

EDITORIAL

Strike the Hotels

ONE of the bright spots in the rising labor movement is the sensational rise of the Amalgamated Food Workers and its militant challenge to the big New York hotels which have been completely unorganized and immune to "labor troubles" for many years.

The action of the union in putting the preparation of the general strike now definitely on the agenda, after the arduous preliminary work in spreading the message of unionism and gathering the forces of the workers together, raises the prospect of a battle that can mean much for the labor movement in general as well as for the workers directly involved.

In invading this field and establishing the firm basis of a union there the Amalgamated Food Workers has rendered a signed service to the whole movement of organized labor. In the projected strike it will be entitled to the solidarity and support, which are needed to ensure success.

To wrest concessions from the big New York hotels is no small undertaking. It cannot be accomplished without a real battle, and the battle cannot get a good start without serious preparation and a fair basis of organization beforehand. In proceeding from this point of view, and in moving step by step along a consistent line—gathering forces, building up the union, popularizing the idea of general strike action instead of reliance on the NRA—the Amalgamated has already stamped itself in the minds of thousands of disoriented hotel slaves as an organization that means business, not bluff and ballyhoo.

The challenge to the NRA code and the hotel magnates in whose interest it was drawn up leads with iron necessity to a strike. There is no other way but by a show of strength to convince these people who refuse to hear or heed the bitter grievances of the workers. The demands gained and the organization established in this way will be all the more secure. There will be no ground for the illusion that anybody gave the workers anything. It will be clear that everything gained is the result of organized struggle and it will not be easy to take the gains away again.

The general strike of the New York hotels will be an undisguised fight between capital and labor under modern conditions. The New York hotels are not one-horse concerns—they represent a huge concentration of capital closely tied up with the banks, and in some cases directly controlled by them. This policy is anti-union from start to finish. The Amalgamated union, on the other hand, is a modern type of labor organization, industrial in form to include all workers in the industry, militant in policy and relying on its own strength.

The A. F. of L. unions in the industry have never tackled the big hotels; they have confined themselves to smaller units—little cafes, caterers and night clubs—leaving the big and powerful concerns and the workers enslaved by them pretty much alone. Antiquated craft unionism demonstrates its inadequacy and the whole theory of the "partnership of capital and labor" goes to pieces when large-scale aggregations of capital are confronted.

The Amalgamated Food Workers arose as an independent industrial union in a field that was deserted and unoccupied just as similar organizations must and will take shape in other big industries which the craft unions are unable or unwilling to organize. It is not a "dual" union but the legitimate organization to serve the needs of the workers. The foremost and fundamental task in preparation for the general strike is to build and strengthen the Amalgamated Food Workers.

Concentration on this fundamental task of organizing the workers into the Amalgamated does not, of course, prevent cooperation with other unions in the industry and, in our opinion, the Executive Board of the A. F. of L. was right in declaring its readiness to engage in joint actions with the A. F. of L. unions in case the latter are really prepared to act, that is, to call a strike of the workers under their jurisdiction. Such a proposition can very well remain as a standing attitude provided it does not lead to illusions among the members that some nebulous combination or instrument outside the Hotel and Restaurant workers branch of the Amalgamated can

be the driving force of a real strike. The Amalgamated itself is the driving force! It would be fatally wrong to shift attention from the fundamental task of organizing the unorganized hotel workers into the union to the field of negotiations, discussions and re-remunations with other organizations which have a basis in the hotels. The mechanism for a strike is first of all membership in a UNION. A hundred "joint committees" and "United Front Conferences" cannot be substituted for it.

As the hotel and restaurant workers move toward a show-down with the rapacious exploiters who coin their lives into dollars one warning cannot be repeated too often. That is: Put no faith in the NRA, distrust every move it makes, rely on your organized strength and the solidarity of your fellow workers alone!

