

WORKERS
OF THE
WORLD.
UNITE

THE MILITANT



Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

VOLUME VII, NO. 11 [WHOLE NO. 215]

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 1934

PRICE 2 CENTS

Taxi Strikers Battling For Union Recognition

N.R.A. Labor Board Conspires With Bosses to Break Strike and Impose Company Union

4,500 taxi drivers and mechanics have struck again in New York City. One month after the general strike of taxi workers, the employees of the Parmelee System, one of the largest taxicab fleets in the city, have found it necessary to strike to prevent a company union from being forced upon them. They are fighting for recognition of their union, the Taxicab Drivers Union of Greater New York. They want an end to the black list, reinstatement of all men discharged for union activities, and improvement of their working conditions.

Intolerable Conditions
The intolerable conditions in the industry have impelled the taxi workers on to the road of struggle for the creation of a strong union capable of defending their interests. Despite the splendid fight they put up in the recent general strike, they gained nothing, having been maneuvered back to work through the efforts of La Guardia and Panken. The wages they earn are extremely low and the hours endless. An N.R.A. survey reveals that last year \$3.9 of the drivers received less than \$12 a week. The hours of work averaged 66.7 hours a week on the day shift and 80 hours on the night shift. Such are the conditions which the bosses want to perpetuate.

The company union, against which the men are fighting, the Drivers Brotherhood of New York, is playing the reactionary role of strike-breaker. It insists very loudly that it is not a company union, but its actions are more convincing than its pleas. Its president, a certain Mr. Irving Robbins has declared that "the Parmelee System is the sweetest company in the world. We haven't got a single kick."

Mrs. Herrick Bats for Bosses
The Regional Labor Board of the N.R.A. with Mrs. Ellmore M. Herrick, chairman, has very graciously consented to conduct a poll of the employees to ascertain which union they wish to represent them. There is however one stipulation. Merely that the drivers go back to work. But the strikers feel that they have already indicated clearly through their action which union they regard as their own. Nor has the recent experience of the Fifth Avenue bus workers, in which intimidation by the bosses eliminated any possibility for a genuine vote by the men, endeared the idea of a N.R.A. "plebiscite" to taxi drivers. The scheme of Mrs. Herrick, who reveals her true colors as a bosses' agent in every situation, could not fool the strikers into surrendering the only effective fighting weapon at their disposal—the strike.

The Strikers' Demands
At the N.R.A. code hearings the bosses have proposed a \$12 a week minimum wage and a 54 hour week. In other words they want to codify more or less the prevailing bad conditions which had driven the taxi workers to strike. Against this the drivers propose a minimum wage of \$23 a week for day work and \$25 a week for night work, a 48 hour week, and three eight hour shifts. The Taxi Drivers Union has wisely decided to seek the support of the labor movement in its fight. It has called a conference for Sunday, March 18th, at 11 A. M. at the Manhattan Lyceum, and has issued a call inviting all trade unions and workers' organizations to send delegates. But besides that, it is necessary to extend the strike as much as possible and get more garages into it.

Spring Festival and Dance

We are making all preparations for the Spring Festival. A good band will play for you. Various special features of entertainment are being elaborated, the chief of these being Chief Little-moose in a recital of his native dances. The fortune teller we promised you in our last notice will also be with us. We are also making all efforts to get a famous cartoonist to draw caricatures of famous political characters. Food and drink will be abundant. A good time is promised you all. Be with us this Saturday, March 17th at Irving Plaza. Buy your tickets in advance and save money, and help us at the same time. Tickets 35c. At door 40c.

THE PARIS COMMUNE

With the recent struggle of the heroic Austrian workers, and the militant demonstrations of the French masses before our eyes, the historical significance of the Paris Commune of 1871 takes on increased importance. When on March 18th we commemorate the seventy-one days of workers' rule in Paris we at the same time pledge ourselves to carry on the innumerable struggles of the revolutionary toilers for class emancipation. We gain inspiration for our battle from the Communards of '71, the Russian Revolution of 1905, the glorious Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the heroic January days of the German Spartacus in 1919, the courageous battles of the Bavarian and Hungarian workers of 1920, the self-sacrificing struggle of the Austrian workers in 1933.

Through all these events, and countless others, we learn the brutal and murderous character of capitalist rule. To defend the profits of the few, to keep the workers in subjection, to perpetuate capitalism, the modern slave-holding class resorts to the most violent means at its disposal. Those who dare threaten its power are met by the armed forces which exist for its defense.

