

FROM THE FIRING LINE

League in Airport Strike Bares Huge Graft; Hits at Forced Labor

WOOD COUNTY, Ohio.—Attempts to work scabs on the Wood County airport project, where for the past three weeks, members of the Wood County Unemployed League have been striking, were crushed by a militant mass picket line which was formed on the morning of January 2 in zero weather by members of the Rossford, East Rossford, Lake Township and Perrysburg Unemployed Leagues.

The strike was called when it was learned that the airport on which federal funds and relief labor were being used is the private property of a corporation, the Trans-American Airway Corp.

As a result of an Unemployed League investigation, it was discovered that in December 1933, E. B. Richardson, receiver for this corporation, had leased the property to the city of Toledo for \$1,000, the lease to extend from that date until November 30, 1938. In the same transaction, also for a consideration of \$1,000, the city of Toledo appointed and designated Richardson as sole operator, with the proceeds from the airport to go to the operator and his company.

Even prior to the time of this transaction, former mayor Thatcher of Toledo had permitted the use of Community Welfare House inmates as laborers on the private property of this corporation without pay.

PMA "Wild Cat" In Springfield

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—Springfield miners have a contract with coal operators, but that doesn't stop them from using direct action when they need it as a weapon to gain immediate demands. The members of the Progressive Miners Union at Jefferson mine here struck last week against the Brewerton Coal Co.

Pickets were on hand Friday and the mine closed tight. The miners charged that they were being compelled to accept pay by buying coal from the company at fabulous prices.

The Brewerton Coal Co., notorious for its robberies, functions under the camouflage of a Federal receivership. For many years one couldn't even whisper condemnation of the company for fear of being brought before the court for contempt. Now, however, the miners have taken the only logical action—strike.

This practice was exposed by the Unemployed League in Toledo and the racket was discontinued.

Soon after the investigation which attended this exposure, the Wood County officials and Relief Administration started to assign Wood County unemployed to work on this project, paying them with federal funds.

In the summer of 1934, the Relief Administration attempted to institute a 30c an hour wage rate instead of the CWA rate of 50c. The Wood County Unemployed League called a county strike on all projects, and after a militant mass demonstration before the county armory at Bowling Green, secured a rate of 50c an hour for common labor and union wages where the same applied.

Following hard on the heels of the airport disclosures came the announcement that a new "work relief" project is to be inaugurated in Wood County. Direct relief will no longer be granted in Wood County, says Earle C. Duncan.

Meeting on Work Projects Called by Allentown League

ALLENTOWN, Pa., Jan. 7.—Step by step, by committee action and mass demonstrations, the Unemployed Leagues of Area 6, comprising Lehigh, Northampton and Carbon Counties, have forced relief officials to grant additional necessities to the unemployed.

First food, then clothing, then fuel, then rent. Electric light bills have now been added to the list. Pressure became so strong that Weston Kelsey, Relief Director of Area 6, took a committee consisting of Lester Heckman of the Lehigh County Unemployed League and Russell Shuey of the Northampton County Unemployed League to Harrisburg to present the case for the payment of light bills before Alvin Guyler, Field Director. The conference resulted in specific plans being drawn up for the payment of these bills. The committee was also instrumental in forcing the distribution of additional surplus commodities.

In spite of these gains relief remains woefully inadequate and the unemployed are uniting as never before in order to force additional demands and to protest the forced labor scheme which is now being foisted on them.

"Budgetary Deficiency" A new uniform state plan is being enforced for distributing relief.

country relief czar, but the unemployed will be "permitted" to work out their budgetary relief allowance for the equivalent in cash, which makes no allowance for transportation to the job, protective clothing, rent, coal, etc. . . . Those assigned to these projects under the new "plan" were sent "yellow-dog" cards which they were supposed to sign, designating whether they accepted the offer—and if they did not accept, informing them that they would be cut off the relief rolls.

The locals of the Wood County Unemployed Union have already adopted resolutions charging the new relief program as constituting a cut in relief and forced labor, and demanding a minimum of \$15 per week for work to be increased proportionally with price rises, which the resolutions add should not be considered as in any way altering the demand of the National Unemployed Union for \$30 per week and a 30-hour week.