There is no doubt that many hotel and restaurant workers believed in the NRA at first and expected that Roosevelt would really do something for them. They have reason to know better now. After the approval by the NRA of the shameful hotel and restaurant code—one of the very worst of all, with its 54-hour week and similar odious provisions in favor of the bosses—it should be clear to every thinking worker that no help can be expected from this quarter. Just the contrary. The whole NRA scheme was hatched to head off the independent action of the workers, fill them with false hopes, dampen down their militancy and harness them for a long time to the old conditions. The proof of this, which has been amply provided already in the experience of the hotel and restaurant workers, is driving them to unionization and to concrete preparations for a strike. That is the only way to success in the struggle to improve conditions and make life more bearable for the cruelly exploited workers of the hotel and restaurant industry of New York.

Mooney Appeals Again

YEARS pass, the case of Mooney becomes an old story, the movement for his release ebbs and flows and ebbs again, militants grow tired and neglect the fight, but there is one who never tires, never quits and never surrenders, and that is the indomitable rebel, white haired and aging in prison, who carries the burden of the case on his own shoulders. The letter from Tom Mooney which is printed in this issue of the Militant is another reminder of this fact. It is an appeal which no militant worthy of the name can read without emotion and without a resolve to take up the fight again in his behalf.

Only a few weeks ago Mooney passed his 51st birthday—more than a third of his years have been spent continuously in prison. To our shame his birthday passed without a wave of public demonstrations and tumult in the street. To our shame the fight for his release has again become a perfunctory, routine affair. It must not remain on this plane. We must gather all our forces and energies together again to make the labor movement ring with his name, to make the demand for his liberation a living and burning issue of the whole working class.

The Mooney case is not an extraneous issue; it is fused together inseparably with awakening revolt of the American workers against capitalism and all its works. The name of Mooney is a banner of struggle. His spirit is the expression of the aspiring struggle of labor for life and freedom. And just as he symbolizes by his dauntless rebel spirit the undying struggles of the workers, so also does the barbarous and inhuman punishment imposed upon him till the true story of the class justice of today. The fight for Mooney is a fight against the whole system of slavery, exploitation, hunger and injustice. The fight for Mooney is the workers' own fight.

The weight of the class system bears down ever more heavily on the masses. They feel every more intensely in their own daily lives the iniquities of the hateful regime; their grievances bring them into closer sympathy with all who suffer oppression and injustice. They can become one with Mooney who symbolizes their rebellion and pays for it with a living death in the California prison. It is our task to hasten this fusion in a renewed fight for Tom Mooney.

The remarks of Mooney about the Chicago Congress and its aftermath are painful to read. It is clear from these remarks, as has been pointed out in these columns many times, that those who monopolized the leadership of the Left wing labor movement in recent years are able only to disorganize and disrupt and to destroy. The blight of their influence is felt even in the defense movement for labor prisoners, and the Mooney case is not the first example of their capacity to sacrifice the interests.

A genuine and legitimate non-partisan defense organization is an urgent need. This is widely felt and recognized already. Mooney's letter brings the issue out into the open more prominently. There is much to be said on the questions raised in Mooney's letter. In next week's Militant we shall return to the subject again.

Transport Tie-up in Philadelphia Sympathy Strike

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Appeals of Senator Wagner and Dr. Leiserson, secretary of the National Association of Taxicab Drivers and the transportation workers for action, the local union of the International Brotherhood declared for a strike of all transportation workers in Philadelphia on Friday, December 22nd. Nine unions with the additions of hundreds not yet organized responded. The following were included: Brotherhood of Transportation Workers, 11,000; Railway Express Drivers, 3,000; Teamsters, 3,000; Milk Wagon drivers, 2,000; Bakery wagon drivers, 2,000; Laundry wagon drivers, 1,100; Dry Cleaning drivers, 75; Piano Movers, 500. Thousands of transport workers stood in the cold for hours outside the strike headquarters and enthusiastically cheered the strike call.

Through striking under a call to make "the bosses agree to abide by the Labor Board's decision," (from the strike leaflet) the drivers are in conflict not only with the bosses directly, but also with the governmental NRA itself. This must be fully realized by the strikers and all workers as a guard against deception.

