

FROM THE FIRING LINE

Judge Wins Picket Trial

ALLENTOWN, Pa. Jan. 14.—R. W. lobst, notorious anti-labor judge, upheld the police court conviction of four of the six workers arrested on Oct. 29 at the strike of the Freezer Shirt Co. when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the Unemployed League joined forces in mass picket lines to defy Mayor Fred Lewis' proclamation limiting picket lines to ten strikers.

Cases against Frank Kirsh and Bill Reich were dropped as the charges against them—"exceeding the number of pickets" and "organizing on the street"—were declared illegal when the similar case of Larry Heimbach was appealed to a higher court by the American Civil Liberties Union. The other men were charged with "disorderly conduct" and had been assessed fines of \$50 by the police court.

The case of John Beisel, Workers Party member, came up first. After hearing the evidence the judge asked:

"Are you the Beisel that makes trouble at evictions?"

"I was formerly chairman of the Lehigh County Unemployed League Eviction Committee," explained Beisel.

"Verdict upheld," ordered the judge.

The verdicts against James Muthard of the Unemployed League and Joe Munick and Frank Bens of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers were also upheld but the fines were reduced from \$50 to \$10.

Police charged the defendants with calling them "rum hounds," "flat feet" and other abusive names. At the police court hearing, witnesses testified that a cop who was obviously drunk started the fracas by deliberately insulting pickets and clubbing them when they protested. The wrist of a 17 year old

Stralinists On Firing - Line

striker had been broken and several stitches had to be taken in the head of another.

Orin Boyle, defense counsel, pointed out that no complaints had been made against the strikers and since nobody except the police were annoyed by these remarks they could not be considered to constitute "disorderly conduct."

"We must uphold respect for our police force," said Judge lobst, otherwise all government institutions might as well disband."

New England Welcomes NUL

NEW HAVEN, CONN.—The National Unemployed League, making its first appearance as a national organization in New England, received an immediate and hearty reception from unemployed and employed workers.

The first mass meeting of the New Haven Unemployed League was addressed by Anthony Kamugan, president of the N.U.L. and Warren Montross, N.U.L. organizer.

Unemployed workers here have had sad experience with the Unemployment Council in various false promises—first as the Unemployment Council, then as the Unemployment Council and now as the Unemployed Protective Association.

Interest outside the ranks of the unemployed has been quickened by the entrance of the League into New Haven. Students in economics at Yale University and a joint meeting of all classes in the New Haven Labor College heard Montross explain the purposes of the League and appeal for support by the organized employed in two meetings held on January 9. Trade union support was speeded when a representative of the Rubber Workers Federal Union in Akron told New Haven trade unionists of the unity of employed and unemployed achieved in Ohio.

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The Party at Work

BOSTON BRANCH TAKES LEAD IN GETTING NEW MEMBERS

Reports from branches indicate that point one on the party convention Program of Action to double the membership in the next six months will be more than fulfilled.

Boston in Lead
The Boston branch appears to be in the lead. It is already very close within the actual doubling of its membership. The branch has worked out a program of public meetings under party auspices and it is making arrangements also for speakers to appear at workers groups and student group meetings.

On January 25 Comrade Shachtman will speak at a Lenin memorial meeting. Sidney Hook is tentatively scheduled to speak before a student group on February 8 with the expectation to remain in Boston and to address a general public meeting the following Sunday.

In the middle west the Minneapolis branch is again in the lead. We have not yet a full report of the number of new members admitted since our party convention, but a perusal of reports on hand show several new applicants accepted at each branch meeting. At a meeting on January 3, seven applications were received.

The branch is about to move into new headquarters and then to bring forward more effectively its program of public meetings and educational activities. It started off with a meeting addressed by Comrade Norris on the subject "Why I left the Socialist Party and joined the Workers Party."

Active in Strike

Most important, however, are the practical activities in the class struggle, a field in which the Minneapolis comrades have already attained a splendid record. All branch members were assigned duties in the present garage workers strike. Once again the labor movement of the city is animated by a strike militantly conducted and bitterly fought by the Citizens Alliance. Once again our Minneapolis comrades are actively engaged, doing the part in the leadership of the strike and taking their posts on the picket line.