A huge mass meeting has been called for Bowling Green, and the Wood County Unemployed League is planning to extend the airport strike to a county-wide strike against the entire new forced labor program.

Under this plan a maximum budget is drawn up for each family. The budget provides for food, clothing, rent, fuel, light and gas. From the budget is subtracted any income the family might have; the remainder is called the "budgetary deficiency." One individual from each family is given work at the rate of 50c an hour to earn the amount of the budgetary deficiency. The main objections to this plan are:

Budgets are set too low for human decency; no provision is made for medical and dental care or for paying insurance and debts; skilled workers are forced to work at rates for unskilled labor; since only one member of a family can be given a job, many able bodied men and women are excluded from work; political preference is being shown in allotting foremen, timekeepers and supervisors' jobs.

A mass meeting for all unemployed and employed workers will be held at the Harrison-Morton High School Auditorium on Friday, Jan. 11. At this meeting relief grievances will be aired and plans for forming committees on every project will be presented. This will be the first of a series of monthly mass rallies held by the Lehigh County Unemployed League. Workers songs and dramatics will form an integral part of each meeting.

The Party at Work

RAPID GROWTH IN NEW YORK

New members are being assigned to the various New York City branches at the rate of ten to twelve a week. One of the significant features of this drift towards the new party is that most of the new members are former members of political parties, such as the Communist Party, the Industrial Union Party, the I.W.O., the Weisbord group, and so on. No systematic membership drive has been started yet, but plans are now being laid for an intensive propaganda campaign on a city wide scale.

The attendance at the Sunday night forums has far exceeded all expectations, and more than doubled the attendances at the former C.L.A. and A.V.P. forums. Preparations are now under way for a joint meeting of the Workers Party and the Spartacus Youth League to commemorate the death of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Robespierre, to be held on Sunday evening, Jan. 13, at Irving Plaza. Another event for which preparations are being made is the Lenin Memorial meeting to be held on Wednesday evening, Jan. 23, at the Irving Plaza. The Cultural Committee has arranged an interesting program of dances and music.

The Cultural Committee is a newly formed group organized to bring color and drama into the movement and to form a nucleus of dance groups, dramatic groups and musical groups. This committee meets every Friday evening at 7 P.M. at 144 Second Ave. All friends and sympathizers who are capable of contributing to this work are urged to be present at these meetings.

ALLENTOWN MAPS ACTIVITY

ALLENTOWN, Pa.—The Allentown Branch at its last meeting elected an executive committee consisting of Lester Heckman, Ed Moser, John Gardner, Bill Reich and Frank Collins. Other officers of the branch are Ed Moser, secretary; Frank Collins, treasurer; John Beisel, literature agent; Grant Minna, branch organizer; Bill Reich, industrial organizer. The following fraction chairmen have been elected: Unemployed League: Andy Budhas; Silk, Corn-

TWO MONTH ACTION PROGRAM OF YOUNGSTOWN BRANCH

1. Double membership of Branch by March 1, 1935.
2. Forty dollars from Youngstown for Party Foundation Fund.
3. Fifteen new subscribers to the New Militant and a weekly bundle sale of 25 copies by March 1.
4. Ten new subscribers for the New International and a monthly bundle sale of 25 copies by March 1.
5. Distribute 1,000 leaflets, sell 100 tickets before meeting, and advertise with announcement on auto in order to get attendance of at least 150 for Cannon's meeting here.
6. Organize trade union contacts as basis for local section of Progressive Trade Union movement.
7. Organize an advanced study class by February 1 in addition to regular classes in fundamentals of Marxism.
8. Sell at least 300 copies of the Declaration of Principles and Constitution of the Workers Party by March 1.
9. Help local Spartacus Youth League to organize one additional branch by March 1.
10. Lay basis in unemployed movement for state organizer to come in and organize local Unemployed Leagues with help of branch by March 1.

ORDER W. P. PAMPHLETS NOW.

Party Lists 6 Pamphlets

The first six pamphlets to be published for the Workers Party of the U. S. by the Pioneer Publishers have been tentatively outlined to include the following subjects:

1. The Goal of the Workers Party.
2. Trade Union Tactics and Strategy.
3. Unemployment.
4. The Recent Events in the Soviet Union.
5. Short History of the Internationals.
6. The Workers Party and its Program.