The Rise of the Commune
The Paris Commune of 1871 arose as a reply to the provocation of the

national government of France. The government which had come to power on the basis of the popular republican revolution in September 1870 at the termination of the Franco-Prussian War, secretly planned to disarm the revolutionary Parisian workers organized in the National Guard. The workers responded by abolishing the old officialdom, the bureaucracy and the standing army and making the National Guard, which was open to all workers, the only military force in Paris. The executive and legislative functions of government were united in the Commune.

This revolutionary act was in open defiance of the existing democracy which by universal suffrage had elected the national government of Versailles. Let the worshippers of bourgeois democracy who give lip service to the struggle of the Communards reconcile this "anti-democratic" action with their own fine-spun theories! Their fore-runners, such as Louis Blanc and his kind, self-avowed socialists, were active in the camp of the reactionary Versailles government.

The Commune had proceeded to pave the way to a classless society. "Its special measures could not but betoken the tendency of a government of the people, by the people. Such were the abolition of the night-

(Continued on page 4)

Cannon to Speak 500 Unorganized Printers in Mass Meeting in N. Y.

The deep interest in all aspects of the question of the Fourth International, manifested again by the overflow crowd at the Cannon-Loveston debate, has prompted the New York Local of the Communist League to arrange a special lecture by James P. Cannon on the subject "The Program of the Fourth International."

This lecture will be given at Irving Plaza, Sunday, March 25th at 8 P. M. Questions and discussion will follow the lecture. Admission will be 15c. An overflow crowd is expected, and those who wish to attend are urged to secure tickets in advance from the local office of the League, at 126 East 16th St.

The lecture of comrade Cannon will deal with the fundamental questions of principle and revolutionary strategy of the present epoch and outline the program of the revolutionary Marxists for the reconstruction of the world movement. Among the questions discussed will be: Further perspectives of the imperialist epoch; the balance sheet of the post-Lenin period; the impending war and the concrete struggle against it; the defense of the Soviet Union and the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy; the attitude of the American revolutionists in the events of a Soviet-American alliance in the impending war; Fascism and the labor movement in Europe and the Marxist conclusions from the German and the Austrian experiences; the incipient Fascist movement in America and the unique problem it presents.

The New York organization of the Communist League is devoting special efforts to make this discussion of the program of the Fourth International an outstanding event and to bring out the largest crowd of the lecture season.

500 unorganized printers responded enthusiastically to a call for unionization from the newly formed Independent Printing Employees, Thursday night, March 15. For two hours, men from every craft in the typographical industry listened intently to speakers from the I. P. E. at the Stayvesant Casino mass meeting called to discuss the code.

The speakers, G. Clarke, M. Tomash and D. S. Gordon of the Executive Board of the I. P. E., outlined conditions in the industry, subjected the code to a searching criticism and called for immediate action by the unorganized. They urged the assembled printers to take advantage of the code provisions. Each speaker pointed out that any enforcement of the code to the advantage of the printers can only be by effective unionization.

A high point of the mass meeting was the thunderous applause greeting the remark of Gordon, President of the I. P. E., that "this meeting is an answer to the union officials who say the unorganized do not want to join the unions."

50 new applications were received at the mass meeting. A resolution presented by Gordon, calling for the opening of the books of the A. F. L. unions and a drive to unite the entire industry, was greeted with a forest of raised hands unanimously endorsing it.

CENTRISM AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
A timely and important article by L. D. Trotsky on the subject of centrism and the process of regroupment in the international labor movement appears in this issue on page 3.

Wholesale Layoffs on All C. W. A. Projects Begin

«Paupers Oath» Forced on Government Employees

Government Inquisition for The Workers

Questionnaire Pries Into Private Affairs

In an effort to break the spirit of the unemployed, the Roosevelt administration through the local offices of the C. W. A. is forcing a Pauper's Oath on all C. W. A. workers under the threat of immediate discharge. A questionnaire which must be sworn to before a notary public asks information on relatives, past employers, others living in household, union affiliations, etc., etc.

An army of snoopers from the City Welfare Dept. is also being mobilized to follow up the questionnaire by delving their snouts into the intimate affairs of all C. W. A. workers, wives and families, other relatives, fellow roomers and friends. The form drawn up by the past masters of snooping, the City Welfare Dept., as an application for relief, has been "improved" upon by these supporters of the "New Deal."

The "forgotten man" is being remembered and with a vengeance. Not only the forgotten man but his uncles and his aunts, his fellow roomers, any one that ever loaned him a dollar—or for whom he worked a day—all are to be remembered and investigated.