Many already understand. They say, "we'll die of old age or starvation or both waiting for the NRA to do something." The strike call itself speaks of the strike as labor's only weapon now.

Supporting Taxicab Drivers

The strike approached but did not become a general strike in transportation. It was called in support of the embattled taxicab drivers. But it is not that alone. The individual unions have their own grievances and demands. Thus the milk drivers who are the strongest reinforcement in the strike and are out almost solidly, are striking for better hours and higher wages and union recognition. They have been organizing all Summer long and are now stirred into action by the practise of the milk companies singling out union militants and firing them off the job. The same applies to the laundry drivers and cleaners drivers. The Brotherhood of Transportation Workers, an independently organized union which entered the A. F. of L. as a second local at the conclusion of a successful strike a couple of months ago, is using the strike to further strengthen its organization.

Betrayal of Bakery Drivers

The bakery drivers union has once more been betrayed. Three months ago they went on strike and were misled into returning to their jobs under old conditions, under promise of favorable action by the National Labor Board. For two months the National Labor Board considered their demands—for two months the Bakers' Club (the association of the bosses) have been busy demoralizing the workers by firing the active unionists from the job.

But when it comes to strikes-breaking, the NRA and all its boards and officers are on the job. Within two days of the general walkout the National Labor Board "grants" the bakery drivers a 44 hour week maximum and a \$27.50 week minimum pay, obviously prompted by efforts to break the unity of the workers. Without any agreement on the part of the bosses, the union officials called off their strike and sent the men back. Now the drivers, who see no indication on the part of the bakers to recognize the award of the union, are demanding action. In fact not all of the drivers went back, hundreds are still out despite the union order. This Thursday the union is taking another strike vote.

Labor Fakers in Action

As soon as the American Federation of Labor Executive Board became cognizant of the sweep of the strike and the enthusiasm it aroused it came to the aid of—the bosses. "Lieutenant" Daniel J. Tobin, International president of the Teamsters' Union came out with his wire to the local state organizer of the union, Thomas O'Brien, that the strike is illegal! "No permission was asked and none was given to call a general strike..." This stab in the back has had its effect. At the present writing five unions remain out on strike, four having gone back. The taxi, milk, laundry men now constitute the backbone of the strike.

It is imperative for the speedy success of the strike—that of the taxi men as well as that of the other unions—that the strike be extended to a complete general tie-up. The strike must go to the P. R. T. workers, subway, bus and street car; and, if need be, to call out not only the drivers but the inside production workers as well. To date neither the Socialist party nor the Communist party have made public any announcement on the strike. The S. P. is in the background of the taxicab union and, to a lesser extent of other unions. In this way it hopes not to embarrass the A. F. of L. officialdom and to absolve itself from any commitments before the workers. The C. P. has made no other contribution than a miserable leaflet by the sterile T. U. U. L. The T. U. U. L. Butcher drivers has been given representation, on the strike committee as has the Independent Retail Laundry Drivers.

The leaflet issued by the local branch of the Communist League calls for a complete transport strike, the six-hour day five-day week with union wages and for a policy of class struggle against class collaboration. —LEON GOODMAN.

Hotel Workers Drive Toward General Strike

(Continued from page 1)

discussed and approved definite wage-scales which are now part of the official demands of the union, specifying in detail the minimum rates of pay for different types of work of varying degrees of skill and responsibility. The union demands include:

Full recognition of the union. A minimum wage of \$20 a week for the lowest-paid workers in the industry.

Specific minimum wage-scales for higher pay for the more skilled workers.

Tips to be entirely separate from wages.

A minimum working-week of 40 hours, consisting of 5 days of 8 hours each.

No split watch. No charges for meals, uniforms or laundering.

The next stage in the development of the union will be marked by the increasing popularization and agitation for these demands, which will be put in the center of the organizing activity, and the preparation to enforce the demands by general strike action.

A mass meeting has been called for Thursday evening, Dec. 28, at 9 p. m., at the union headquarters, 915-917-919 Eighth Avenue, to put the demands of the union before the hotel and restaurant workers and explain the preparations which are necessary to obtain them.

