

NEW MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Workers Party of the U.S.

VOL. 1, NO. 18

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 1935

PRICE 3 CENTS

Labor Marshalls Forces for Banner May Day

Raw Deal Put Over In Akron

Green & Co. Surpass All Records For Treachery

By ART PREIS
AKRON, O., April 14.—The great strike involving 35,000 Akron rubber workers, which was to set the spark to the 1935 wave of strike struggles in America, is over before it began—the latest and most sinister betrayal of organized labor by William Green and his lieutenants. A group of militant progressives, which has been growing in the last few weeks, led the opposition battle and, only after hours of desperate fighting, was defeated by the better organized official machine, which finally shoved through the agreement by a series of deceptive maneuvers and outright railroadings. This progressive tendency, which has been greatly strengthened and clarified by the events of the last 4 hours, will find a clear public expression in a mass meeting to be held by the Akron branch of the W. P. April 17, at which James P. Cannon will analyze the betrayal and outline the next steps in the fight to build an effective union.

The Game of Delays
The imposing of the treacherous agreement upon the rubber workers and the breaking of the strike by the A. F. of L. officials followed a carefully designed course. The strike, which has been looming for eighteen months past, was delayed month after month on the urging of the A. F. of L. officials, even after the rubber companies brazenly defied the rulings of the National Labor Relations Board that an election be held on the matter of representation for collective bargaining. When the government further demonstrated its unwillingness or inability to enforce its own ruling, these officials continued to point to the government as the agency from which union recognition might be secured instead of to the mass strength and militant action of the workers.

Last Minute Promises
Following an overwhelming vote by the unions last week in favor of strike, a last-hour course of delay was pursued by the A. F. of L. leaders in order to give the forces of the national government and local press a chance to get into full play. Every effort to set a definite strike date was deliberately brushed aside. While still urging the workers to prepare for action, the officials implanted in the minds of the inexperienced union members the belief that a strike might still be averted and that the demands for union recognition might be secured through the intervention of Francis Perkins and the pressure of the government.

As late as twelve hours before the signing of the actual agreement, Claherty and other organizers boldly proclaimed through the press that they would agree to nothing less than an election conducted by the Department of Labor off the companies' properties, in which the companies would unconditionally recognize the group securing the majority vote. It cannot be doubted that the terms of the final settlement were well known to Green, Claherty and Co. even while these misleading statements were being made to disarm the workers and leave them unprepared for the last crushing blow.

C. P. Plays Claherty's Game
A new play was the role of the Communist Party in the Akron betrayal. During the last and most critical days leading up to the debacle, the C.P. in effect collaborated with the A. F. of L. officials, and in return for an indirect endorsement from the A. F. of L. leaders withheld all criticism of the obvious step-by-step course of treachery. The "non-aggression pact" with a vengeance!

Claherty, Bill Green's personal agent and chief figure in the betrayal, was several times played up in the Daily Worker during the past week in militant role. His statement that "he was not going to fight the communists, etc." was

(Continued on Page 4)

The Betrayal in Rubber—And the Road Ahead

By JAMES P. CANNON

AKRON, April 15.—After 18 months of organizing work and preparation the rubber workers went to Washington to get union recognition, the 30-hour week and the abolition of the company unions. They came back with the recognition of the company unions, no mention of the 30-hour week and a pledge, signed by their representatives, to surrender the strike weapon while the courts dispose of their "case" and the rubber production season slides down to its low point.

It was a deliberate, cold-blooded betrayal—the auto, steel and textile run-around all over again, with fancy trimmings. Scientific treachery reached its "peak" in the experience of the rubber workers, but in the furious reaction of the rank and file to this perfidy—if it is harassed to a searching analysis of its technique—there is the making of a powerful movement for genuine unionism which can set the pace for the entire country.

An open struggle on the picket lines—the only place where any of the new unions can really be consolidated and "recognized"—is out of the question at present: the strike has been knocked in the head as effectively as slugs at the stockyards, armed with sledgehammers, knock over a steer. The rubber unions are dizzy from the cruel blows which have been dealt to them in the past week-end, but they are not dead by a long shot. The roar of militant protest and denunciation, which rose from the floor at Sunday's membership meetings, is the sign of unconquerable vitality, the promise of recovery from the cruel defeat. This will take time. What is possible right now, and what is needed, is a searching inquiry into the causes of the defeat; a probe of the complicated system of maneuvers and tricks

which left the rubber workers bewildered and helpless at the decisive moment. This is the task of the hour. The rest will follow.

As in the case of nearly all of the new mass unions which have sprung up in the past two years, the mass of the members at Akron, including even the best elements of the local leadership, entertained the greatest illusions about the policy and role of the government in the situation. They thought the government was on their side and depended on it to help them. This was a fatal miscalculation which ought to be clear enough now.

