected with the Congress, was still unpaid. From another source, I learned that each of the delegates to that Congress were pledged to return to their home organizations, and collect their quota to pay off that debt.

During the latter part of May, the National Tom Mooney Council of Action organized a National Tom Mooney Tag Day, using the organizational machinery of the International Labor Defense to carry this work to a conclusion. The first object of this Tag Day, was to liquidate the Congress debt, of which I was first informed to be \$2,000, and which I have since been informed, by Roger Baldwin, the Treasurer of the National Tom Mooney Council of Action, to be only \$1,500.

Want to Hear from Delegates.

Since the Free Tom Mooney Con-

gress adjourned, and the formation of the National Tom Mooney Council of Action, the activities of the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee has been suspended for the lack of funds to carry on the fight. Whether this was deliberately planned or not, I am not now prepared to state, but I would like to get the actual feelings of all of those delegates that attended that Congress—a sort of personal report from each of them as to just took place there—what was the spirit of the delegates towards me, personally, and also towards the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee. Also telling me what sum was raised by you and your organization in the National Tom Mooney Tag Day Campaign, and what other sums have been raised by you or your organization, as pledged as your quota to liquidate the debt left from the Free Tom Mooney Congress and the later sales of Free Tom Mooney stamps.

The Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee is penniless, with a debt of \$4,000. I have just 60c to my credit on the prison books, and have not been able to order any prison commissaries for the past four months. In spite of this tremendous obstacle, my defense committee is now having prepared a 132-page booklet, exposing this foul conspiracy against me. It will tell the story that I had hoped to tell in my recent trial, but was prevented from doing so by the powerful bankers and industrialists who are in complete control. Just as soon as my defense committee can secure the necessary funds, this booklet will be published. Will you help me do this? I want to circulate these booklets by the hundreds of thousands.

Appeals for New Campaign

Some time during November or December, my attorneys, Frank P. Walsh of New York City, and John F. Finnerty of Washington, D. C., will attempt to secure my freedom on a writ of Habeas Corpus in the United States Supreme Court. A tremendous wave of agitation, demanding my freedom, should precede this move. The United States Senators and Representatives from your state, together with the President and the Attorney General of those United States, should be appealed to cooperate in this move to secure justice for an innocent man. I am herewith enclosing a Press

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The efforts of the hotel and restaurant-workers of New York City to obtain a serious improvement in the intolerable conditions now existing in their industry through building up their union, the Hotel and Restaurant Workers' branch of the Amalgamated Food Workers, have now entered on a new and higher phase. Up to now, the major tasks have been to gather forces, and to lead the workers away from the illusions of the NRA and toward a militant policy based on the formulation of concrete demands and the struggle for their enforcement. The new phase consists of the preparation for the enforcement of these demands through a general strike.

Big Hotels Organized

Considering the total number of the unorganized workers in the industry, much still remains to be done. But a magnificent beginning has already been made, particularly in the kitchen and dining-room departments of the large hotels, dozens of which are 70% to 95% unionized. In this field, the tasks are to complete unionization in those hotels where the union already has members, to organize the houses where the workers are becoming attracted to us because of our consistent program and our activity, and particularly, to broaden the base of the organization among the hundreds and thousands of smaller restaurants now that the peaks of the industry are well on the way to complete organization.

As to the NLR and the codes, the workers are increasingly realizing that they have nothing good to look for in that direction. Both the hotel and the restaurant codes are understood to be nothing but blows directed at the workers, and the apparatus of the NRA for the enforcement of any provisions which seemed to offer some protection for the interests of the workers, has been proved by living experience to be nothing but a hollow sham. The workers now realize that only their own organization can do anything for them.

