

Goodyear Accord Imperils Union

Layoff of 1600 More Men Ends Rubber Sit-Down

By B. J. Widick

AKRON, Ohio, Nov. 21. "They licked us again, but it's the last time!"

This terse comment by a progressive rubber worker summarized the Sunday meeting of Goodyear Local where the United Rubber Workers official leadership shoved down a betrayal proposal that allows 1,600 additional layoffs against which a rank and file sit-down had been called.

The United Rubber Workers leadership abjectly surrendered to the threat of National Guard strike-breaking, and agreed to an eight-point, government sponsored program, which gives Goodyear further opportunity to break the union.

But it took five hours of bitter argument to defeat the rank and file opposition to the lay-off proposals, which rallied around the slogan, "All or None. We all work or nobody does."

The program of the union leadership was a clever one. It was announced to the sit-downers that a special meeting Sunday would take up the question of strike action. This and other reports brought the sit-downers out of the three plants.

Present N.L.R.B. "Offer"

When the meeting was called to order, John House, Goodyear Local president and leading reactionary, read the labor board proposals which the union negotiating committee and the company had agreed to.

The agreement allowed for the lay-off of the 1,600 men who had been given notices. It established department seniority while the rank and file demanded, and the union needed, factory seniority. It promised to rehire the workers on the basis of seniority.

It means that the company policy of getting rid of the militant unionists by closing down key departments has been sanctioned by the union!

A counter proposal was offered from the union floor to the effect that the company be forced to rescind the lay-off orders or a strike would take place.

Bill Carney, Goodyear unionist and now C.I.O. director in New Jersey, amended the counter-resolution calling for an immediate strike vote and action.

Dalrymple Swings Axe

Then S. H. Dalrymple, president of the United Rubber Workers, leaped to his feet and rebuked Carney and declared his amending motion out of order.

"This meeting wasn't called to take strike action. It's unconstitutional. We can't strike. The National Guard would defeat us. We haven't the money for a strike," Dalrymple shouted.

Carney indicated that the very life of the union was at stake. That the C.I.O. had won its first great victory in the Goodyear strike of 1936. That either the union fought back or it was doomed.

Rank and filers tore the official proposal apart. They called it a betrayal of union men. For hours the argument continued. But the steady barrage of defeatist propaganda of the leadership began to take hold.

Stalinists Equivocate

The Stalinist spokesman took an ambiguous position, one that confused the issue and helped the

union officialdom. "We don't want to see men laid-off but I don't like the counter-resolution. It isn't complete," he said. He didn't make any clarifying motions. He didn't explain that he, under party orders, had approved of the evacuation of the plants, which was the basis for the defeat.

It was the threat of the National Guard action and the realization that the union leadership wouldn't fight Goodyear, that swung the tide. A vote of 1,492 to 822 approved of the union officials' agreement.

The rank and file is willing to stake its life in a struggle against the strikebreaking tactics of the National Guard. Sentiment for a general strike against the National Guard grew hourly in this city while the Goodyear union was meeting.

Need Militant Leaders

But the workers have seen what reactionary union leadership does when a serious crisis confronts it. The rubber workers remember how the steel workers were betrayed by their leaders in the "Little Steel" strike. That the National Guard had been called because the C.I.O. had asked for it.

It takes a militant, class-conscious union leadership to smash the strike-breaking of the cops, the Guards, and the other governmental forces of oppression.

A powerful leadership of that kind doesn't exist in Goodyear. The progressive have been learning slowly and through painful experience, such as this Sunday meeting, the need for genuine left-wing leaders with a program of class struggle.

The sit-down is over. The 1,600 rubber workers join the 21,000 other unemployed in this city. The union continues to retreat.

But not for long.

There will be more lay-offs. Goodyear has already indicated that. There will be more sit-downs. The mood of the rank and file guarantees that. Meanwhile the progressives are learning fast.

And when it breaks loose again, there will be no stopping.

Starving men have nothing to lose but their chains and the rubber workers are realizing it.