The policy of the government all along has been to stall and delay action, involve the workers in a labyrinth of hearings, appeals and negotiations, and paralyze the preparations for a decisive battle until the peak of the production season had passed. Then, at the decisive moment, Madame Perkins misused the confidence of the workers to shift the scene away from the picket line to Washington. There the stage was all set and the infamous pact was stamped through. The bosses got what they wanted—with the government seal on it. No wonder they are "jubilant." T. G. Graham, Goodrich vice-president, said: "The agreement puts everything back in the same status it was before the Washington conference." He was right, and so was F. O. Harold, Goodrich union delegate to the Central Labor Union, when he said: "The agreement doesn't give us a thing."

But the most important feature of this agreement that "doesn't give us a thing" is the fact that the government put it over, just as the government put over similar deals on the auto, steel and textile workers. This is the

(Continued on Page 4)

Resentment Is Bitter Over Trickery of "Settlement"

Inside Story of the Battle in Rubber Unions

By JACK WILSON

The railroadings of the sell-out agreement arranged by Francis Perkins, Secretary of Labor and the A. F. of L. bureaucracy on Akron's big three rubber workers' unions this week put to shame the lousy auto-week agreement or any other previous capitulation of William Green to President Roosevelt and his other agents of capitalism.

Twenty workers at the Goodyear local walked out, half-sick, half crying, Saturday, April 13, when they received a report that Green, Coleman Claherty (his rubber organizer) and the Goodyear, Goodrich and Firestone local presidents had signed an agreement in Washington which gave away the right to strike, didn't abolish the company unions and left all jurisdiction in labor disputes to a government board, not yet selected and having no power to enforce its decisions.

Nothing Is Too Low
While company union men jubilantly said, "Why it gives them nothing," and the rubber barons smiled, an aroused rank and file prepared to fight the treacherous betrayal in the Sunday meetings. But they didn't know to what depths the bureaucrats would stoop in an effort to smash the strike. They found out.

Claherty, red-faced and shifting uneasily from foot to foot, had scarcely finished reading the so-called agreement when a rank and file at Goodrich, shouted, "Where'd you get the guts to bring back that god-damned sell-out to us?" to the thunderous applause of other workers. More criticism was hurled as Claherty retreated and finally sat down apparently defeated. His henchmen then began their work. Smooth tongues argued, "we must support our leaders," and similar blather. It seemed to do little good. A vote was called. About one third of the Goodrich workers raised their hands in approval. The chairman said: "It evidently has passed." No negative vote was taken after the meeting was over

(Continued on Page 4)

Goodrich workers walked out cursing, looking lost and humiliated. Claherty had "won over" the strongest local union.

The Rout at Firestone
Firestone was next. Shouts of betrayal, sell-out, down with the A. F. of L., bitter threats, more curses and eloquent speeches by progressives but to no avail. "Goodrich won't walk out and you boys can't do it alone. Why not be sensible. This is just a foothold, we'll get more later." Three hours of this and the Firestone workers gave up in disgust.

Goodyear workers were better prepared to meet the onslaught. Four days ago the progressives realized what would be done. They began organizing for a fight. Reports of the Goodrich meeting came in and inflamed the workers. The meeting began at the same time as Firestone's. Regular business took an hour and then John House, president read the "agreement."

A progressive from the rear immediately made a motion to repudiate the "agreement" signed. House ruled it out of order and said the approach would have to be a positive motion. He won.

A "Bold" Faker
Then a barrage by progressives placed throughout the hall sent House scurrying to cover. "I'll bust any guy in the face that says I want this agreement or that I sold out. You boys decide this," he temporized.

"We've had 18 months of boards. This is full of loop holes, Claherty has betrayed us. This means proportional representation. We don't want to depend on the government or Francis Perkins!", progressives argued while the Goodyear workers cheered them on.

A recognized progressive leader got up. He took the agreement from House's hands. He could barely speak he was so indignant. He threw the agreement on the floor. "It's not worth a damn. This is what I think of it." Shouts of approval encouraged him... then the telephone rang. "Firestone boys are giving in, looks like they'll approve the agreement." The speaker almost bawled; other progressives became sick in the pits of their

(Continued on Page 4)

110,000 Out in Student Strike Against War

Spartacus Youth League Plays Militant Role in Demonstrations

NEW YORK, April 12.—110,000 American students from high schools and colleges all over the country engaged in the second and largest anti-war strike in American history.