Demands of the Union

The first step in the new phase of the development of the union was taken last Friday, December 22, when meetings of the dining-room and the kitchen departments dis-

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Shoe Workers Amalgamate Unions at Historic Convention at Boston

Boston.—The amalgamation convention of independent shoe workers' unions which has been meeting in Boston since early December came to a close on the 21st after a stormy but successful session of 10 days. This convention transformed amalgamation from a hope to an accomplished fact by bringing into being the United Shoe and Leather Workers Union. It was marked by threatened sabotage from out-going reactionary officialdom on the one hand and by disruptive maneuvers of the Stalinists on the other, but repulsed both determinedly. New hopes of strength in unity have been aroused.

Resolutions of a political nature adopted by the convention are the harbinger of a more developed political consciousness in the minds of the American worker. Already bitter experiences have stripped bandages from the eyes of this group of workers concerning the NRA and its paraphernalia.

60,000 Workers Represented

A group of 184 delegates represented some 60,000 shoe workers of 5 formerly independent unions with locals from Maine to Missouri. The National Shoe Workers' Association had 79 delegates, the Shoe Workers' Protective Union 59, the Independent Shoe Workers' Union of Salem 16, the Shoe and Leather Workers' Industrial Union of New York 28, and the Brotherhood of Greater New York 2. In addition there were fraternal delegates and observers from other independent unions in other parts of the country.

The Shoe and Leather Workers' Industrial Union, affiliated with the Trade Union Unity League, furnished the first discordant note in the convention by their shameless attempt to back-down on their previously written agreement with the provisional committee, which was that they would attend the convention as an independent union like the others, that they would sever their connection with the T. U. U. L.

Bitter Fight over T. U. U. L.

A bitter fight on the floor followed their attempt to have the question decided by referendum. Their plea of misunderstanding the terms of the agreement was completely exposed as the lie it was by two members of their own delegation who subsequently took the floor. The first, Frank Costello, secretary of the resolutions committee, dramatically offered his resignation in view of the attitude of the leaders of his New York delegation who obviously placed the interests of the T. U. U. L. ahead of amalgamation. This was a high point of the convention as this worker tore his badge from his chest, disclaimed any communist leanings and declared himself "in fact a regulation catholic". As he prepared to leave his place, he was surrounded by agitated delegates who, with cries of "No! No!" persuaded him to remain.

He was quickly followed by another member of that delegation who seconded Costello's views, and made clear to all delegates that the New York rank and filers were overwhelmingly in favor of amal-

gamation. He stated further with some bitterness that the principal cause of the delay in their joining the amalgamation movement was their being misinformed as to the attitude of the New England Shoe workers toward the A. F. of L. As far as he was concerned he was "against the A. F. of L., the T. U. U. L. or any other hell"—which sums up the disillusionment of most of these workers. The Industrial Union delegation was finally forced to comply and pledged itself anew to sever its connections with the T. U. U. L.

Old Officers Removed

A resolution to abolish all offices of the several independent unions on January 15 and to elect a coordinating committee of 15 to handle the affairs of the new union until newly elected officers take up their duties in April, was adopted by an overwhelming majority. This body-blow to deposed salaried officials of the old unions set off fireworks.

W. B. Mahan, general organizer of the National Shoe Workers' Association openly defied this convention decision in a statement published later in a newspaper stating that he would not give up control of his organization, unless so instructed by the Lynn Shoe workers, and if the new coordinating committee expected him to comply then they lacked intelligence. A Mrs. McGee, official of a Lynn Stitches' local, unsuccessfully attempted to recall that locals' delegates at a meeting the same night. Officials of the Shoe Workers' Protective Union at a similar meeting

decide likewise to resist being supplanted.

When this news broke on the floor of the convention the next morning the anger of the delegates threw that body into an uproar and the hooting and jeering of Mahan's name bodied ill for any attempts of union officials might make to sabotage the amalgamation about to be realized after a difficult year's work. There was no mistaking the temper of the rank and file.

