

Comments

On Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness

By BILL REICH

Privileged Classes . . .

"We have privileged classes in this country," said Miss Alice Mertz, New York relief supervisor in explaining the \$99 per week salary of herself and husband. . . . Relief recipients in Clinton County, Pa., were told by relief investigators to "go and steal coal." . . . As relief funds are cut off and 1,300,000 people face starvation, the Illinois legislature adjourned so that members could attend the Kentucky Derby. . . . The \$90,000,000 that the government "loaned" Charles Dawes (and which will never be repaid) would take care of Illinois relief needs for nearly a year. . . . An evicted share-cropper with his palled wife, rickety children and meager pile of furniture was seen standing by the roadside near Shreveport, La. All were wearing "EVERY MAN A KING" buttons. . . .

Food . . .

The AAA has expended to date \$678,000,000 for crop reduction and \$191,000,000 to purchase crop surpluses. . . . President Roosevelt last week signed a bill appropriating \$600,000,000 for seed loans to farmers. . . . Food prices have risen 34 percent in the past year. The CONSUMERS' GUIDE issued by the AAA states: "never before in this country have so many people been unable to buy food and the simple necessities of life as in the past two years." . . . Secretary Wallace, head of the AAA, says: "Prices are not excessive; the increase in the price of food products has only kept pace with the rise in national income." . . . Although farmers comprise 25 percent of the population, for the past five years the farm income has averaged only 8.8 percent of the national income. . . . Profits reported for food processing corporations for 1934 are: National Biscuit Co.—\$26,592,000; National Fruit Co.—\$21,290,000; Armour & Co.—\$19,446,000; Borden Milk Co.—\$9,138,000; National Dairy Co.—\$13,603,000; Corn Products Refining Co.—\$21,207,000; A. & P. Stores (two year period) \$43,219,000. . . . Increase in food prices have raised the average cost of feeding a soldier from 374 cents to 50 cents a day, necessitating an extra allotment of \$5,000,000 per year to feed the army and navy. . . . Commissioner Osborne of the New York State Fish Hatcheries complains that because of the increased cost of liver he cannot feed the trout adequately. . . .

Jobs . . .

Helen Fortney, 138 lbs., of Lake Geneva, Wis., advertised for a job as bodyguard. She received 48 proposals of marriage, one offer of a job. "It must be phoney," she remarked. . . . Franklin Jr. and John Roosevelt, sons of the President, are in the market for summer jobs. The boys are willing to do almost anything says their mother. Last summer John taught polo at a summer camp and Franklin Jr. toured Europe. . . . Eighty percent of the industrial firms in the U. S. will not hire new workers over 40 years of age. . . . The majority decision of the Supreme Court nullifying the Railroad Retirement Act states: "It does not follow, as contended, that a man of 65 is inefficient or incompetent. The facts indicate a contrary conclusion." . . .

Patriotism . . .

Ex-Senator George Wharton Pepper shaved his mustache of 40 years standing in order to play the part of George Washington in a Philadelphia pageant. . . . In an "inversion test," Dr. E. L. Thorndike of Columbia University, found that two thirds of the older persons tested would "spit at the picture of George Washington" for \$10,000. Half the younger ones would do it for less than \$10. All were jobless. . . .

Society Notes . . .

"I couldn't tend to Anne drink all night and work all day," pleaded Brandon Smith, husband of Anne Cannon, textile and tobacco heiress. "Brandon was dumb and I was dumb for living with him. The only reason I married him was to get a home," retorted Anne. Brandon was awarded \$125,000 heart balm by the court. . . . The 287 "rugged pioneers" being transplanted to the heart of Alaska revolted aboard ship when they were given buttered bread rather than individual pats of butter. . . . Elsie de Wolfe, actress, considers her bathroom the crowning glory of a life devoted to beauty. "Moonshine and glamour, white orchids and rock crystal, silver tissue and white fur, reflected in many mirrors—that is my bathroom. The hooks are in the form of dolphins. The faucets are the heads of swans. The carpet is of white velvet. The electric lights are mother of pearl in a design of oyster shells. There are always white flowers, sometimes great sprays of white orchids." . . . Ninety percent of American farmers still perform the Saturday night ritual in a galvanized wash tub. . . .

Central Labor Union Backs Local 574

Unanimous Appeal For Reinstatement

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—Without one dissenting voice the Minneapolis Central Labor Union voted last week full support to Local 574 of the Truck Drivers in their battle for reinstatement in the International. A motion to continue 574's delegate on the Central Union was defeated only after an appeal from the chair, on the ground that such a motion would lay the Central Union itself open to expulsion by Green.

