

## FROM THE FIRING LINE

### Clothing Workers Fight Suspension

Eight members of Local 4, Amalgamated Clothing Workers, have been given a suspended sentence on charges of belonging to an opposition group in the local. Expulsion is threatened if they take further part in the activities of this group. Some members of the group declared themselves to be members of the Rank and File Committee which is not confined to Local 4 but is a general left wing organization working for a left wing progressive program throughout the entire Amalgamated Union. Only in this one local, Cutters Local No. 4 of New York has the right of members to belong to any group been challenged. The A. C. W., which was founded in a struggle against a bureaucratic machine has prided itself on its democratic and progressive policies and procedure. Nevertheless, this Local administration takes upon itself to discipline members for exercising a right long recognized and practiced in all progressive or democratic unions, that is the right of members to organize groups around such policies as they consider fitted for their union.

We wish to publicly protest against the following violation of elementary democratic rights of union members within their own organization. (1) The suspended sentences and threats of expulsion for belonging to the Rank and File Committee and the barring of members from belonging to organized groups within the union, who loyally support the union and whose aim is to make it a more effective instrument for their struggles. (2) The violation of the constitutional rights of the eight members who were never given copies of the charges against them and who were also refused the constitutional rights of being represented by any

member designated by them at the trial. At a time like this when organized labor, both in this and other countries, is battling for the right to organize into unions of their own choice, etc., it should be the bounden duty of all organized workers to see to it that the widest democracy prevails in their own and other unions.

We hope that this protest of a group of members of a trade union, which has always paraded as a progressive and democratic union, will draw the attention of all honest and truly progressive workers and secure their sympathy and support in our struggle against the violation of elementary democratic rights and against the intimidation of a suspended sentence and the threat of expulsion that hangs over the heads of our eight members.

MEMBERS OF LOCAL 4.  
(Signed)

### Allard Elected

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Dec. 19.—Gerry Allard, member of the Workers Party, was overwhelmingly elected to the pit committee of his local union in recent elections held in the Progressive Miners of America. Fred Schmidt and Walter Repasky, young militant coal diggers, were elected as co-members of the committee. The local union has 437 members. It is a working local with job control under the jurisdiction of the new Illinois miners union.

Officers elected for the incoming year are: James Peyton, president; Cap Hollensack, vice-president; Fred Farrand, recording secretary; John Beamer, financial secretary; Chas. Peyton, treasurer; Louis Cooke, door keeper; Mike Mayerhoffer, Jim Burgess and Ed Donaldson, sick committee; Gerry Allard, Fred Schmidt and Walter Repasky, pit committee.

### Relief Head Aids Cops, League Finds

ALLENTOWN, Pa. Dec. 31.—The grievance committee of the Lehigh County Unemployed League recently disclosed that relief officials were working hand in hand with the Allentown Police Department. The facts are as follows:

M. Harisko, father of a 16 year old boy wanted as the alleged murderer of a night watchman, was cut from his job on a relief project shortly after the shooting occurred on Nov. 15. The son has successfully eluded the police since.

Although Harisko has a family dependent upon him, all relief was stopped and he received neither food, clothing nor coal. Reduced to extreme destitution and misery he applied time and again in vain to various relief officials. After a month of suffering, Harisko was approached by the police with the infamous proposition that if he would turn the son over to them he would be given immediately the relief due him.

#### Appeals to League

Angered, Harisko brought the case to the attention of the Unemployed League. When it was presented to Mrs. Maomi Sheema, local supervisor of relief, she vehemently denied collaboration with the police. However, when she opened the folder containing the records of the Harisko case, what should appear but numerous clippings and a police photograph of the boy.

The committee demanded to know the meaning of this and Mrs. Sheema blushing replied: "As social workers we are interested in the welfare of the boy. We want to see that no harm befalls him."

Due to the efforts of the League the family is again receiving relief. The police department and relief officials are in an embarrassing predicament.

## United Fronting In Pittsburgh

### PENNSYLVANIA LEAGUES TRY AGAIN

#### But Councils and S. P. Group Forget to Tell The Rank and File What It's All About

By E. R. McKINNEY

PITTSBURGH.—Once again the Communist Party and its Unemployed Councils have demonstrated themselves to be ineffectual instruments for promoting the united front with other unemployed organizations. For different reasons the same criticism can be directed against the Socialist Party and the Unemployed Citizens League in Pittsburgh.

