

Comments

On Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness

By BILL REICH

Labor . . .

Calling themselves the Sindicato por Defensa de la Mujer, Mexican prostitutes formed the first union of their craft. They voted for a general strike unless their demands are met by June 1. . . . The American Federation of Ministers, Local No. 1, was recently formed in New York City. . . . Labor has a new champion: "American labor will not long stand for price fixing, limitation of output, stifling of competition or other monopolistic of Fascist practices inherent in the NRA," proclaims Herbert Hoover. . . . William E. Green replies: "As for labor, we will follow Roosevelt, not Hoover." . . . Green threatens a general strike to force labor legislation pending in Congress. . . . In September Green denounced the tactic of the general strike and broke the general strike in San Francisco by refusing to support it. . . .

Boom . . .

Jiggs, the trained Hollywood chimpanzee, draws a salary of \$350 a week. . . . The U. S. Chamber of Commerce reports that the average worker in industry receives \$21.86 per week. The average unskilled worker, \$17.85. . . . The cocker spaniel that played in the "Barrett's of Wimpole Street" received \$100 a week. . . . Cotton textile workers in the South average \$10.29 per week for male workers. . . . Samuel Goldwin spent a million dollars to make a star of Anna Sten. She receives \$3,000 a week. . . . The first project under the new works program opened in Mississippi. Wages for labor were \$4.75 per week or \$19 per month. . . . As a sequel to his book, "The Coming American Boom," Major L. L. D. Angas has written "The Boom Begins." . . .

Arts and Letters . . .

Dr. John F. Condon (Jafise) dedicated an ode, "The Bronx Beautiful," to the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. . . . Huey Long's song, "Every Man a King" is a best seller in the South. . . . "Soviet Russia will end in nothing and so will the Roosevelt Administration end in nothing. Huey Long will not end in nothing. He is stimulating, he is not ephemeral and will not end in nothing," hables Gertrude Stein. . . .

Progress . . .

Five years ago the average length of a screen kiss was 72 inches of film giving four seconds of bliss. Today the screen kiss has dropped to approximately 18 inches which means they last but a second and a half. . . . The fastest airplanes were used to rush bullfrogs from Louisiana to New York for a frog-jumping contest. . . . Virgil Garvey, humane society head, forbade the use of live cats in the Seattle "put-out-the-cat" derby. Dr. D. D. Jones won the race, in which men wearing night-shirts, each carrying a calico cat and lighted candle, gallop 50 yards. . . . Eighteen disciples of Father Devine could not cease ecstasy after a recent "Garden of Eating" session. . . .

Games . . .

Eight men were killed, two sea-planes destroyed and two battleships smashed in the recent Navy "games" in the Pacific. . . . Increase of cadets at West Point necessitates placing three in a room. . . . Lord Rothermere, England's Hearst, says: "To expand the royal air force by 1,000 planes is childish and useless for defense. Germany has 10,000 bombing planes." . . . Mathew Mellon, nephew of Andy Mellon praises Hitler: "Personally I rejoice when I hear that Germany is rearming. Being a property owner in Germany, I regard Adolf Hitler as having saved my home from the communistic rabble that would have spread all over Europe had he not come into power in 1933." . . .

Society Notes . . .

John Elton, recently discharged from the hospital with a hopeless case of cancer, was evicted from his home in Toledo, Ohio. . . . Margot, Countess of Oxford and Asquith, wore gowns valued at \$7,000,000 at the Silver Jubilee Ball. Queen Mary wore a diamond valued at \$500,000. . . . William H. H. Michigan Relief Administrator, threatens to cut people from relief who refuse to work in the beet fields at coedle wages. . . . The late Alfred I. duPont left an estate estimated at \$100,000,000. His wife gets an annual income of \$200,000, the Florida estate and the yacht. . . . Mulligan stew was served on May 15 at the Cincinnati transient flophouse. One hundred men were poisoned. . . . Andrew Mellon's \$4,000,000 art treasures are locked securely in the Corcoran Art Gallery to be seen only by the Mellons and their friends. . . . As the Salvation Army celebrated its jubilee in Chicago ten men were evicted from its flophouse. . . .