Find Charges False
The vote was taken after a report by a committee of three appointed by the Central Union to investigate the charges made by Dan Tobin, reactionary president of the International. Tobin's charges, the committee found, were unjust, and in some cases completely unfounded. It was shown that 574 had made tremendous sacrifices to pay its per capita tax, although it was faced with extraordinary expenses, debts left over from last year's strike, the expenses of negotiating with hundreds of employers, the expenses consequent on the hospitalization of workers wounded in the strike, the expenses of maintaining the widows and families of those killed, etc. In spite of all these expenses, the local paid over \$3,000 in the last 15 months. It was pointed out that in previous years the union had been as much as one year behind in per capita tax without action from Tobin.

Tobin's charge that the union had overstepped its jurisdiction was answered by evidence showing that 574 has voluntarily relinquished the Ice Drivers, the Bakery Drivers, the Laundry Drivers, the Brewery Drivers, etc. etc. although such actions went against the better judgment of the union leaders. In the case of the Brewery Drivers, the union leaders, not wishing to break up the industrial union of the Brewery workers, actually went against the advice of Tobin who, merely to gather the extra dues, pressed for a jurisdictional fight with the Brewery Union.

Against Tobin's charge that the financial secretary of the union was not bonded were presented documents, including the bond itself, dated last November, when the secretary was elected. It was pointed out that a copy of this bond was on file in Tobin's own office.

Take Immediate Steps
After voting support, the Central Union took immediate steps. A committee of three was voted to see Tobin in Indianapolis and Green in Washington, to fight out the case on its merits and demand the reinstatement of local 574.

In presenting its case local 574 contrasted the policy of Tobin and the policy of the union: ". . . There were two lines open to the union after the strike. First: It could have followed the policy indicated by president Tobin in his

letter of April 15 in which he says 'No union shall have the right to pay any bills before they pay the per capita tax due the International Union each month.'

"This would have set up a small office with a secretary in charge who could have done little more than collect dues—and would have resulted in the quick and decisive liquidation of the union and would have reduced it in a few short weeks to its former impotent position."

"Second: the policy followed by the present leadership, that is, throwing every available force into the field.

"(a) To check and finally defeat the bosses' plan of wholesale discrimination. That this was absolutely necessary the record of the membership lists month by month will show.

"(b) To set up a steward system and build a well-knit block of active organizers in the different firms and sections.

"(c) To take care of the wounded men and their families, to pay off gradually the most pressing obligations, hospital, doctor and food bills, to maintain a suitable hall and headquarters.

"(d) In the meantime to pay to the International every cent possible without crippling the union and scattering the membership, which is the source of all funds.

"(e) In this way to lay the basis for the liquidation of all debts to the International, as well as other local obligations."

In connection with debts to the International it was pointed out by the union that "During the past 18 months while the work of building the union was in progress no strike benefits or other financial aid or, indeed, any assistance, organizational or otherwise, was received from the International."

What to Attend

Friday, May 24, 8:30 P. M.—"The Situation in Fascist Italy." At 420 E. 19th St., between Ave. A and 1st Ave. Speaker: Anthony Ramaglia. Admission free.

Saturday, May 25, 8:30—Dance and entertainment at Branch 1 headquarters, 420 E. 19th St. Given by Branch 1 W.P. and S.Y.L. Help S.Y.L. and Br. 1 raise its rent!

Saturday, May 18—Grand Opening and Housewarming of Brownsville Branch and Spartacus Youth League, 1776 Pitkin Ave. (near Stone). Entertainment, Dancing and Refreshments.

Friday, May 24, 8:30 P. M.—"What is the Meaning of the Franco-Soviet Pact?" At 1776 Pitkin Ave. (near Stone), Brownsville. Speaker: Arne Swaback.

New Militants and New Internationals can be purchased at:
NEWS EXCHANGE
29 So. Main Street, Akron
CONFECTIONERY STORE
1 West Market Street, Akron

Boston Dressmaker Calls for Effective Preparations to Improve Conditions

By J. RAYMOND
BOSTON, May 3.—A general stoppage in the dress industry was called here yesterday with about 2,000 workers responding. Although this strike comes at the tail-end of the season, the conditions which surround it and led up to the union action are highly instructive for all dressmakers.

For the past year conditions in the dress industry have been rapidly rolling down hill. The little gained in the May strike two years ago after the signing of the code was fast disappearing. The union on its part did nothing to organize the unorganized who were undermining conditions in the union shops.