The story begins about two months ago when the Allegheny County Emergency Relief Board decided to set up a central complaint bureau to be called the "Public Relations Office" (P.R.O.). The A.C.E.R.B. ruled that relations of the unemployed organizations should be with the P.R.O. only and that in the future no unemployed committees would be admitted to the relief stations.

Before the Public Relations Office had been publicly announced, the Relief Board called for a meeting of the unemployed organizations. The Pennsylvania Unemployed League (P.U.L.) in Pittsburgh, had information that this meeting was called for the purpose of telling the unemployed leagues of the board's intention to establish the P.R.O. The P.U.L. immediately sent a letter to the Unemployed Citizens League (U.C.L.) which is led by the Socialist Party, suggesting that the U.C.L. and the P.U.L. get together before the meeting with the board and lay plans for meeting with the P.R.O. The U.C.L. did not reply to this letter and each unemployed organization went individually into the meeting with the A.C.E.R.B. At a subsequent meeting the P.U.L. presented a counter-plan to the P.R.O. and was the only organization to make definite and concrete counter-proposals.

About one week after the first meeting with the board Robert Lieberman, S. P. leader of the U.C.L., sent out a letter to all unemployed organizations suggesting a meeting at U.C.L. headquarters to organize a united front against the P.R.O. When Lieberman was asked why he had not replied to the P.U.L. letter his reply was to ask, "How did you know what was going to be discussed at the Board meeting?"

#### On the Line

The P.U.L. decided to go into the united front called by Lieberman and the U.C.L., along with the Unemployed Councils, and the Rank and File Veterans. We insisted that our united action must not be directed against the P.R.O. as such but must be a demand for the admission of unemployed league committees to the relief units.

The P.U.L. began to picket relief stations in support of this demand. At the East Liberty relief station the pickets were arrested. The police contended that there could be no strike of the unemployed and that therefore they had no right

to picket. Furthermore, the police took the position that the picket line of about fifteen was a "parade" for which a permit was necessary.

#### Not a Parade

Despite the arrests the picketing was kept up. At the time the hearing for those arrested was in progress the picket line was still on duty. At the hearing, despite urging from the police, the magistrate decided that a picket line was not a "parade" and that the unemployed could not be stopped from using this form of protest and demonstration. Thus the P.U.L. established the right of its members to be on the sidewalk in front of a relief station.

While the P.U.L. was leading this militant action the Unemployed Councils in the united front committee were advocating a county-wide demonstration to be conducted both inside and outside the relief stations. Some of the unemployed were to demonstrate outside while others were to lay siege to the inside. Out of its experience the P.U.L. knew that such methods would prove futile and defeatist on a county-wide scale. We had tried them and knew that other tactics were more effective. The U. C., the U.C.L. and the Rank and File Veterans voted to ignore this experience. The P.U.L. decided not to participate in the demonstration.

#### And It Failed

The demonstration was called and was a failure. At only two stations was there any action worth while. There are 10 stations inside the city. At the South Side station about 200 workers turned out but no leader or speaker either from the U.C. or the U.C.L. showed up. At the time these South Side workers—most of whom belonged to the Unemployed Councils—were loitering around the relief station waiting for the "speakers" to come, the two Unemployed Council leaders who had advocated laying siege to the relief stations, were busy resting in the headquarters of the U.C.L. over one mile away.

#### Forgot Rank and File

At a meeting of the Unemployed Council the next day, one leader made the statement that the demonstration was a failure because the P.U.L. had refused to participate.

After a five week's effort the P.U.L. discovered that the rank and file of the U.C.L. and the U.C. had never been informed what the united front was all about.

#### What Councils Wanted

There was plenty of evidence for the conclusion that the U. C. was only interested to put Lieberman "on the spot" and to push their everlasting schemes for forcing merger on the other organizations.