Subscription for the six pamphlets, which will be published at the rate of one a month, are now being accepted. The price for the series is 50c, and may be secured by writing to the Pioneer Publishers, 102 East 11th Street, New York City. All friends and sympathizers are urged to subscribe immediately as this is the only method of financing the publication program.

Injunction Seen As Lewis Move

(Special to the New Militant) SPRINGFIELD, Ill. Dec. 24.—Federal Judge Wham of the East St. Louis district court, denied the United Electric Coal Co. an injunction to prevent mass picketing by the members of the Progressive Miners of America. The Red Bird mine, operated at Freeburg in the Belleville coal field, has been shut down since April 1, 1934, excepting for a few days when the miners permitted operation under tentative plans.

The efforts to get the injunction were avowedly the plans of John L. Lewis, tyrant of the United Mine Workers, who is attempting to break the Progressive Union in the Belleville territory.

YOU SAID IT, FRANKLIN! In spite of our efforts and in spite of our talk we have not weeded out the overprivileged and we have not effectively lifted up the underprivileged.—Pres. Roosevelt in his message to congress Jan. 4.

Gotham's 1,200,000 Unemployed Face '35

CITY JUGGLES WITH RELIEF

Councils Dormant - Socialist Unions With Cap In Hand - Attitude of Jobless Changing

By AL DASCH

The beginning of the New Year finds the unemployed in New York City in a more precarious position than at any time in the past five years. The city flop houses are filled to capacity with homeless men and women; and if the lengthy breadlines no longer arouse comment, it is only because the sight has become an all too common occurrence. 1,200,000 people in the city are totally unemployed, while more than 300,000 families depend for existence on the starvation budgets allotted to them by the Emergency Relief Administration. Due to the lack of organization on the part of the jobless, the city administration has been able to direct a whole series of attacks against the unemployed in the past few weeks.

Over six thousand families were dropped completely from the relief rolls lately. The favorite excuse was that a close relative (who in many cases had a family of his own and did not even live together with those on relief) had an income exceeding the budget of the relief bureau for that number in a family. At present no more applications of single workers are being accepted. All clothing vouchers have been stopped. This leaves the unemployed without even a minimum of clothing with which to face the winter.

Waiting for Snow

Some time ago the city realized that the budget of the Emergency Relief Administration could not take care of all the needs of its "clients." An elaborate snow removal plan was worked out by which 23,000 heads of families would receive work at fifty cents per hour. The Department of Public Welfare stated that the money made on this job would go fully to supplement the relief the men received and nothing would be deducted from their monthly vouchers.

Last week the Department of Public Welfare sent out letters to the men enrolled informing them that half of what they made would have to be deducted from their budget. In view of the fact that clothing vouchers had been stopped it advised them that every twenty-five cents made on the job would be wisely invested if clothes were purchased with it.

Another trick is to transfer those on CWA projects who have no children to home relief, where the amount received by a family of two is less than the small wages paid on work relief. This works both ways, as now only the heads of large families are being placed on work projects. Those placed as laborers received \$48 a month for two weeks work. This is less than many of them received before and in that case their "earnings" are supposed to be supplemented by a check from the home relief bureau making up the difference. Most of the men however are unaware of this and do not apply for the additional amount. The result is their families have to get along as best they can on the miserable wages they make.

Work Relief

Since the mass lay-offs last summer for "loafing" the men are, as they put it, "leery." A host of Fusion and Tammany favorites in the positions of foremen harass the men with the threat of "knocking them off." The result is that those on work relief are driven to work extremely hard for what amounts to \$12 a week. The speed-up plus the small wages have caused a great deal of dissatisfaction. The work bureau, however, has hit upon a happy scheme with which to allay protest. Together with the threat of being fired for freshness a constant rumor is circulated that with the beginning of the new year those employed are going to receive steady work at the rate of five dollars a day.

Lack of Organization

The only reason that one blow after another can be aimed at the unemployed of New York City without resistance on their part is the lack of an unemployed organization capable of championing the jobless. While cities throughout the country have had their unemployed band together and force concessions from the relief administrations, New

ATTENTION!