A partial list of the demonstrations shows 3,000 at Brooklyn College, 3,000 at Columbia, 4,000 at City College, 2,000 at Hunter College, 3,000 at Chicago University, 4,000 at Ohio State, 2,000 at Western Reserve, about two thousand apiece at Minnesota, Michigan, Hopkins, Penn State, West Virginia, Cornell, Princeton, etc. etc. These among the colleges alone. We have no list of the various high schools, but in New York City the figure runs into many thousands.

The Student Strike Committee, a united front committee which was directing the strike, pursued a militant course, fighting all attempts of the authorities either to outlaw the strike, or at least to convert it into "peace discussions."

In New York the high school students were muzzled, bullied and intimidated in an attempt to kill the strike. R.O.T.C. units and school guards barred doors, leaflet distributors were rushed by foot-ball and rifle teams, addressed by police and suspended by school authorities. At Harvard and Chicago the demonstrators engaged in battles with bands of reactionary students.

The size and militancy of the strike this year marks a definite step in advance for the American student movement. An unfortunate feature, however, which can only be overcome by further education on the basis of the advances already made, was the distinctly pacifist nature of the demonstrations.

In only a few schools and colleges where the Spartacus was active did the demonstrations present the real cause of war, and the revolutionary solution for it. Future anti-war work must and will see an expansion of the revolutionary element.

Eight Are Sentenced On Coast

Two Refuse Mercy; Scorn Court in Speeches

SACRAMENTO, Cal.—The eight militant workers who were convicted on April 1 of criminal syndicalism were sentenced for indeterminate terms of one to fourteen years by Judge Dal Lemmon last Saturday, after he had denied a motion for a new trial.

The Judge refused to consider the affidavit of juror Howard McIntire, obtained by the N.P.L.D., in which he swore that the verdict was not the expression of the jury's actual opinion, but was the result of a compromise, a horse-trade.

"As I view the affidavit," said the Judge, "it means absolutely nothing in this court, it is foreign matter, and the juror is precluded from questioning his own verdict." The opinion of the jury "foreign matter" in a courtroom!

Those sentenced were Pat Chambers, Caroline Decker, Norman Mini, Lorene Norman, Jack Crane, Albert Houghbary, Martin Wilson and Nora Conklin.

Refuse Probation
Lorene Norman and Norman Mini who both received a recommendation from the jury refused to ask for probation before the judge.

"I feel," said Lorene Norman, "that an application for probation would be an admission of guilt, therefore I will make none in this or any other court."

Norman Mini, after summarily refusing to apply for probation was asked the usual question whether he could advance any reason why he should not be sentenced.

"Yes," he said. "Our standing here is no accident. Our conviction is the logic of the class struggle. But the same class struggle that results in our conviction will some day generate an irresistible wave that will sweep everything this court and this State represents away forever. With this knowledge we can face our sentences confidently; because we know that the future belongs to us."

NUL is Active Thruout Ohio

ALLIANCE, Ohio, April 16.—Four hundred Stark County Unemployed Leagueurs force through coal orders. Wire to Governor Davey demanding coal in 24 hours; or else! Davey sent coal!

WAYNESBURG, Ohio, April 15.—Local No. 6 Stark County Unemployed League supporting strike of Waynesburg Tile workers, mass picketing, defying injunction. Other Leagueurs send pickets. For union recognition.

COLUMBUS, Ohio, April 15.—Ohio Unemployed League organization campaign on the way; six county conventions in six days. Truar, president O.U.L. at conventions of Auglaize, Putnam, Williams, Wood, Hancock counties, Says Truar, "Other conventions in line. State will be organized solid; no time to loose."

NEW LEXINGTON, Ohio, April 15.—The Perry County Unemployed League on strike today. Mass picketing closing down all projects. Against cut from 50 to 45¢ per hour. For a new relief administration. The unemployed answer the Roosevelt wage cut program with mass action.

PORT WAYNE.—Arnold Johnson, Secretary of the National Unemployed League, spoke here on Friday, April 12. Over 200 listened attentively as Johnson outlined the program of the N.U.L. The Allen County U. L. is reorganizing and a state convention of the U. L. is being called in June. Harry Conner, the president of the A.C.U.L. has announced that an intensive drive is to be made in Northern Indiana in the next three weeks.

Union Turnout to Be Biggest in Years

First May Day Finds Workers Party in Forefront of Important Labor Battles

By A. J. MUSTE

All reports about May Day preparations indicate that more American workers and more trade unions will participate in demonstrations this year than ever before. These workers are more militant, more free from illusions, more in the mood for new adventures than at any previous period. For the Workers Party of the U. S. observing its first May Day this is the most significant feature of this year's celebration. Its meaning must be clearly understood. It must be utilized to the fullest extent in all speeches and discussions on May Day, as well as in all our work in the ensuing months.

Workers Party To March With Unions in N.Y.