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INSIDE STORY OF TOLEDO STRIKE

Told by a Leading Participant in the Battle with General Motors

By ART PREIS
(Ed. Note: This is the second of a series of three articles by Art Preis on the great Toledo strike. Art Preis was the editor of "Strike Truth," the Chevrolet strikers' bulletin.)

Two-fold were the lessons of the Auto-Lite strike, lessons which quickly permeated the entire Toledo labor movement, and which in turn affected through the Toledo labor movement the Chevrolet strike. The first lesson was that better conditions for the workers are won on the picket lines. Secondly, the Toledo workers had learned that the struggle of one group of workers is the battle of all workers, in which all labor must cooperate if victory is to be assured.

Side by side with the progressive growth and development of the auto workers union, Local 18384, a new spirit began to animate the other unions as well. One of the significant indications of this fact was the increasing participation of the Toledo Central Labor Union in every strike battle and its response to the appeals for assistance from the organized unemployed.

The Organized Unemployed
It was a well established fact that the Lucas County Unemployed League, acting with the assistance of the Workers Party, had taken the initiative and aggression in smashing the Auto-Lite injunction and reviving the lifeless strike. This action on the part of the organized unemployed served to drive home to the union men that the unemployed, instead of being a serious menace to their jobs and wages, might become an invaluable ally on the picket lines. In the Armour and Swift and Larowe Milling strikes, which shortly followed the Auto-Lite, the Lucas County Unemployed League was officially invited to aid the strikers and in actually formed the backbone of the mass picket lines.

One of the significant contributions of the Workers Party to the Toledo labor movement, and one which has had a vital bearing upon the present characteristic solidarity, was the weapon of the united front. While the Unemployed League was demonstrating the effectiveness of joint action between the unemployed workers on the Auto-Lite picket lines, a united demonstration was secured for increased relief between the Central Labor Union, the Unemployed League and the now defunct Relief Workers Association. A successful united front anti-injunction demonstration, originally proposed by the W. P., was carried through by the Workers Party, Socialist and Communist parties.

The Famous Death March
In the fall of 1934, on the initiative of the Unemployed League, a Joint Action Committee was organized with several other local independent unemployed groups. A continuous fight of several months duration was conducted to better the relief standards for unemployed single men. A series of extremely militant marches and mass demonstrations, culminated by the famous six-day and -night Single Men's Death March and the seizure of the Lucas County Court House, were organized and led by Sam Pollock and Ted Selandar.

During the latter part of February of this year, the Toledo Building Trades Council initiated a strike among the skilled workers on the Federal Emergency Relief projects in Toledo. The Unemployed League soon stepped to the fore in this strike. The program of the Unemployed League for the conduct of this strike was adopted in entirety. A Joint Action Committee, representing the entire Building Trades Council the U. L. and the Workers Alliance, was set up and a general FERA strike was effected. Mass strike tactics, hitherto completely outside of the experience of the skilled craft unions, were adopted. Again W. P. and U. L. members organized and led the picket lines and a series of splendid demonstrations.

A May Day United Labor demonstration was organized by the Joint Action Committee, endorsed by the Central Labor Union. This was the largest May Day demonstration ever held in Toledo, with A. J. Muste as the principle speaker. It ended in a militant march upon the Lucas County Relief headquarters.

"March of Labor"

While the FERA strike was reaching its height, four other strikes occurred, the outstanding being the general Milk Drivers strike. An unofficial Joint Board of Strategy was devised, composed of the leaders of all the strikes including Sam Pollock, representing the Joint Action Committee. The forces of the various groups of strikers, under the leadership of Pollock, were combined into a joint picket line, called the March of Labor, which by a series of quick concentrations on various struck plants and projects closed them all down effectively.

It is only on the basis of an understanding of this simultaneous development—the organization of the progressive forces within the auto union and its expansion and achievements by virtue of the militant

policies fostered by these forces, and the corresponding development in the entire labor movement of the attitude of working-class unity and mass action, with a weakening of class-collaboration policies—that the subsequent unionization of the Toledo Chevrolet workers, their strike and its unique aspects, can be correctly understood. In the final analysis, what preceded and immediately followed the Chevrolet strike is as significant from a broad perspective as the strike itself.