The questionnaire states "any poor person that shall sell or exchange supplies or articles furnished him for relief.... or dispose of them in any other way than as directed shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." "Poor persons", it seems, are in a different category under the law from democratic politicians.

Have you a car? Have you an insurance policy? Does any member of your family work? What is the address of your local union? License plate of car? Evidently they are in search of the car which Hoover placed in every garage. The road of the unemployed to the boasted Roosevelt prosperity at \$13.44 a week is through the pauper's oath. Need more be said to characterize the New Deal and the Capitalist system which spawned it.

Mobilized by their organizations the indignation of the C. W. A. workers is crystallizing in demonstrations, mass meetings and organizational campaigns. The Association of Civil Works Employees and the Unemployed Workers' Union, among the first to react to this new threat, are pushing a campaign of organization while carrying on the strongest protest against the questionnaire and the mass layoffs.

New York City.—The latest fad of the government, the "questionnaire" issued to all C. W. A. workers, designed to throw the C. W. A. in N. Y. State into the hands of the Home Relief Bureau, is now clearly revealed as nothing more than a trick. All along the line the workers have been led to believe that there would be no mass layoffs, and that the old projects were to be continued under a new agency.

11,000 Get the Gate
Beginning Monday, March 12, before the questionnaires had even been turned in for examination.

Big May Day Edition of the Militant

Extensive plans are being made by the editorial board of the Militant to get out a special May Day issue this year and to ensure its distribution on a far wider scale than we have ever achieved before with a single issue. To make this possible the cooperation of all the branches of the League and all Militant Builders is necessary. Next week we will report in detail some of the plans for the May Day issue. Here we want to emphasize two essential points:

1. May Day greetings to the new party of the Fourth International and its banner-bearer, the Militant. All branches, sympathizing organizations and individual supporters who wish to testify to their support of the Militant in its historic struggle can aid us materially in producing a big May Day issue by sending greetings to the Militant for publication in the special issue. The cost of the space for the greetings will be one dollar per inch. Every supporter of the Militant should make it a point of honor to have his greeting in the May Day issue.

2. Order extra bundles of the May Day issue and send cash with the order. We are so close to the cloth in finances that we will be able to buy paper and print only as many extra papers of the special issue as are paid for in advance. The rate for this special issue is one cent per copy. We urge all branches to put in big orders for this important special issue and to get the orders in early. Next week we will begin to report the orders. In addition to branches, however, individual subscribers should take it upon themselves to spread the message of the Militant this May Day. For one dollar you can secure a hundred May Day Militants. Why not order a hundred for free distribution in your shop or neighborhood or at workers' meetings? Address all bundle orders and greetings to:

The Militant,
126 East 16th Street,

(Col. Walter Delamater, Local C. W. A. administrator, announced an immediate layoff involving 54,000 men, the project along Riverside Drive has been reduced to a skeleton force, and the order is under way to knock off every big park project outside of Central Park. This specifically concerns the thousands working in Highbridge and Inwood.

This move had been carefully prepared for. The mechanism was simple. On paper, all C. W. A. workers have been given the right to organize. In effect, organization on the job was forbidden. The first step employed in breaking any spirit of "agitation" was the use of a transfer slip. All suspected workers were transferred, mainly to Riverside. This can partly explain the militant spirit of this Riverside outfit which, a short time ago, knocked off work and marched down in mass protest against wage-cuts because of cold weather.

The "Pink" Discharge Slip
However, this move was ineffective and the bosses resorted to firing. Every foreman on the job was given the right to fire anybody he cared to. All he had to do was to present the worker with a pink discharge slip. With that, a constant stream of "drops", prefaced by the simple word—"insubordination"—poured into the main office. The insubordinates were carefully picked and then the axe descended.

The present mass lay-off slips bore the words: Discharge due to excess quota; orders from Washington (which means Roosevelt, who has been hammering away night and day to have all C. W. A. men fired).

Washington says that it cannot afford to pay the wages of C. W. A. workers, and Mayor La Guardia in Tuesday's papers announces that the city cannot afford to pay them any relief. Between them both they wash their hands of any responsibility for the unemployed millions, and, with gallons of crocodile tears, send them off to starve.

—G. G.