Newark Workers
The Workers Party of the U. S. will open its new headquarters at 85 Springfield Avenue, on FRIDAY, JAN. 18, at 8 P.M.

Max Shachtman
will speak on
"ALARM SIGNALS IN THE SOVIET UNION"
Admission 10 Cents

York's unemployed have remained unorganized.

There has never been an unemployed movement here that had any sort of a base. The Unemployed Councils of the Socialist Party pursued a policy of going cap in hand to the relief centers. An organization which did not believe in militancy and did not explain the need for more than temporary alleviation (need of unemployment insurance) could only recruit members who left them as soon as they received their hand out.

Nor could the Communist Party controlled Unemployed Councils give guidance to the jobless of this city. They managed for a time to make a furor, more because of the bravery of the rank and file members of the Communist party, who engaged in more than one bitter battle with the police, than of any mass influence the Councils had. The mechanical directives transplanted from the party to the Councils, played no little part in isolating them from the unemployed.

Naturally enough, such an organization could not exist for long. For the past year and a half the Councils have been dormant. Now the Stalinists are trying to arouse interest in them by a National Congress for Unemployment Insurance held in Washington. They could have no more success with this Congress than they had with their National Hunger Marches. Their unemployed line has not changed and the congress was staged under the same narrow limitations that mark all C. P. efforts.

Attitude of Unemployed Changing

At the same time it must not be overlooked that the unemployed of this city manifested a certain apathy towards organization. Because of the size of the city and the multitude of industries, a jobless worker here looked upon his period of unemployment as something temporary. His period of accepting relief was considered a temporary one and he was therefore not very much interested in an unemployed organization. Particularly, when those in existence had so little to offer. Today a different situation exists. The idea that unemployment is permanent for millions of workers and not something temporary is beginning to seep through.

All signs indicate that if a realistic program for the unemployed, expressing their demands is worked out, an unemployed organization answering the needs of the jobless can be built. Such an organization must be one that is founded on militant lines and will embrace the unemployed of every political belief. There must be a direct link up between those on work relief and home relief—no separation of the two. It goes without saying that between this unemployed organization and the trade unions of the city a definite tie-up must exist. Undoubtedly in the coming months sharp struggles will break out among those employed on work relief projects since there the unemployed have a more stable base than those on the lists of the home relief bureaus. Particularly, since it is the plan of the Roosevelt government to put as many as possible on work relief.

The unemployed of New York are realizing the necessity of organization and the coming months will prove that they have absorbed the lessons of the crises provided they are given the necessary leadership.

\$3,500 Is Family Need

(By Special Correspondent)

HARRISBURG, Pa. Jan. 7.—The Pennsylvania State Planning Board in a report to Governor Pinchot and the National Resources Board, announced that a minimum annual income of \$3,500 is necessary to provide "reasonable human needs" for a "statistical family" of 4.23 persons. In defense of the position that this budget is not extravagant the Board stated that "the man of the family is allowed one suit per year and one overcoat every two years." One half pair of suspenders per man per year is allowed. The report further states: "Approximately 90 percent of Pennsylvania's families had incomes, even in the prosperous year of 1929, that were inadequate for the complete attainment of reasonable comfort."

Another state board, the State Emergency Relief Board, has also drawn up budgets, not for "statistical families" but for actual families on relief. Its budget for a family of 4.23 persons amounts to \$14.10 per week in contrast to the "theoretical budget" of \$67.50 per week presented by the State Planning Board.

FOLLOW THE NEWS IN THE NEW MILITANT.

IN THE UNIONS

By KARL LORE

Saving John L. Lewis Storm on the Horizon

Hot Oil Compulsory Arbitration

The National Industrial Recovery Act saved the skin of John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers. He had worn the once-powerful union to a frazzle, had expelled the militant elements who opposed his corrupt and bureaucratic rule and did nothing to halt the steady disintegration of the organization.

NRA changed all that. John L. saw his opportunity, worked himself rapidly into the highest councils of the administration and sent his organizers into the coal fields with the story that he, Lewis, had breakfast every morning with the President and that F.D.R. had asked him to organize the coal miners. In less than a year the U.M.W. of A. had practically swept the field.