Showdown Comes in Autos

Following the unionization of the vast majority of the Toledo auto parts plants by March of this year, the auto workers' union finally approached the last major challenge in its path, the transmission plant of the Chevrolet Motor Ohio Company, employing 2,300 workers. Previous attempts to organize this plant had met with almost total failure. Certain more backward elements and leaders in the union balked at the seeming magnitude of the task, for this was poaching upon the previously inviolable domains of the General Motors Corporation whose illimitable resources would be fully and unhesitatingly used to smash the union. Nevertheless, the progressive forces in the union pressed unceasingly for an organizational drive on the Chevrolet plant. They recognized that all previous union activities had been merely preliminary skirmishes and training for this major onslaught, which carried with it the possibility of a general auto strike and a genuine showdown on the issue of unionism in the automotive industry.

Three primary factors determined the ultimate success of the progressive program for organization of the Chevrolet plant. The first of these was the general atmosphere of unionism which pervaded the air of Toledo and the steady succession of labor battles and victories and partial victories which followed in the wake of the Auto-Lite strike. The Chevrolet worker might have shunned direct union appeals, but he could not avoid the experiences of his friends and neighbors who were in the unions nor the daily evidences of union activities and achievements which constantly forced themselves into the Toledo press.

The Company Maneuver

Secondly, the officials of General Motors connived with the Automobile Labor Board in attempting to put over a crude maneuver to place the official stamp of company unionism upon the Chevrolet workers. This was an "election" called in the Chevrolet plant for April 9, under the supervision of the completely repudiated Board, to deter-

mine what agency the workers desired to represent them in collective bargaining. The real union had not even requested such an election, but it was the intent of the company to force through a vote favorable to the company union before the genuine union could secure the slightest foothold in the plant. The obvious crudity and arrogance of this maneuver acted as a boomerang against the company and served to drive the workers in desperate defiance to the union.

Then there was Jimmy Roland. Jimmy was a plain everyday production worker in the Chevrolet plant. He joined the union in its early stages prior to the Auto-Lite strike. In short order, he got the "can." During the Auto-Lite affair he was one of the handful of union militants who fought the injunction. He was one of the real mainstays of the fight. During his period of unemployment he joined the U. L. and became one of its leading members. He likewise established himself as a leading progressive in the union and was elected to the position of trustee on the executive board.

One-Man Picket Line

Despite his inexperience and youth, Jimmy was class-conscious to the core, intelligent and eager to learn, tireless in his efforts to build the union, honest and incorruptible in every fiber and, above all, a bull dog fighter for his principles. He refused to back down before General Motors. When the Auto Labor Board avoided his appeal for reinstatement on his job, he put on his one-man picket line before the Chevrolet main gate. He was rehired in short order—and placed in an office post at his original wage.

With its hand forced by the imminent Auto Labor Board election, the union was compelled to act promptly and decisively. Ten days before the election a meeting of the Chevrolet workers was called. The phenomenal number of 600 showed up. Jimmy Roland was chairman and acting organizer. Other successful meetings were called in quick succession. The union was flooded with applications for membership. When the elections were finally held, despite the fact that the union advised the workers not to participate in it, the vote of the Chevrolet workers went overwhelmingly for the representative of the union, the business agent, Fred Schwake.

Acted Quickly

Once the vote was over, there was no stalling or delay. Moving quickly and decisively, guided by the strong and militant leadership of Jimmy Roland, as chairman of the elected executive shop committee, the new union men acting through

their committee drew up a union contract and presented it to the plant executives on April 19. Roland firmly and skillfully directed the inexperienced committee through this first treacherous conference, and indicated thereby the undeviating position he would maintain throughout the strike. The committee refused to discuss anything but the terms of their own contract. They would not accept cigars or non-union brand cigarettes offered by the bosses. They declined to lunch with the bosses or deal with them in any but a formal and business-like manner. The class lines were strictly drawn.

Every significant condition in the union contract was flatly rejected by the bosses. That very night a mass meeting of the Chevrolet workers was held and a unanimous vote for strike taken. A strike committee of nine was elected with authority to call the strike. Jimmy Roland was the chairman.