Tough Luck for Bright Boy

Five years ago Thomas Edison named a committee to select the "brightest boy in America" to be educated at Edison's expense in the hope that he might follow in the great inventor's footsteps. The boy selected, Wilbur B. Huston, 16, Seattle, Wash., received a scholarship in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and specialized in chemistry, his favorite study, graduating with high honors last June. Returning home, he was unable to find employment in his chosen line so took the first job he found open, ordinary hand labor. "And I'm lucky to have that kind of a job," young Huston says philosophically. He has plenty of time yet to justify the faith Thomas Edison put in him.

Oh yeah!
—Exchange.

CUT WAGE OF PATERSON TEXTILE WORKERS

The silk workers of Paterson have been given a wage-cut.

The sorriest feature of the wage-cut is that it actually came about through the votes of the workers themselves themselves who were maneuvered by the bosses on the Industrial Relations Board to vote for it "in order not to break the contract." A great ferment has developed among the workers because of this. All along they have been expecting wage increases as the bosses promised when the strike was settled. A so-called "gentlemen's agreement" was made at the time of the strike's conclusion. In view of the union's promise to organize the rest of the industry the bosses agreed to increase wages within 60 days after the strike and put clocks on every loom. Putting clocks on every loom means that every pick woven would be automatically recorded and so insure complete payment for the work done. The settlement was made on the basis of \$2 for 100,000 picks. Still no move has been made by the bosses to introduce the clock system. The silk cloth is still measured by the boss in his private office and the chiseling on yardage still continues. It goes without saying that there is still no pay for such dead

work as fixing a smash caused by faulty looms and bad silk. The contract, however, calls for the payment of fifty cents an hour for fixing a smash. Very few shops pay this.

Against a solid, militant resistance, the tactics of the bosses would prove fruitless. But the union must first be consolidated. To this day there are rat shops in Paterson running 7 or more looms per man like the Maxwell. Why? (With a militant union leadership not a loom would run in any scab shop. But there's been pussy-footing and as a result Pennsylvania and other silk sections have not been organized.)

So long as these disastrous policies are continued the workers will remain at the mercy of the bosses. The present cut will not only be followed in the future by other cuts in Paterson itself but will result in a drive against living conditions in underpaid and unorganized sections elsewhere. These in turn will be used as a club to beat down the standards in Paterson in particular and the industry in general. There is only one way out of this vicious circle, a strong, militant union in Paterson, which would be the bulwark of a strong national federa-

tion of silk workers along industrial lines. Such a union will not come into existence until a militant left wing is formed in the Paterson local to drive and fight for the silk workers. Such a Left wing would vitalize the A. F. S. W.

The wage cut must be fought; the bosses must be made to understand that any attempt to drive the wages below the standards already set will be met and defeated. Again it should be repeated there is only one way to do this, consolidate the union, turn it into a militant and powerful weapon not only of defense, not only to prevent wage-cuts but to improve the conditions in the industry as a whole. The union must demand the immediate institution of the clocks, payment for smashes and bad warps. Every shop in Paterson must be a union shop. The American Federation of Silk Workers must take the initiative to organize all the other silk centers, especially Pennsylvania.

—A SILK WORKER.

854 New Subs!

With the addition of sixty-five new subs the drive registered a new high record: 854. The complete record up to date follows:

New York Local	384
Minneapolis Br.	108
Kansas City Br.	48
Pittsburgh Br.	32
New Castle Br.	24
L. Brown	20
Boston Br.	16
J. Hamilton	12
A. Teacher	12
Chicago Br.	12
Youngstown Br.	12
F. Simington	8
Philadelphia Br.	8
M. Steinbach	8
Chicago Friends of Militant Club	8
Davenport Br.	8
D. Marcus	8
D. L.	8
J. Ruby	8
G. Papcun	8
S. Hardy	8
L. Goodman	8
Q. Parker	8

G. Kots	6
Los Angeles Br.	5
M. Hurwitz	5
Buffalo Br.	4
G. Ellis	4
D. Fogel	4
M. Gendelman	4
C. Hoffman	4
T. Mill	4
Salt Lake City Br.	4
W. Toupin	4
H. Sukut	4
M. O'Dwyer	4
M. McLeod	4
St. Louis Br.	4
L. Murphy	4
M. Koehler	4
C. Genfan	4
R. Carlson	4
TOTAL	854

That leaves us only 146 subs to go to reach our goal of 1,000 new subs on the special Club Plan of four prepaid six-months sub cards for a dollar. Can we do it within the next two weeks? We think it can be done. What do our Militant Builders say?

GRamercy 5-9524 - - -
This is the phone number of the Militant, The Communist League and The International Workers School.