The P.U.L. decided to discontinue participation in such tomfoolery and sent a committee to so notify the next united front meeting. In this meeting the P.U.L. delegates were surprised to discover that rank and file members of the U.C.L. and U.C. also had come to the conclusion that it was not a genuine united front. Speaker after speaker from the U. C. charged that the rank and file did not know what was going on, that their leaders had given no information or directions to the membership and that they were finding it very difficult to get the members to demonstrate. Collins, the best militant in the U.C.L., charged that the U.C. leaders only showed up on Sunday at the committee meeting.

After these speeches E. R. McKinney delivered the decision of the P.U.L. When he had finished a U.C. member made a motion that a leaflet be distributed exposing him before the workers.

#### U. C. Hatchet Men

Then one of the U. C. hatchetmen took the floor and made a provocative speech in which McKinney was called a "scab" and likened to a "strike-breaker". This speaker contended that the P.U.L. was composed of "honest workers" and that they must be taken away from the P.U.L. leaders.

After this speech the Unemployed Council speakers who had severely criticized their leaders and called the united front a "fake" decided that not only were their leaders OK but that the failure of the united front could be laid solely at the door of the P.U.L. Not the "honest workers" in the P.U.L., of course, but their leaders.

The P.U.L. is going ahead with the work of organizing and fighting for relief. They are catching up on ground lost while the united front was being attempted. Three concentration points in the city have been established in which large and strong locals are being built.

FOLLOW THE NEWS IN THE NEW MILITANT.

SUBSCRIBE TO NEW MILITANT

## IN THE UNIONS

By KARL LORE

### Local 802 A.F.M.

One of the most encouraging features of the growth of trade unionism in the last year and a half has been the development of organization spirit among the white collar and professional groups. The existing unions in the field—the teachers, office workers, etc.—have made gains while in various cities throughout the country librarians, artists, auto salesmen, drug clerks and innumerable other similar groups have become part of the labor movement.

There are those who look to this development to cure many of the evils of racketeering and gangsterism that exist in the unions at present. The ladies and gentlemen of the white collar class, so the argument runs, won't put up with the things that the overall stiff is too dumb to kick against. They may be an influence in that direction. But glance for a moment at a few pages from the history of the American Federation of Musicians which tell of the fight of Local 802 in New York for the right of self government.

### 13 Years Hard Luck

The A. F. of M. and its president Joseph Weber have always been notorious in the labor movement for the hard boiled bureaucracy which they exercised over the membership. It was one of the first unions to go in for union representation in a big way. Locals were summarily suspended and all their functions placed in the hands of a Weber appointee. In 1921 the rights of the 15,000 members of the New York local were thus taken away. One flare of revolt after the other has taken place in those thirteen years of dictator rule but it is only recently that the membership has begun to win back its rights. Early in 1934 the membership took up the fight again. The local was being milked of \$250,000 a year in dues and fines without even a hint as to its use. Financial reports were never made. Thugs were used against them. Seven Weber appointees sat on the local government board of 13 while the membership was graciously permitted to elect the remaining minority. Edward Canavan, president of 802 was paid \$10,000 a year for ruling a membership who had him crumpled down their throats. Weber himself as the big chief, rakes in a salary of \$25,000 per annum plus \$3,000 for personal expenses, \$5 for every day he spends out of New York and additional "general expenses".

### 3,728 to 127

A membership vote taken in the local last March approved by 3,728 to 127 the demand for self government and the establishment of such rights as other locals of the Musicians Union enjoy under the constitution. The practically unanimous opposition of his N. Y. membership had its effect even on the rhinoceros hide of Brother Weber. At the union convention held a few months later, a decision handed down by the National Executive Board granted self government in all particulars with one exception—Canavan was to remain local president for the next two years at his regular ten thousand a year salary.

But the fight was not over. Fifteen of the active oppositionists were tried by the governing board of the local, found guilty and fined \$300 each. On their refusal to pay they were expelled from the organization.

### Labor In Court

It is bad for labor progressives to fight their union officialdom in the courts. The cards are generally stacked against them by the alliances that so often exist between the district attorney and the union leadership. More important, however, is the need to settle the problems of labor within the movement and without recourse to the courts of capitalism. But there are times when it cannot be avoided. This was one of them and by legal injunction the ousted members were reinstated in the union ranks.

### Administration Out

In the elections held in local 802 a few weeks ago the administration got a licking. A clean sweep eliminated every old official with the exception of Canavan who has his two years to go by special dispensation.