The Confidence in NRA

Every worker will have to realize that these demands will not be conceded merely by asking for them. The hotel and restaurant men themselves are well-organized, and prepared to resist every serious demand for improving conditions. This is shown not only by the vicious conditions which they have attempted to saddle firmly on the industry through the codes (54-hour week which is really 60 hours, concealed wage cut through introducing charge for meals, taking wages out of tips, etc.), but by their efforts to promote company unions in one form or another, refusal to deal with unions, attempts to discriminate against active union men, etc.

Here and there, particularly in houses where the Amalgamated is well-organized, the bosses have thrown out a few concessions—scattered wage increases, even rearrangements of shifts to shorten hours. This has been particularly true since the Montclair workers went out solidly on strike, cooks, waiters, busboys, dishwashers, etc., under the banner of the Amalgamated. The workers generally un-

derstand, however, that these are only sop to keep them quiet and head off further advances of the union.

The American Federation of Labor locals have been coming forward with particularly militant phrases, threatening a general strike of protest against the codes, in which they have claimed to have the support of the Amalgamated and of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Guilds (the company-union type organization recently built up out of the previously-existing fraternal clubs and professional societies such as the Geneva, Vatel, Helvetia, etc.). The Federation at once repudiated any connection with a strike, although it appeared to vacillate a little later; meantime it has been advertising for extra workers for New Year's Eve.

Preparing for General Strike

The Amalgamated has made its position clear with regard to the A. F. of L. publicity as to the threatened protest strike. It is unconditionally opposed to the codes, and as long ago as Nov. 21 at a mass meeting passed a resolution denouncing the codes and stating that the workers were prepared in defense of their conditions "to use the effective weapon of the general strike". All our organizing work is directed to this end and we intend to make the general strike a real one.

As opposed to the bosses' demands, embodied in the codes, for perpetuating and aggravating the miserable conditions which prevail in the industry, we set up the working class solution to the problems of the industry: higher wages and shorter hours to raise the standards of the workers and relieve unemployment. We know that we cannot get these things without a struggle, and specifically a general strike.

It is important and necessary to make every effort to obtain the greatest possible unity in action of the labor organizations in the industry in support of any serious action for the purpose of enforcing these class demands, including not only a well-prepared and powerful general strike movement but also such actions as joint mass meetings or protest actions to prepare for it. It is essential, however, that every such step should be a serious part of a definite program calculated on the basis of the real forces available and have behind it the full weight of the organizations concerned. —A. F. W. WORKER.

New York Printers Organize Union

New York.—A general meeting of unorganized printers took place on December 17, 1933 at Germania Hall. It was called by the Independent Printing Employees. A prominent feature was the presence of a number of union men who encouraged the new body with warm words from the floor. Official representatives of Big Six and Pressmen's Local No. 51 were also given an opportunity to express their views. Numerous applications for membership were filed with the committee after the speeches and discussion.

These workers listened with attention and enthusiasm to a member of the Organization Committee, D. S. Gordon, who described the wretched conditions in the trade, the disastrous competition between union and non-union printers and the advantage taken of this division by the employers. He pointed out that while the printing bosses were combining to secure higher prices from the NRA code now under discussion more than half of the printers in this city are unorganized and ignored by the A. F. of L. unions, which through their prohibitive initiation fees, their closed membership books and long periods of apprenticeship have become closed corporations to a huge section of the unorganized. Concluding with an appeal for organization and action as the only effective method for the unorganized to improve conditions, Gordon stated that it was the intention of this union to work as closely with the other union men and their organizations as possible and to work for the establishment of one union in the industry.