Trying to Stall

Desperately, General Motors sought to delay the action. Topnotch G. M. C. officials flooded into Toledo from Detroit Monday, April 22, at 5 A.M. and called the shop committee into another conference. General Motors was obviously on the defensive. They knew they were dealing with leadership of a different calibre than that of the weak, vacillating, conciliating type of the A. F. of L. officialdom, personified by individuals like the national auto union organizer, Francis Dillon. They kept the committee closeted in conference for twelve straight hours so that the strike could not be called that day. The committee held to its demands like the Rock of Gibraltar.

At 6:15 A.M., April 23, Jimmy Roland and his committee went through the plant and spread the word. The power was turned off, the wheels stopped moving. In a disciplined organized line, the workers marched from the plant. The company foremen tried to threaten and cajole the strikers not to leave. Company handbills, calculated to distort the issues of the strike and confuse the workers, were circulated. The company tactics were useless. In short order, the plant was entirely shut down.

At the plant gate, the strikers were met by a group of the union men, headed by Bill Prior. The progressives aided the strikers to organize a solid, effective mass picket line.

Then the strike committee, as guided by Jimmy Roland, sent a number of telegrams. One went to Washington to the surprised and chagrined Francis Dillon, informing him that the strike was on. The others went to all the union locals in General Motors plants throughout the country, telling them of the strike and urging them to take similar action. Every one of these moves had been previously calculated by the union progressives.

where in certain restaurants, waitresses returned to the wage basis of \$4.00 for a 7 day week. The American worker cannot fool himself that the result can be anything but a general lowering of wage scales and a still more general increase in working hours.

Prepare for Action

He must be ready now that the decks are clear for action. He must give an answer, and the only possible one, to those who up to now have controlled the life and destiny of 125 million people in this country. The American worker must respond to the coming onslaught of the employers against the living standards by an effective method of organization. Their answer must be: into the unions to fight for higher standards, and to fight effectively as only can be done by strong and all embracing unions.

WASHINGTON (FP).—By a 6 to 3 ruling, the U. S. Supreme Court refused to reverse the sentence of Angelo Herndon, 22-year-old Negro labor organizer, to 18 to 20 years on the Georgia chain gang, claiming no jurisdiction.

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Censure Silk Workers Board; Fails to Carry Out Decisions

By FELIX GIORDANO
PATERSON, May 22.—The Joint Board of this local of the American Federation of Silk Workers was extended a unanimous vote of censure at a meeting of the Plain Goods Department, held last Saturday. The vote came as a result of an attack against the Stalinist-influenced Board for failing to carry out its own decisions.

At an open hearing of the Mayor's Conciliation Committee held the previous night night at Central High School the Joint Board was supposed to present a resolution for public approval, which was then to be forwarded and presented to the open hearing on the silk code in Washington on Tuesday. Such a resolution was not presented and no one represented at the hearing the official view of the union. Tom Morgan, notorious local representative of the U.T.W., was the labor spokesman on the Mayor's Committee, which sanctioned unanimously the passage of resolutions that were very clear in so far as the bosses' demands went, but which became miraculously vague as soon as they began to babble about a standard of wages for the workers.

W. P. Member Speaks

And none of the known members of the Communist Party dared get up and protest at the hearing. It was only a member of the Workers Party who demanded that the resolution which read in part " . . . resolved, that we place these craft minimums on the basis of the program adopted by the workers . . . " specifically state the program adopted by the A.F.S.W., which is for a thirty hour week and a \$25 minimum for weavers.

Having failed to protest of their own accord, the C. P. carried its program to its logical conclusion and did not even support the demand, with the result that the resolution went unchanged.

Not such was the attitude of the officials of the Federation and of the Local of the Dyers. George Baldanzi made no bones about presenting a resolution of his own, which was carried as a substitute resolution for one presented by the Mayor's Committee.

Union Muffs Situation
At this hearing our union failed miserably. It did not mobilize the membership to attend the meeting. It did not present the official resolution embodying its views, it did not even take the floor to try to give official leadership to the workers. What fight there was, what resistance was offered, was not organized by our union, but was instead organized by the dyers' union, which was not affected by the meeting.