While New York thus makes progress, the situation of the national organization is not a happy one. Its total membership is 101,115 musicians, a loss of 45,215 within five years. A resolution introduced at the June convention calling for the reduction of initiation fees (\$50 at present) in order to make it possible to carry on organization work was turned down cold.

### Building Trades

Some weeks ago in this column I discussed the scrap in the building trades and the dilemma of the executive board of the American Federation of Labor in handling the serious split that has developed in the Building Trades Department. Latest news indicates that the differences are growing worse with no settlement in sight. The effort to get the books of the department away from the officials of the "out-law" group has not succeeded but the insurgents have been evicted from their offices in the A. F. of L. Building in Washington and have set up shop across the street. And the combatants on both sides, we regret to note, are not behaving with anything like the dignity and the restraint we have a right to expect from the responsible leaders of the very respectable American Federation of Labor.

Nevertheless, it is still very doubtful whether a final showdown will see either group withdrawing from the Federation fold. The consequences in the way of jurisdictional fights would be too horrible to even consider. It is significant that the fight has not yet been brought into the local and state building trades councils but is restricted for the present to the highest body. A complete breakdown of all negotiations between the warring groups would mean the dismemberment of every subordinate council in the country.

### AGED MAN JAILED FOR SNARING RABBITS

ALLENTOWN, Pa. Dec. 31.—Following a four day (day and night) vigil by game wardens, John Hontz, age 76, resident of an improvised shack of pasteboard and scrap tin, was arrested when he came to remove a rabbit from a snare. Hontz, who is not on relief but makes a living the best he can doing odd jobs, was committed to the Lehigh County Jail on the charge of "illegal trapping".

## Contract for Paterson ---- What a Contract!

### Silk Workers Must Tear It Up and Fling It at the Bosses

By FELIX GIORDANO

After some six weeks of negotiations, between the Paterson District of the American Federation of Silk Workers and the Silk Manufacturers Association of Paterson, the terms of the proposed contract for the plain goods department have finally been made public.

Since the end of the national textile strike last September the silk workers of Paterson have been working under conditions which were becoming daily more intolerable. The bosses declared the old contract no longer in effect and proceeded without any action on the part of the union to chisel and slash wages, discriminate against militants, and all that goes with the dear old racket.

The union officialdom, meanwhile was busy . . . watching and waiting. This policy has now brought its ripe fruit: A CONTRACT. And what a contract!

#### "No More Strikes"

The Paterson News summarized its essence in a front page cartoon which portrayed the silk worker shaking hands with the boss under the title of "NO MORE STRIKES FOR TWO YEARS". On this point the contract is specific.

Wages are left for arbitration. "Grievances" are left to an "impartial" Grievance Board. Ample provision is made for any and all decisions, and recommendations, and rulings by any and all government boards, "official or agency on the subject of MACHINE OR WORK-LOAD PER WORKER together with CHANGES IN RATES OF PAY when the machine load is changed, whether the said decision, ruling or recommendation is made to apply generally to the industry at large or to individual cases". But not the question of strikes. Strikes are out!

Are the workers to have any say on the subject of work-load, or "changes" in pay? Not on your life! Not while this contract can keep them down! The bosses have appointed the National Textile Relations Board, the Work Assignments Board and so forth and so on for this very purpose. All that is left for the workers is to accept the contract that binds them and hand and foot to accept all decisions of all bosses' boards for the next two years.

#### Perpetuates 40-Hour Week

The Paterson yellow press and the bosses can very well rub their hands and chuckle, for the workers will be bound for two years to the same and worse conditions in their industry. The contract perpetuates the 40-hour week; it binds them to accept as conclusive any decision on wages and work load that the bosses' boards may hand them.

There are 29 articles in the contract, each article a link in the chain that binds the workers and the union to the wheels of the government arbitration machinery. The only article without a joker in the contract is article 24 which

reads: "This agreement is intended to comply in all respects with Section 7a of the National Recovery Act and with the interpretations and construction thereof."

You bet! Here is collective bargaining in all its glory. It's the bosses' bargain, with the bosses collecting the profits and the workers collectively getting it in the neck.