The floor was thrown open for discussion and printer after printer got up on his feet describing conditions and counselling courage and determination for the Independent Printing Employees. The printers present took heart and hope when members of "Big Six" and the Pressmen's Union No. 51 told them that they too were opposed to the policies of the leadership of these respective organizations for unions, that they were fighting for an industrial instead of the craft union, for the organization of the unorganized. They wished the New Union success and offered to fight for it inside the A. F. of L. unions. The presence in the meeting of Thomas J. O'Connell, Label Representative of Typographical Union No. 6 and Edwin L. Duck, Special Representative of the N. Y. Printing Pressmen's Union No. 51, gave the new union recognition, however informal, almost from its inception. These A. F. of L. representatives, soft spoken, silver-tongued, confidential back-slappers, consumed considerable time of the meeting explaining to the workers the great work they were carrying on and how easy it was to join up in

their organizations. The printers plagued them with questions, recounting their unsuccessful attempts in gaining admission to the A. F. of L. Facts were countered to honeyed words and Duck and O'Connell did considerable wriggling and squirming. It can be said with certainty that the speeches of these A. F. of L. representatives served to confirm the imperative need for the new union in the minds of the assembled printers.

In reply to the discussion Gordon properly exposed the pretensions and deception of the A. F. of L. representatives, stating in reply to one of them who said that where there was a "will to get into the Pressmen's Union or 'Big Six' anyone could enter", that the new union not only had the will but the determination to crash the closed doors of the above unions. But it was well aware that this could only be accomplished by the unorganized taking the job into their own hands through the pressure of the new union.

Additions were made to the Organization Committee which will proceed with the stupendous task of gathering all the unorganized printers under the banner of the Independent Printing Employees. —A. PRINTER.

A Letter from Mooney

(Continued from page 1)

Sheet for the film, "THE STRANGE CASE OF TOM MOONEY". If this Motion Picture should be shown in all of the motion picture houses of this country, my continued imprisonment would be impossible. If you are a member of any organization, move for the appointment of a committee to call upon the managers of all the motion picture houses in your city, showing this press shoot, and urging that they show this film in their theatre; assuring them that if it is shown, your committee and all of the members of your organization, will do all possible to secure the largest attendance while it is being shown—that you will help to secure local publicity through the press and other sources.

Eighteenth Year in Prison. July 27, 1933, I began my eighteenth year in prison for a crime that I was acquitted of on the 24th day of last May. That is democratic capitalist class justice—with a vengeance.

I do sincerely hope that you will treat with generous consideration this most urgent appeal for help—commensurate with your means and the worthiness of this cause. I plead with you, I urge you, I implore you not lightly, or throw it into the waste basket. Just think of what it means to an innocent

Notes of the Week

MR. ERNEST T. WEIR, steelmaster, very quietly challenged Section 7a of the NRA last week. He held an "election" in the mills of the Weirton Steel Company (a subsidiary of the National Steel, of which he is president) at which 49 company union men were delegated as "representatives of their own choosing" by the mill-boards. To keep up face, the Labor Board and General Johnson protested, fretted and threatened.

But Mr. Weir, the papers tell us, read "David Copperfield" for the hundred and first time. "It gets better with each reading," he remarked.

The steelmaster, "a rugged individualist who came up from the ranks in the old American way", has every cause to maintain his equanimity. "The next step is up to the administration", and that the administration will merely mark time is self-evident from all past experiences.

This is not the first and we don't believe it will be the last instance of the utter contempt with which big business regards the ever so solemn agreements concluded from time to time by the code authorities in Washington. The National Steel made more profit in 1931, according to reports, than all the other steel companies put together. That is a persuasive enough argument to counter any of the General's forceful paper ultimatums which serve as a veil for feeble action. Such arguments abound in the ranks of the rugged individualists.

In most cases, the next step on the part of the administration is a surrender to the captains of industry all along the line. A case in point is the latest development in the needle industry. There the code authorities, after arbitrating the great New York strike last fall with a seeming victory for the workers, have now made public some rulings which practically turn the tables in favor of the employees. A so-called "sub-normality" clause permits the payment of a wage below the established minimum to "slow" workers. What other effect can this have but the granting of a loophole to the needle bosses by which they can abolish the minimum wage altogether? Another ruling in the same industry gives the Southern and Western employers the right to pay their workers from 30 to 40 per cent lower wages than in the East. What other effect can this have but the enforced reestablishment of the Sweatshop?