L. A. BRANCH INCREASES 30 PERCENT AT EACH MEETING

LOS ANGELES.—Enthusiasm is running high in the recently fused branches of the Workers Party of the U. S. with an approximate increase in membership of 30 per cent occurring at every meeting. A new branch, to be known as the Southside Branch, is in process of formation in the Goodyear section of the city. Payments on the Party Foundation Fund are coming in promptly from friends and sympathizers of the W. P. as well as from members.

Plan Mass Meeting
A huge mass meeting is being planned for Friday evening, Feb. 1, at Walker's Auditorium. There will be several speakers including Sam Meyers, Charley Curtis, and Dave Harris of the National Unemployed League. Among the subjects

to be discussed will be "The Message of the Workers Party," a report from the delegates to the National Unity Convention and an address on "The Only Way Out."

Evening classes are now under way at the Los Angeles headquarters, 1785 East 1st Street. They include classes on "Working Class Economics" given on Thursday evenings at 8 P.M. by E. Everett, and at 8 P.M. on the same evening a class on "Imperialism—America in the World Arena."

DISTRICT COMMITTEE STARTS TRADE UNION CAMPAIGN

NEW YORK.—The New York District Committee has undertaken a campaign to organize the trade union work of the Party in this district. The first step in this direction will be taken at a general membership meeting to be held Sunday, January 20, at 3 P.M. at the Irving Plaza Hall. At this meeting the trade union policies of the Party and the concrete tasks before the New York district will be the subject for discussion. Only members of the Party can attend this meeting.

This meeting is to be followed, according to the decision of the District Industrial Committee, by a week-end conference of all the Party members who are members of trade unions, and also close Party sympathizers.

This conference will be held the following week, that is, Saturday afternoon, January 26 and Sunday, Jan. 27. Sympathizers who wish to attend this conference are to apply to the District Office for permission. The problems of the various trades in which our Party members are involved will be discussed and concrete policies elaborated.

LOS ANGELES

Mass Meeting

"The Launching of the Workers Party of the United States"

The first move towards revolutionary working class unity in 13 years, bringing new hope and inspiration to the workers everywhere.

Speakers:

DAVE HARRIS SAM MEYERS

CHARLES CURTISS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 8 P.M.

Walker's Auditorium

730 Grand Ave.

Should Communists Build A Labor Party?

Speaker:

MAX SHACHTMAN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27th, 8 P.M.

Irving Plaza

15th St. & Irving Place

Stalinists On Firing - Line

NEW YORK.—Will you please print this as an item from the Firing Line.

The Communist Party made a dying start in its fight on capitalism in Harlem last Thursday, Jan. 10.

Two hefty members of that party attacked and beat up A. Gonzalez who was passing out leaflets for a meeting on "War and the Unions Racket."

Gonzalez was standing near Fifth Avenue and 115th Street passing out the handbills on an anti-war meeting to be held the following evening at 143 E. 103rd Street, under the auspices of the Harlem branch of the new Workers Party, when the two men approached him from the rear and knocked him down. The men ran and disappeared in the Astoria Workers Club near by, where the Communist Party was holding a meeting.

League Pickets 13 Townships

BOWLING GREEN, Ohio.—Flying squadrons formed by the Wood County Unemployed League early Thursday morning, January 10, struck every relief project in Wood County, Ohio. Hundreds of relief workers, members of the Ohio Unemployed League, manned picket lines in thirteen townships of the county, in a demand for 15 dollars a week minimum wage on relief jobs, in the first drive against the new national forced labor program which is aimed at placing the unemployed to work for the equivalent or less of the present direct relief allowance.

Using the county house at Bowling Green as general strike headquarters, over 1,000 relief workers, from all over the county met Thursday evening to lay the plans for the continuance of the strike and to arrange for mass demonstrations at the county relief offices to secure relief for the strikers. The meeting was addressed by Sam Collock, vice president of the N.W.

Subway Men In Revolt Against Co. "Brotherhood"

What has happened to the subway workers who two years ago took a 10 percent wage cut without a squawk?

The company "Brotherhood" has turned out to be not so hot, after all!

The men on the subways of New York City are now engaged in organizing a union of their own, an independent union which will take in all who are employed in passenger transportation in the entire city.