Oil Unionism

The International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers was in somewhat the same fix. No conventions had been held since 1926 because of the steady decrease in membership. It took a new lease on life and a membership of 75,000—an increase of 25 percent—was reported to the 1934 gathering. The steady growth has continued since then. Some 15,000 workers are covered by an agreement negotiated by the union with the large Sinclair Oil Company. A few strikes were called against small companies, a number of Labor Board elections resulted in decisive victories for the International and special organizing drives enrolled thousands of new recruits.

Thunder Ahead.

In both of these great fuel extraction industries therefore, almost entire dependence was placed on NRA maneuvering. National headquarters of the U.M.W. were moved from Indianapolis to Washington while Harvey Freming, pres-

ident of the Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers, deserted his old offices in Fort Worth, Texas for the superior attractions of the nation's capitol. The increased distance from the coal tipples and oil derricks was more than compensated for by the proximity of code authorities. It is true that Freming threatened general strike action in his industry in March and again in August 1934, but no one ever took it seriously.

Speaking relatively, therefore, everything has been smooth sailing. No real crisis arose to disturb the tranquillity of the union chiefs, such as faced the oilfield of the textile, steel and auto unions. But the events of the past week show that the day of reckoning is approaching and that the coming months are almost certain to produce serious and unavoidable issues in coal and oil.

Price Control

The stumbling block in both industries is the breakdown of the price control system set up to end suicidal competition. Lewis has recently complained that bituminous coal mine operators, after more than a year of successful operation under fair trade provisions of the NRA code have, within the last ten days, started "cutting each other's throats again." The entire minimum price structure of the coal code is threatened with collapse. This must lead to wage cuts as the old competitive fight begins all over again. In a letter to the NRA Lewis hinted at a nation-wide walkout of coal diggers to check that tendency. An even graver situation has been created by the recent decision of the Supreme Court which declared the production and price control features of the oil code unconstitutional. The flood of "hot oil" especially from the East Texas fields in defiance of NRA provisions had already nullified any benefits which the oil workers might have gained from the code or their industry. Now that all the bars are down, price cutting will go on at an ever increasing rate. And the brunt of the battle will, of course, be born by the workers. What this will mean in some sections where even today a state of virtual peacetime exists, may be imagined.

The union is trying to get revisions of the code to provide for a 30-hour week and wage increases. Freming stated at a hearing recently that the "reabsorption of unemployed by the industry has been practically nil and its increased wage bill has been a sad disappointment."

Fight—The Only Way

One after the other the unions are finding out that the old rules still apply. Labor must fight for what it gets. In certain industries special circumstances may delay the final showdown. That has been the case in coal and oil. But increasingly the workers in these two industries will have to face the cruel facts. To prepare the organizations of labor for the fight, to sweep aside those who sabotage or who preach the identity of the interests of the exploited and the exploiter—that is the job for the progressive unionists of America.

Arbitration

It is certain that efforts will be made at this session of Congress to put over a bill for the compulsory arbitration of labor disputes. It is an open secret that certain government officials in high places favor such legislation. Every reactionary interest in the country is busily pushing the idea.

And why not? If organized labor can subscribe to the following paragraph from the American Federationist, organ of the A. F. of L., what serious objection can it have to forced arbitration?

"We hold," says this editorial, "that Labor and employers are properly partners in industry, with separate functions but with interdependent interests which can best be furthered by genuine cooperation for production and for that control of industry that will bring balance in distribution of income and stability in production."

Compulsory arbitration goes as logically with that kind of bunk as ham with eggs.

LETTER CARRIERS PROTEST EXTENSION OF WAGE CUT

WASHINGTON.—Extension of the federal employees' 5 percent wage cut for another six months was called for by Pres. Roosevelt in an executive order signed Jan. 4, as bills sponsored by the unions were being introduced in Congress demanding immediate restoration of the cut.

Charges that the government "encouraged general wage-cutting" and set "the worst possible example to private employers" are made in a memorial for repeal of salary reduction addressed to members of the House and Senate by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

WASHINGTON.—Railroads have received more than half a billion dollars in R.F.C. loans, according to the annual report of the Interstate Commerce Commission.