But, if they have any grievances, they can bring them to the Grievance Committee. The contract provides for everything. Even the bosses relatives, who "shall be entitled to be employed at all times, whether they were previously employed or not". There are plenty of scab agencies to provide the bosses with all the second cousins, uncles and other relatives the bosses may need to add to their family tree. "In other respects, members of the union will be given preference in retaining their jobs." (1)

#### "Trial Period" Joker

To make assurance doubly sure, Art. 20 sets a trial period, averaging 4 weeks, in which time the worker is no regular employee and is not "governed by this agreement." In other words for a full month the bosses have ample opportunity to discover whether or not he can cut undercover, chisel and bamboozle to his heart's desire. And if he can't get his way as in the past he can fire, or hire a new batch, or call upon the family tree.

Such is the contract which the official organ of the silk and dye workers hails as "THE END OF STRIFE". The December 21 issue of the Silk & Dye Worker, official organ of the A.F.S.W., has the gall to state that this contract is based upon the contract recently won by the dyers, in which the dyers gained not only a substantial wage increase but also the 36-hour week. The only comparison between the two contracts is that the worst features are in both, but none of the gains won by militant struggle are contained in the contract arrived at through "peaceful negotiations and collaboration". Worse yet, the leading article of this official organ boasts that "the union maintains its right to strike"

#### "The Right Strike"

This right to strike is very well taken care of with a few big IF's. Here they are:

IF the workers have a grievance or a dispute, they must submit it to the Grievance Committee. The Committee has five days in which to rule. IF the Committee rules that this grievance or dispute is a violation of the agreement, and IF it passes a decision which the bosses or the workers do not comply with, THEN the Relations Board has two days in which to rule that "the decision has not or is not being complied with". IF and WHEN the Relations Board does so rule, THEN "and thereafter

the LOCKOUT or strike may be resorted to for purposes of discipline in the mill in question."

There is this boasted "right to strike", such as it actually is in the contract.

To be sure, this agreement can be modified if notice in writing is served in 30 days. But one thing cannot be modified, and it is exactly the "right to strike". "Paragraph 17 of this agreement may not . . . be modified or altered in any respect."

There are no two ways open for the silk workers of Paterson, as regards the proposed contract: tear it up and fling it in the faces of the bosses. The militant traditions of Paterson, the long years of struggle of the silk workers, the splendid record of the recent dyers' strike have been flouted by the very proposal of such a contract. The shameful contract must be rejected.

## Richberg Smokes Peace Pipe As He Exonerates the Poor

WASHINGTON. — Donald R. Richberg was furious when he learned that General Hugh S. Johnson, retired, had written a series of articles in which he, Richberg himself, was "exposed". Lolling in his easy-chair, his bald forehead glistening, his broad nose twitching, his heavy underlip between his teeth, lawyer Richberg wrote a letter threatening "legal action".

Said the General, "The ants of conscience are crawling in Richberg's pants!"

Thanks to friends, the day has been saved. Christmas found the NRA moguls, past and present, smoking the pipe of peace, and there will be no "exposures". Good old Santa Claus.

Richberg has undergone a strange liberal sea-change since coming to Washington.

When President Roosevelt elevated him from a big Chicago labor lawyer to Position Number 1 in the Washington regime, liberals hailed him as a Godsend, a wonderful man, in fact a liberal. But when the Chamber of Commerce people clapped hands and took him in tow the liberals slunk away, looking sheepish.

Today the chairman of the President's Emergency Council lolls in his desk-chair and explains to interviewers who want the story of what has happened to him, "They must have thought I was more radical than I am. Fact is, I'm not a partisan—I don't take sides." (Bolagna)

#### Doesn't Blame Poor Men

About the workers, he says:

"I have had a good deal of experience with poor men, and I can honestly say that I haven't found them as a class either anarchists or reckless experimenters. For the most part they have struck me as extraordinarily timid. I don't deny," he continues seriously, "that they want a change, but who can blame them for that?"

Indeed, Richberg has a large heart and a bank account from all reports that would choke a cow. He hates "exposures"

INDIANAPOLIS.—The 40-hour maximum work week in future contracts has been voted by the International Typographical Union. A special assessment of 3% on wages for unemployment relief was also approved wherever locals deem it necessary.

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