From 1905 the subway men have tried many times to better working conditions and get more pay. Sometimes it was through company unions, sometimes through the A. F. of L., and at other times through no organization whatever. Several times they went out on strike, but without proper preparation or leadership. They were sold out by their leaders, Cochrane of the I.R.T. company union, who threw three or four hundred motorists on the street to look for other jobs, and by Shea of the Amalgamated, who collected the dues and disappeared.

Company "Brotherhood"
Subway workers are forced to belong to company unions. On the I.R.T. this union is called the "Brotherhood of Interborough Rapid Transit Co. Employees." This organization never did anything for the men as a whole, but the delegates take up individual grievances if a man is punished by suspension, the delegate of his local may try to get the time cut down. Or if a man is fired, he may get back to work in two or three weeks, or get transferred to a different department. But when the company wants to put over anything on the men, it is done through the same delegates.

One afternoon, in December 1932, the men were going to their lockers to wash up after work. They saw in the evening papers the announcement that they had voluntarily voted themselves a 10 percent cut in wages, (\$2,750,000 annually) and that the I.R.T. Company thanked them heartily. They had not heard anything about the cut. It was the trusty delegates who had done the dirty work.

Another Example
Another example was the famous, or rather infamous Pension Plan of July 1934.

It seems that there were and still are several hundred old employees and company officials who are getting from \$4,000 to \$50,000 and even \$60,000 per year each, and they were old enough, or almost old enough to be retired on a pension. These few hundred men, although forming a very small percentage of the total number of employees (14,500) take up an enormous percentage of the total pay-roll, due to the fact that they average five to ten times the yearly earnings of the regular subway worker.

District of the Ohio Unemployed League. Ralph M. Kille, president of the Wood County Unemployed League, acted as chairman.

LEAGUE'S STRIKE IS FIRST ONE IN MONROE COUNTY

MONROE, Mich.—The first strike in the history of Monroe County was pulled early Monday morning, Jan. 14, when the Erie-Lesalle local of the newly organized Monroe County Unemployed League threw mass picket lines around two war-reliet projects in Erie Township and closed down the jobs 100 percent. From its very beginning the strike was marked by splendid militancy, women as well as men marching on the line and forcing the few scabs to lay down their tools. One woman was injured while trying to take a shovel away from a scab.

At two meetings held the previous night, which were addressed by Ted Selander and Art Preis, members of the Workers Party, the new League members voted 100 percent to close down the jobs, in a demand for a 20 percent increase in wages and the firing of Ray Gonyer, foreman on the Yeller Drain Project, who has appeared on the job on several occasions with a concealed revolver.

Freight car loadings the first quarter of 1935 will amount to just about the four and a half million cars loaded the first quarter of 1934, according to railroad authorities.

Does Industrial Food Union Support Dutch Shultz Gang?

By JOSEPH ZACK

The situation that prevails inside the Communist party is reflected in the unions it controls. The workers believe that the party fraction in the unions discusses their problems and then brings recommendations to them for approval.

In reality that is not what happens. The leader of the party fraction lays down the law, then there is more or less latitude in discussion—less in the needle trades and more in the foodworkers' unions.

Authority to decide policy is thus so concentrated that what results is a one-man union. Those who object are either "tamed" or eventually eliminated.

The only thing that Rubin, Gold, Potasch, etc., really have to worry

National Progressive Movement In Trade Union Is Party Task

By ARNE SWABECK

Trade Union Secretary of W.P.)
Definite trends in a progressive direction are apparent in a number of trade unions, and especially in the unions in the basic and in the mass production industries. In practically every instance determined support from the rank and file membership has followed spontaneously. But so far it is possible to speak only of trends, here and there taking on an organized form. The specific features that will give to these trends the character of a movement are still lacking. Unified plans and clear perspectives have not yet been brought forward. It is in view of these conditions that the Workers Party convention in its Program of Action laid special emphasis on the creation of a national progressive movement in the trade unions.

Progressives In Steel
In the steel workers union the progressive group which came forward last summer is now renewing its activities and it is now also enriched by one more valuable experience. The group is demanding that the union president, Mike Tighe, reconvene the convention adjourned last summer to force action on a number of grievances dating back to the Weirton case. Of

course, the essential issue is still union recognition; but the prospects that Tighe will agree to reconvene the convention are exceedingly slim. Apparently the progressive group understands this and it has therefore called its own progressive conference to be held during the first week of February. Reports indicate that the progressives feel that now is the time for action in view of the present upturn in the industry due largely to the heavy orders from the automobile manufacturers.