May Day United Fronts Concluded in Other Cities

The Workers Party and the Spartacus Youth League, their friends and supporters, will assemble in front of their headquarters, 2 West 15th Street, for the huge May First parade and demonstration. This section of the parade will be headed by eight large red flags and the banners of the Workers Party and the Spartacus Youth League.

Besides the general slogans of the united front, numerous other floats and slogans are being prepared. The Spartacus Youth League in uniform will march along with the Workers Party. Workers Party May Day buttons are already being sold. A special May Day manifesto is being issued by the National Committee.

Ten thousand copies of the special May Day issue of the New Militant will be sold and distributed along the line of march. A band has been secured, which will live up this section of the parade, and along with the other features will make the Workers Party-Spartacus Youth section one of the liveliest in the whole united demonstration. Friends and supporters of the party are asked to assemble at the headquarters early on May 1st.

Organizations Represented
The Workers Party is represented on the executive committee of the United May Day Labor Conference, made up of representatives of the leading trades unions, Socialist Party, I. W. W., Workmen's Circle, Communist Party (Opposition), etc. which meets regularly every Saturday at 1 P.M. in the Council Room of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union at 3 West 16th St. Plans for making this year's May Day parade and demonstration the largest ever held in New York, were pushed forward at the last meeting of this committee, held Saturday, April 13. Reports of committees on publicity manifesto, slogans, organization, etc., were given.

The plan calls for two huge parades, one starting from 15th St. and taking in all unions, political parties, and fraternal organizations meeting in that territory. The other will form up in the dress market near 40th St. and will comprise the bulk of the workers in the dress trade. Both parades will end in a monster mass meeting at the Mall in Central Park.

N.B.C. Strikers to Participate
Floats by the score, dozens of bands, thousands of placards, and one hundred thousand marchers are expected to make this the largest and most colorful May Day parade in the history of New York. The International Ladies Garment Workers locals are providing bands, pennants, arm bands, and banners for their marchers. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers are out to surpass them. Unions in the food, building and other industries promise a splendid turnout. Five thousand striking National Biscuit workers and their families will form one of the most important sections of the march. One hundred thousand copies of a May Day man-

(Continued on Page 4)

Half a century ago American workers, engaged in desperate and dramatic struggles for the eight-hour day, made the First of May a labor holiday. The idea was taken up a few years later by workers in other countries and presumably May Day became the International Labor Day. Of the associations which gather round May Day—anti-militarism, class solidarity, labor internationalism, revolutionary aims of the working-class—we need not speak here.

Before the Crisis
May Day ceased, however, to be observed generally by the American workers. For a time, in certain of the larger cities, foreign-speaking groups demonstrated in considerable numbers; but even they became in large measure apathetic during the hectic boom period from 1924 on. In the main during this period American workers shunned May Day. They believed the propaganda of the boss press and of their own reactionary trade union leaders that May Day was for "foreigners," "ungrateful reds," etc. who did not appreciate the fact that the American working class was something unique and led a charmed life of perpetual prosperity under a special brand of capitalism, U.S.A. model.

The crisis has put a period to all that. It is clear that there is nothing unique about American capitalism, clear certainly that it leads no charmed life. As a part of world-capitalism it is in decline, and in its decline brings untold suffering on the masses who in this land of boundless resources and an unsurpassed productive machinery have in five brief years seen their standard of living cut in half.

Rising magnificently at the first opportunity, the American workers have since the spring of 1933 made great advances in organization and fought a series of important battles. In the course of these struggles one illusion after another has been ruthlessly dissipated.

The New Deal has not brought back prosperity. The doubt as to whether capitalism can be reformed is eating deep into the minds of the workers.

Short Cut Proves a Trap
The NRA proved not to be a magic gate to union organization. The conviction that it is useless to look to the Roosevelt administration or to any capitalist government, to give genuine support to fighting unions gains ground.

Trade union leaders, committed to "cooperation" with the bosses and the bosses' government, sell out strikes, are seen to be "cooperating" indeed—to keep the boss on top and the workers under—and that lesson sinks in.

In the presence of such harsh realities bunk loses its hold. The bunk of the militarists and super-patriots. The bunk of the red-baiters. The Hearst campaign has fallen flat among the workers. The A. F. of L. bureaucracy got nowhere with its latest attempt to oust radicals from the unions. In fact they themselves have to try now to put on a "radical" cover. They collaborate with Socialists, hoping that that will convince the workers that they are "as progressive as anybody." On occasion A. F. of L. demagogues collaborate, at least in effect, with Communists, as did Coleman Claherty in Akron recently when he was selling out the strike!

Radical Thought Gaining
The workers in ever increasing numbers are becoming interested in radical solutions for their problem. They will march this May Day proudly side by side with the Workers Party, with other parties

(Continued on Page 4)