On February 15 the agreement with the employers expired. The workers believed a strike to be necessary if conditions were to be improved and the unorganized recruited for the union. Insistent demands were voiced at local meetings that preparations be made and machinery set up for strike. But the administration dabbled and postponed on the pretext that the time was poor for a walkout. With their usual hypocrisy they declared that the workers could not be depended on in these "hard" times and would not support a strike.

The union militants struggled desperately against this policy but to no avail.

At conferences between manufacturers and the union about twelve of the bosses agreed to sign the old agreement. There was no great sacrifice for them in this offer as the agreement had remained a dead-letter hitherto. At a mass meeting called to ratify these negotiations considerable opposition was voiced by rank and file. They were enthusiastically received by the workers present. As was to be expected, however, the stage was set in advance and Hochman, International President, was the last speaker. Soft-soaping in his own inimitable style, Hochman dilated on the depression, pleaded for acceptance of the agreement, begged for patience until the opportune moment, urged that the workers wait for the New York strike after which conditions would automatically improve in Boston.

Filled with disgust the workers voted for the agreement and left the meeting with disappointment, the prevailing sentiment.

Conditions went from bad to worse. Most of the dressmakers worked without agreements. Wages were anything the workers could get. Lock-outs and reorganizations were regular occurrences. But the union did nothing, calmly awaiting the return of prosperity. Only when talk became rife that the union was worthless and that members would stop paying dues to it, were the bureaucrats stirred out of their slumber.

Having temporarily broken the morale and exhausted the treasures of the big rubber unions, Coleman C. Claherty, A. F. of L. organizer in rubber, was rushing off to Toledo to make an empty pledge of "moral and financial" support of the rubber workers to the auto strikers. He left behind one of his henchmen who merely advised the India workers "to use their own judgment" about voting down the open shop proposal. Again the rubber workers see the bureaucratic leadership deserting them at the crucial moment. The India rubber workers can depend only upon their own strength on the picket line, and the support given them by the large and militant Unemployed League at Mogadore.

In the big rubber unions plans are being pushed to test the recent sell-out agreement by demanding wage increases for the cleaners and elevator men.

Reject Pact in Rubber Strike

By R. FERGUSON
AKRON, May 13.—The first militant step in turning back the tide of reaction in the rubber workers' unions was taken yesterday by the locked-out workers of the India Tire and Rubber Co. when by a vote of 141 to 33 they flatly rejected the proposal of President Klaus that the company be turned back into an open shop.

Klaus, having pleaded with great emotion that the closed shop, the only one in the industry, was ruining India's business, that the consumers of India tires (bearing the union label, no longer would buy them "on account of their problems regarding labor."

The company, admittedly in bad financial shape as a result of bitter price wars between the large corporations, expects to receive a \$190,000 loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corp. if "labor difficulties are ironed out"—meaning, of course, if the open shop is reestablished. Once again the rubber workers witness the role of the government in the class struggle.

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Auto Progressives in Toledo Organize After Partial Defeat

(Continued from Page 1)

Muste, who has been in Toledo assisting the local branch in developing the forces and strategy of the union progressives in the strike. He shouted "Muste won't feed you!" A score of voices hurled back, "Neither will you!"

Schwake Rats for Dillon
Despite Dillon's threats, lies, enjoinery and brow-beating, it is doubtful that Dillon would have succeeded in his purpose of smashing the strike, had it not been for Schwake.

While slips of paper were being passed out for ballots intended to record a secret vote—a maneuver to catch the "weak-sisters" in the union put over by the pressure of the executive committee of the local which has been stringing along with the Dillon gang and backing the progressives on the strike committee—Schwake stepped to the " mike" and pleaded with the strikers to accept the proposals. He told the strikers to think of their wives and children going hungry if the strike continued further, he argued that they weren't strong enough to battle General Motors despite the fact that the strikers had forced the company to terms on point after point in the course of the strike, he pointed to Dillon's threat to lift their charter.

Schwake swung enough of them to carry the vote for Dillon. Until he spoke, the strikers were dead-set against acceptance. But Schwake was the man whom they regarded as one of their own trusted leaders. It was he they had voted for in the Auto Labor Board election one month before. All during the strike he had presented himself as a militant, although behind the scenes he went along with Dillon, fought the progressives under cover, prevented the publication of the strike bulletin, helped keep strike funds from the strike committee, tried to start a "red scare" and prevented the distribution of hand-

bills by other working class organizations, and sought to take over the leadership of the strike from the elected strike committee.