Auto Workers
From the automobile workers' federal unions, which have suffered a serious setback since the sell-out agreement was concluded last summer, comes word also of incipient revolts. Recently a number of Detroit federal locals decided, in face of an edict by William Green to the contrary, to get together in a conference and discuss their problems of organization. In other cities federal local unions have begun to make demands for the creation of city central councils of federal unions. Thus the direction of these trends is unmistakable. They tend in a progressive direction although still on a very elementary level. Clarity of perspectives has not yet been arrived at. But this is usually the way that progressive movements begin, centering at their inception around the most elementary issues of organization. With the pressure of economic necessity these trends are bound to advance toward a greater clarity of objectives and take on organized form. They are bound to spread because of the fact that everywhere the problem exists of finding a way out of the conditions of stagnation imposed by the trade union bureaucrats.

Period of Calm
At present the whole trade union movement is in a state of calm before the storm of new strikes and new struggles. Last year in some of the local strike situations, not only did the progressive tendencies become pronounced, but in Minneapolis, as one example, the truck drivers strike saw a conscious left wing in the leadership. Toledo followed this example and on the Pacific Coast the left wing forces had a powerful influence in the harbor workers unions prior to the San Francisco general strike.

Yet the reactionary trade union officials appear on a whole as strongly entrenched as ever. That is what appears on the surface. When looking beneath the surface to the undercurrents of rank and file discontent that breaks through from time to time it will become noticeable very quickly that the entrenchment is not so secure. This fact will undoubtedly become much clearer in the coming contests between progressives and reactionaries over the immediate and pressing issues of extension of union organization and of union recognition to be attained through the organized mass power of the workers—the only way it can be attained.

Fears of the Officialdom
Under the conditions of monopoly capitalism organization of the unorganized in the basic industries is possible only through fierce struggle against the owners of the powerful corporations and their government servants. In some instances the workers in these industries have already proven that they will respond most readily and that they do not at all fear the struggle. At the same time the trade union officialdom has demonstrated just as clearly its fear of any heavy influx into the unions of the healthy proletarian elements much more than it fears the aggressive onslaughts of the employers. It shrinks from organization of the unorganized in fear of the consequences of the struggle. The trade union officialdom knows that rapid growth and expansion of the unions also means a fundamental change in their composition and character, leaving room for demands for action and demands for leadership; leaving room for rank and file rebellions.

Counting on this officialdom to give leadership in the organization of the unorganized would be hopeless. Nay more, it would be inconceivable that the trade union organization of the basic industries can be undertaken seriously with this gentry in a position to block every move and to enter into treacherous agreements with the owners of monopoly capital of the kind that makes an aggressive policy of organization impossible. Certainly, unless there is an effective counterbalance created, an effective progressive movement, real prospects of success would be very slim.

The Job Before the Progressives
This is the job for the progressive and left wing elements to tackle. It is a job of large dimensions. It has been issued reveals the charges as a frame-up. The labor movement here regards them as a blow at unionism itself, a major issue in this city today.

At first, when the entire local was arrested, the members were held on the warrant charging them with "obstructing business". Three weeks later Weiner is specifically charged with the murder on the belated testimony of Joseph Haftka, father of the slain youth, who has suddenly identified Weiner as the murderer.

and requires a fight on two fronts. It requires an intransigent fight against the reactionary officials who block the road and a determined fight against all the obstacles to organization laid down by the well-fortified employers. But it is necessary to repeat: The left wing and progressive forces will not get very far without a clear understanding that they are called upon to lead and that conditions are ripe for such a leadership. Now is the time for action. The progressive forces owe to the trade union movement that they organize themselves and work out their plans in common. Their movement may start on a local or otherwise circumscribed scale, but it is really effective it must be national in scope and unified in character, interlocking from industry to industry and from union to union.

The problem before them is first of all to chart a new course for the trade union movement and to gird up their loins for a serious struggle. A militant class struggle policy and leadership in the trade union movement is the objective. This the Workers Party will aim to sponsor. The party will endeavor to reach an agreement with the progressive elements to attain the elementary objectives, agreements honestly arrived at and with the pledge to carry them out in common action. Some of the progressives may falter and weaken in fear of reprisals by the hostile trade union officials, but this fear will be far outweighed by the needs for the building of the progressive movement and the pressing needs for action. Today there is not such a national movement in existence and its actual creation represents for us an unpostponable task.