The failure of the local officialdom on Friday was not the end, but the beginning of a disastrous chapter in the history of our union. Where the C. P. left off in Paterson, the infamous national leadership of the U.T.W. took up in Washington on Tuesday, with Gorman and McMahon accepting the standard of wages proposed by the Labor Advisory Board, in open defiance of the standard of wages and other labor provisions demanded by the membership of the union nationally only a scant three weeks ago.

An Alarm Signal
Nor can we be surprised; for, had not Paterson, even Paterson, the city of struggles, allowed the Mayor's Resolution to pass?

The events of last Friday in Paterson and of yesterday in Washington bear a warning and sound the alarm.

The membership of our union needs intelligent and alert leadership. The so-called "Progressive Group" failed when it was in charge, and now cannot do anything better than spread a whispering campaign against individuals, instead of presenting a policy and fighting for it. The Communist Party, grown "respectable" with the right turn effected in the trade union policy, does not dare put up a fight against the reactionary leadership of the A. F. of L. What is needed in Paterson and in every other silk center is a new alignment of really progressive forces, a genuine left wing, established on the basis of a sound program of real militancy, and challenging both the old bureaucrats and the Communist Party for leadership in the locals and nationally.

The Manager's Corner

More Builders Are Wanted

Among the New Militant builders Comrade S. W. Semington of Chicago holds the record for the period of the last fortnight. He sent in a total of six yearly subs and two club subscriptions of four each. But there is another sign of activity in this field from Chicago. More attention is being given to general distribution and Rose Casano also forwarded two club subscriptions of four each.

From Los Angeles A. C. Doughty sent in two club subscriptions of four each. From Philadelphia we received from Norman Penn one such club subscription and from Davenport, Iowa, Betty Rowland forwarded one club subscription and two six months subs. Chester Johnson of Minneapolis forwarded four one year subs and our indefatigable builder among the railroad workers in the northwest sent in a club subscription of four. All in all when this is taken together with a number of single subscriptions turned in notably from New York City, this is not such a bad record, but it is, of course, not sufficient for a real serious extension of circulation.

A practical means of quick results in this respect is afforded by the club subscription cards. They are issued in clubs of four three-months subs for each dollar paid in advance, printed on U. S. postal cards, to be deposited in a mail box as soon as the subs are obtained and the investment thus refunded to the builder. We have only a limited number of these cards and they will be good only for a limited period of time. Some changes by the way of real improvements of the New Militant are now in contemplation, hence the limited period for which these club cards will hold good.

The changes that are contemplated are of a far reaching character and as soon as the plans take on concrete shape the announcement

Next New International To Appear Soon

We are making a serious effort to catch up with the past delays in publication of the theoretical organ. The management of both publications has been brought together under one head and we believe that this will facilitate the matter of appearing on time in the future. The June issue will be off the press on June 10. Following that the date of appearance of the July issue will be further advanced and so on until we have caught up.

Time is short for distribution of the May issue and for settlement of accounts, but the remittances are a very important item in assuring a prompt appearance. The May issue features a fundamental Marxian analysis of the present situation in France. From the Lome front one of the most important developments taken up for a thorough discussion is the Long and Couffignas movements. The June issue will carry as one of its outstanding features a new theoretical article on Soviet Russia by L. D. Trotsky.

In this connection let us remind you of the combination offer of a one year subscription for the New Militant and the New International both for \$2.00. This offer also will be good only for a limited period. The best thing to do for those who are interested is therefore to avail themselves of this offer right away.

Speed Is Most Important Now!

The New Militant is in a very serious financial crisis. Only disaster can follow if this situation is not changed. It will go under unless our alarm signal is heeded.

This crisis is brought about by and large due to the fact of the inexcusable negligence in many instances and the undue slowness in others in making settlements for accounts due for bundle orders forwarded regularly. We do not doubt that the bundles have been disposed of; but the remittances are lacking. To say the least, this is an intolerable situation.

We do not believe that our sup-

porters will want to see the New Militant go under. We feel certain that you will all lend a hand to get it out of its difficulty. But action is required without a moment's delay. The first thing to do for those who owe on bundle accounts is to make an immediate settlement. In addition all subscriptions about to expire should be renewed without delay and the New Militant builders get busy soliciting new subscriptions. If this is acted on promptly we can get out of the crisis and continue in existence.

In this we count upon all the friends and supporters of the