At a meeting of unorganized workers and union men, an A. F. of L. official who is also serving on one of the NRA Complaint Boards told those present that he believed the chiselers had worried their way clear into the NRA itself. Belgil all hepped up by the propaganda against the chiselers, the good man appeared to be quite outraged by this fact. It never occurred to him that an administration which stands four-square for a system—the profit system of capitalism—which upholds the free-for-all grab and may the best chiseler win, cannot help being swamped by them.

While the American workers may not as yet have come to the realization that it is up to them as a class to take the works into their own hands and run industry for the benefit of all the people, they are nevertheless gropingly doing something about it. They are realizing already with increasing clarity that NRA won't do a thing for them unless they themselves get together in formations of their own and see that they get whatever they can out of it. They no doubt notice with growing apprehension the fact that out of 3,000,000 Blue Eagles issued to the boss class—and how many million violations—the National Recovery Administration announces only 55 (fifty-eight!) withdrawals. —G.....

MINNEAPOLIS OPEN FORUM LECTURES

Sunday, January 7th at 3 P. M. WHAT HAS THE STATE LEGISLATURE DONE ABOUT RELIEF? Speaker: C. R. HEDLUND January 14th, at 3 P. M. IS THE ROOSEVELT PROGRAM BRINGING RECOVERY? Speaker: WILLIAM KITT January 21st, at 3 P. M. LENIN MEMORIAL MEETING Speaker: O. COOVER Held at: 1530 Franklin Avenue Auspices: Minneapolis Branch, Communist League of America. ADMISSION FREE

man—buried alive in this tomb of forgotten men—for seventeen of the best years of his life—denied and deprived of all that life holds dear. How would you feel if you were so brutally treated? Won't you do as much for me as you would like them to do for you, if in a similar predicament? Accept my heartfelt thankful appreciation for any consideration you may show this desperate appeal. With my warmest personal regards and best proletarian greetings, I am, Comradely yours, TOM MOONEY 31921 SAN QUENTIN PRISON

Another «Friend» of the Soviet Union

The great wit of the bourgeoisie, George Bernard Shaw, has discovered a new love. Before the war it was the Fabian Society, the pinkiest of all pink organizations. During the war he served God and Empire. Recently his love was the Soviet Union, whose hotels at last had hot water, and whose trains at last ran. And now it is Herr Hitler.

and his fellows as the "friends" and defenders of the Soviet Union. Shaw and his friends are only petty bourgeois or bourgeois masqueraders, and when they get tired or scared of the red get-up, they'll change it for black, brown or blue. Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Lord Marley, and all the rest will very probably disappear long before the battle which decides whether the Horst Wessel song shall be sung in Moscow's streets by Hitler's brown shirts—or whether the Internationale shall be heard in Berlin.

Mr. Shaw has shown these people the road. It is useless for Communists to blame them for taking it; they are what they are. But all workers must watch with suspicion those leaders of the Soviet Union, and the whole Stalinist bureaucracy, who prefer such friends and defenders to the revolutionary proletariat. —M.

LECTURE on the PERMANENT REVOLUTION by JACK WEBBER Monday, January 1st at 8 P. M. at 126 East 16th Street

CHICAGO FORUM

Lecture by Albert Goldman on SOCIALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION When and How It Will Be Achieved Sunday Eve., January 7th, 8:30 p. m. at the National Socialist Institute 3322 Douglas Blvd. Admission 10 Cts. Unemployed Free Auspices: Friends of the Militant Club

THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION "The Communist Party of America does not concern Russia, and the Communist Party of Russia does not concern America." Transport this formula of Litvinoff to Europe and you have: "The Communist Party of Germany does not concern Russia and the Communist Party of Russia does not concern Germany." OR: "The World Communist Parties do not concern Russia and Russia does not concern The World Communist Parties." Thus Spoke Stalinism!