Knives Roland
But the strikers didn't know, or perhaps didn't understand, these things. They didn't know Schwake was betraying Jimmy Roland, their fighting chairman of the strike committee and leader of the militants. They didn't know that it was Jim Roland who was most active in the organizing of the progressives in the local after last year's Auto-Lite strike, in ousting Ramsey and Bossler, the former reactionary leaders, and putting Schwake in as business agent. They didn't know Schwake was inexperienced and vacillating and that he had been run for office with the promise that he would accept the advice of the experienced union men like Roland. When Schwake turned tail, the props were knocked from under many of them. They became confused. Their confidence in the correctness of their militant position was shattered. Many faltered as he spoke all through the vote-taking. Only after the vote was announced and the meeting officially adjourned did they begin to realize that they had voted for something they did not want, that they had been fooled and tricked.

Several hundred of the most militant remained in the hall for an hour after adjournment. They were fighting mad. They wanted to hold another meeting to reconsider. They wanted to return and man the picket lines despite everything. In this group were the best fighters, the most self-sacrificing, the picket captains, strike committee members. But it was too late. For the moment demoralization had set in. The majority of the strikers had dispersed, most of them in disgust. They were weary of body and torn in spirit. Some of the bravest of them wept.

Jimmy Roland had given the real militant leadership and direc-

tion, had fought Dillon and his gang almost single-handed, had kept the strike committee time after time from capitulating to the pressure of the government, the press and the General Motors officials, had personally spread the strike to other cities in the face of the opposition of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, was indeed the spark-plug of the entire fight. He fought in his grim bull-dog honest fashion to the bitter end, but he seemed in a daze during the entire meeting. Only 24 years old, he did not as yet possess the skill and knowledge to offset the maneuvers of Dillon. His very incorruptible honesty and sense of fair play betrayed him. For it was he who finally persuaded the strikers to permit Dillon to speak. He did it in the sense of demonstrating to Dillon what democratic unionism means. And then Dillon thanked him by knifing him and the strikers in the back.

Progressives Organize
The results of this strike cannot be termed an utter defeat, however, although the auto workers have lost their finest opportunity to date to force the auto barons to their knees throughout the country.

Out of this fight has grown a force of militant progressives in the auto unions who have demonstrated conclusively their power and ability. The struggle they put on in Toledo, although meeting with temporary defeat, has already aroused progressives in the auto unions throughout the country. Tonight these progressives are planning to get together to lay out a national program, to organize, train and discipline themselves more thoroughly.

Moreover, this strike has proved to the auto workers that the auto barons and corporations are not invincible. A small handful, comparatively, of Toledo strikers, militant and determined, forced General Motors to negotiate with them directly, against all the previously declared policy of General Motors. They won some concessions, even though meagre and apt to be withdrawn if the union men fail to push forward their organization and fight every attempt to violate the terms. Further, they have demon-

strated the power of organized labor in action, when even a small group of workers, willing to fight, can successfully cripple a giant organization like the Chevrolet Corp.

W. P. in the Strike
The methods by which the progressives in this strike were organized have laid the groundwork for more successful and wide-spread attempts in the future. Although most of the strikers were new union men, the militants were drawn together. Bill Prior did a splendid job on this. A prior floor machine, inexperienced as it was, was developed, and it put up a magnificent battle when all the circumstances are considered. A regular series of leaflets were issued to the strikers by the Workers Party. These were eagerly read and were tremendously effective in suggesting to the strikers the practical and necessary course to be pursued in the strike. Key men, rank and file leaders, were educated and trained in parliamentary procedure, strike tactics, and militant unionism. For one brief period, despite all the handicaps, it seemed as though the progressives would carry the day.

This year the production season is almost over. But the seeds of clean, progressive, fighting unionism which the W.P. has succeeded in implanting in the minds of the auto union members will bear fruit. At a meeting of the Chevrolet local held tonight, a thousand union men cheered the President of the local when he said: "In three weeks you won more than General Motors has granted any group of workers in twenty years. What can you do in another six months! Build the union for the next fight." Walter Gunthrop, President of the Central Labor Union of Toledo, denounced the settlement as a bastard affair whose mother was Francis J. Dillon. Midwife at the birth was James Wilson, Green's personal representative, he stated. The men unanimously pledged themselves to stick in the union, throw out their false leaders, and build the organization toward a fight to a finish with General Motors.