New Constitution Discussed

With the opening of discussions on the floor of the draft of a constitution prepared by the constitution committee a difficult part of the convention's task started. A 53-page document was first decided to discuss and vote on each article separately. After a day and a half it became apparent to all that such a procedure would require several weeks to complete consideration of the entire document. The major cause of the slow progress lay in the petty obstructionist tactics of the Stalinist delegation of the New York Industrial Union. Their extended criticism of petty details in each article acted to further distract them. As a consequence they failed to arouse sympathy and support for the really meritorious proposal of industrial unionism when it was put forth.

The role of the T. U. U. L. delegates as impediments to rapid progress was recognized by the convention when a motion was finally made and carried to recommit the draft to the constitution committee

which should confer with 2 representatives of the New York delegation and iron out further differences and then return the document to the delegates for consideration. This was done. The constitutional committee reappeared before the convention the next day with the results of their conference. The two added delegates had requested and were granted changes amounting in all to twelve words!

Local Autonomy in New Union

Following further consideration by the convention delegates of certain parts of the proposed constitution it was voted to submit the proposed constitution to referendum of all locals for discussion and amendment or approval.

As finally adopted for submission to referendum the constitution incorporates certain features of a progressive nature compared with their ranks workers in industries closely allied to them: leather workers, counter-makers, wooden-heel makers, last and pattern-makers and workers in foot-wear industries generally. There is also provision for the recall of officers by vote of 5 locals of a District. Provision for local autonomy means no local charter may be revoked except after trial by other locals of its district, and means also that the form of organization shall be decided by each district. Thus the New York Industrial Union may retain its present form. General officers are to be a General organizer and a

General Secretary-Treasurer. A general executive board of 21 members will represent 3 major districts.

Contradictory Resolutions

Among the resolutions adopted by the convention were these: (1) Condemnation of the NRA as not operable to the interests of workers (2) Demand for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. (3) Demand for the unconditional release of Tom Mooney. (4) For unemployment insurance, cost to be borne by the government and employers. (5) Petitioning the National Recovery Board for an appropriation by the Federal Government of \$25,000,000 for the purchase and distribution of shoes for the needy. (6) All labor leaders should withdraw from the National Recovery Board and the Labor Advisory Board. (7) Against compulsory arbitration. (8) For reopening consideration of the NRA shoe code and demand for the 30 hour week and minimum weekly wage for unskilled of \$18. (9) In commendation of Father Coughlin, the radio priest for the good work he is doing for the workers!

In connection with this last resolution it must be told that Israel Zimmerman, a well-known Lovestonite, voted in favor of the Coughlin resolution. This rankkest kind of opportunism that fails to tell the workers, for example, that the inflation program advocated by Coughlin is the most vicious attack on the income and the welfare of the working class, cannot be condemned too bitterly. Influence gained

by sacrifice of principles can never operate to disillusion workers.

Brockton Brotherhood to Come In

Paul Salvaggio, originator of the planning board and the leading spirit for amalgamation in the early days of the movement, was honored by the assembled delegates and it was unanimously voted to constitute his lastern local of Boston as Local No. 1 in the new United Shoe and Leather Workers' Union in recognition of his pioneer efforts that culminated in the amalgamation.

The Brockton fraternal delegates representing the Brotherhood of Allied Shoe Crafts with 10,000 members announced that they would join the new union very soon, that they had been double-crossed by their leaders and that one local had already torn up its charter.

In anticipation of trouble with defiant officials of the old unions whom it was voted to depose, the planning board (the original rank and file body) was directed to continue its existence until the last bolt is in place. As matters stand at the time of writing certain officials of both the National and the Protective have expressed defiance of the order directing them to give up January 15, but it appears that this time the momentum of the amalgamation movement is too great for them to resist.

It was voted to hold the next biennial convention in St. Louis on the first Monday of November 1935. —SHOE WORKER.

CELEBRATE WITH THE MILITANT At the New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball Germania Hall 16th St. & Third Av DECEMBER 31st, 1933 ADMISSION: 50 CENTS