WHAT TO ATTEND

(The New Militant will be glad to publish all notices of lectures, mass meetings or social events if they are sent in by branches and district offices, sufficiently in advance to reach the editorial department not later than Tuesday morning.)

New York City
Jan. 23, Wed. evening—Lenin Memorial meeting, Irving Plaza.

Feb. 7, Thurs. evening—Theatre Party, "Sailors of Cattaro". Chairman: Frances Drake.

Gillespie, Ill.

Feb. 1, Friday, 7:30 P.M.—Socialist Party Hall, Main Street. "The Workers Party." Speakers: A. J. Muste and J. P. Cannon. Chairman: James Cross.

Torrey (Christian Co.), Ill.

Feb. 2, Saturday, 2 P.M., School House—"The Workers Party." Speakers: A. J. Muste and J. P. Cannon. Chairman: C. H. Mayer.

Springfield, Ill.

Feb. 3, Sunday, 8 P.M., Carpenter's Hall, 6th & Monroe Sts.—"The Workers Party." Speakers: A. J. Muste and J. P. Cannon. Chairman: Gerry Allard.

Feb. 3, Sunday, 10 A.M. all day. Left Wing Conference.

Philadelphia
Jan. 20, Sunday, 8 P.M., Grand Fraternity Building, 1626 Arch St.—"Why I Joined the Workers Party." Speaker: Joseph Zack.

Waukegan, Ill.

Jan. 22nd, Tuesday, 8 P.M., Co-operative Clubhouse, 523 Helmholz Ave.—"The Program of the Workers Party of the U. S. Speaker: James P. Cannon.

Minneapolis

Jan. 23, Wednesday night, Pythian Hall—"Program of the Workers Party of the U.S." Speakers: A. J. Muste and J. P. Cannon.

Jan. 26, Saturday night, Pythian Hall—Banquet.

Jan. 27, Sunday—Minneapolis and St. Paul Open Forums.

Boston

Jan. 25, 8 P.M., Byron Hall, 6 Byron St.—"The Workers Party Faces Its Tasks." Speaker: Max Shachtman.

St. Louis

Jan. 31, Thursday evening, 8 P.M., Hibernian Hall, 3619 Finney Ave.—"The Message of the Workers Party—Its Program and Purpose." Speakers: J. P. Cannon and A. J. Muste.

Kansas City, Mo.

Jan. 29, Tuesday evening, Workers Library—"The Workers Party of the U. S.—Its Program and Purpose." Speakers: A. J. Muste and James P. Cannon.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Feb. 1, Friday evening, 8 P.M., Walker's Auditorium, 730 Grand Ave.—"The Message of the Workers Party." Speakers: Sam Meyers, Charles Curtis and Dave Harris of the National Unemployed League.

WEEKLY FRIDAY NIGHT FORUMS OF NEW YORK BRANCHES PROMPTLY AT 8:30

Branch No. 1—144 Second Ave.

Branch No. 2—Grand Palace, 90 Clinton Street.

Branch No. 3—112 E. 19th Street.

Branch No. 4—Harlem, 143 East 103rd St.

Branch No. 5—Bronx Branch

Branch No. 6—1776 Pitkin Ave., Brooklyn.

Branch No. 7—1281 40th Street, Brooklyn.

Branch No. 8—E. R. McKinney on "The Unemployed Movement"

On Feb. 1, Dick Etlinger on "Roosevelt's Program"

Arrest Union Local In Labor Frame-Up

(Special to New Militant)

DETROIT, Mich.—In one of the rawest frame-ups the labor movement of this city has seen in many years the Prosecuting Attorney's office has charged Meyer Weiner, member of Jewish Bakers Union Local 78, with the murder of Harry Haftka, son of Joseph Haftka, operator of a Jewish bakery at 4232 Joy Road, against whom the union has been conducting a strike for several months. Harry Haftka was shot to death near his home on the night of December 13, 1934.

In addition to Weiner, seventeen other union men, practically the entire membership of the local, have been arrested. Four of those arrested reported to the court that they were severely beaten by the police.

The manner in which the war-