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Ill. Jobless March on Capitol

(Continued from Page 1)
came out simultaneously with the roaring banners on the "hunger march" that thousands of dollars had been appropriated for the Great Lakes naval station. Other items told of millions being expended for naval maneuvers in the Pacific. Yet, when the unemployed petitioned the Governor of the state for redress in the face of famine and wholesale destitution, they were told in no uncertain terms that a levy on an income tax was "unconstitutional." In the coal camps, hovels and shacks of the jobless, whimpering children starved. This, perhaps, is "constitutional."

Learn Political Lesson

The unemployed of the state learned the political lesson of their life. They were taught that the government of Illinois, like its big brother, the government of the United States, was a government of a class—the capitalist class. Illusion after illusion were dispelled and the unemployed should realize by now that a program of action must assume definite political character if victory is to be acquired.

The marchers carried banners. "United We Eat — Divided We Starve," the slogan of the fighting National Unemployed League was adopted as the most popular banner of Illinois' hunger army. "We Want Work At Union Wages," "Down With The Sales Tax," "Feed Us Or Shoot Us Down," "Tax The Rich," "We Want Shelter" were others among a hundred or more banners carried by the marchers.

Strangely enough, after Horner had issued a statement of "not one cent," and Hopkins "not one thin dime" for the jobless, the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission came across with \$1,250,000 as a sop to the unemployed. Other counties through rich donors and special

appropriations began to announce that some money was on hand. The hunger marchers had exerted pressure.

Federation Knives Unemployed

As a desperate resort to undermine the threat of the unemployed workers, Mr. Soderstrom and Mr. Olander, boss parrots and officers of the State Federation of Labor, issued a vicious denunciation against the Illinois Workers Alliance and came out in favor of the sales tax. Soderstrom, a Republican state legislator, and Olander, a member of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission, again stabbed the militant labor movement in the back with an irresponsible charge that the jobless "were allied with the Chamber of Commerce."

At the same time when the hunger marchers, tattered and hungry, petitioned the state to feed them, these two arch labor traitors were eating in ritzy restaurants, sleeping in swanky hotels and consorting with the very enemies of hungry men and women, many of whom are members of the Federation of Labor. We were compelled to witness again well groomed, well fed and well cared labor aristocrats splitting in the face of the masses who were desperately trying to avert a calamity of famine.

The Illinois unemployed marched. They experienced some necessary political lessons. They rehearsed in one of the simple immediate struggles. They'll march again. They will march in larger numbers, better organized and knowing more about this thing called the class struggle. In the meantime the fight continues. The jobless will refuse to starve in silence. They will refuse to be satisfied with a "bean order."

READ THE NEW MILITANT.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:
So I was hanging on a subway strap Monday morning, and I read on the front page of the New York Times.

"A. F. of L. officials here (Toledo) are irked at the influence which A. J. Muste of the Workers Party appears to have with the left-wing members of the strike committee," so I step all over the gent's toes in appreciation, and say "Atta boy" right out loud, and several people look at me, and the gent gets up and gives me his seat—maybe he thought I was talking to him!

Which doesn't have much to do directly with the Manager's request that I write something for the New Militant campaign,—but I thought I'd mention it anyway. After all, "influence" of the W. P. does depend a mighty lot on the New Militant too.

I understand the sub campaign is only so-so, and there is only half a month left. Personally I like to work "under pressure" at the last minute, and perhaps many comrades are planning to send in most of their subs between now and June 1, but there will have to be some tall hustling!

Visiting headquarters I hear rumors of an enlarged paper, a daily, a bi-monthly supplement, eight pages, etc. And apparently the main obstacle to taking the plunge is not having quite adequate support in pushing the paper from the branches and membership as a whole. It's my guess that if this campaign were to approach closely 100 percent success, the New Militant would immediately come out larger or more frequently.

With a larger paper, its character inevitably improves. In my own case, for example, it hasn't been easy to sell the New Militant "as she is" in the wilds of Worcester, Mass., open-shop, middle-class-minded city. But I am sure a larger paper would be more comprehensive and complete in its viewpoint and presentation of news, and so easier to promote. Only WHOLE-

HEARTED SUPPORT NOW CAN PRODUCE THAT TYPE OF PAPER!

I have three more to get on my individual quota of ten subs, and I'll get them somehow. One student, one housewife, an S. P. secretary, a machinist and a pal of his (vocation unknown), a printer and a shop foreman comprise my catch to date. I shall go gunning for a school teacher, a minister and shall give the tenth sub to an unemployed friend, instead of seeing "Goin' to Town." Now isn't that sacrificing for the Party! But after all Mae West will always be Mae West, while that sub might make a W.P. member out of a good Democrat!

How about it? All together for a final two-week's drive!

CARA COOKE,
Former Manager,
New Militant

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