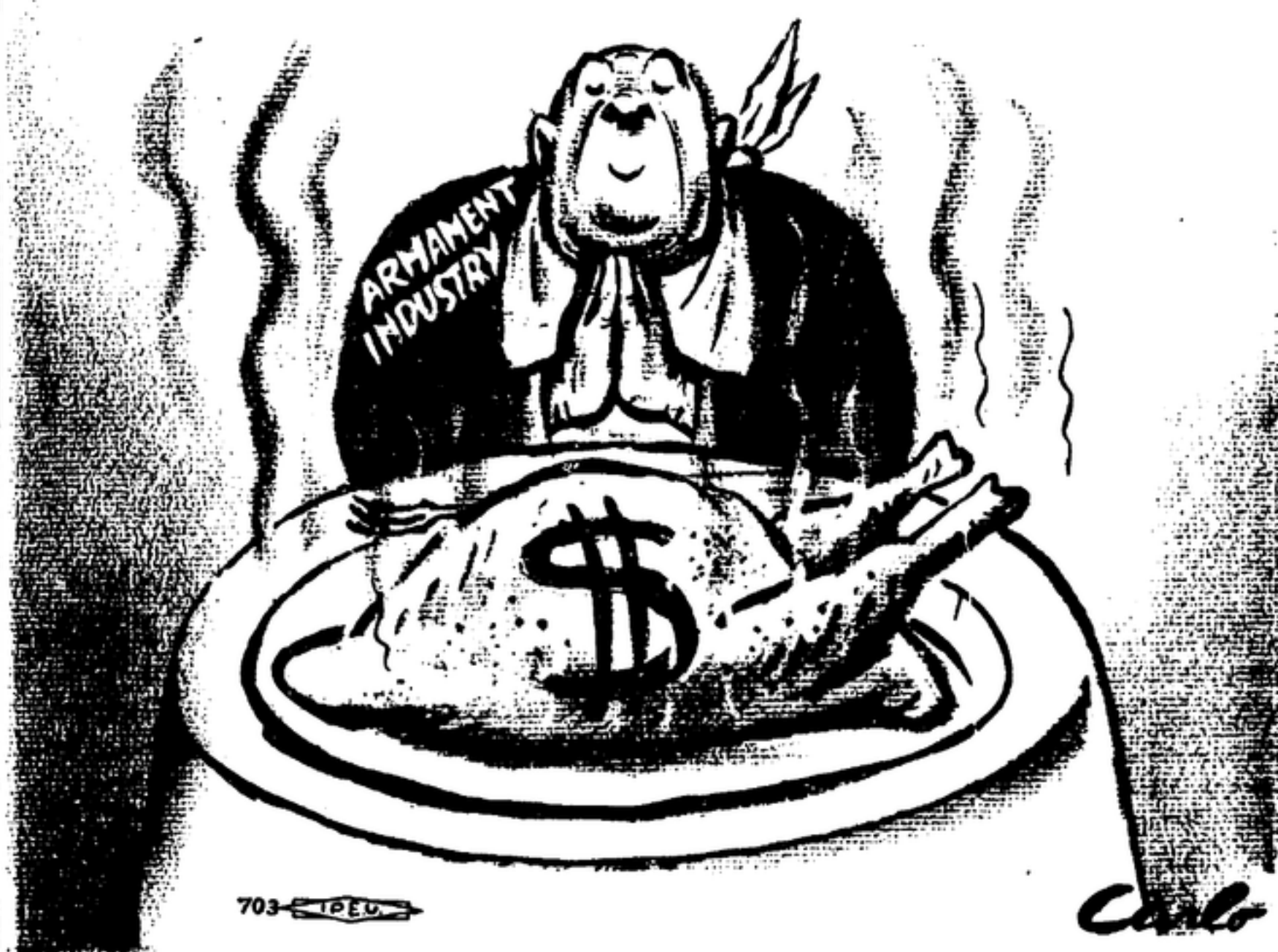
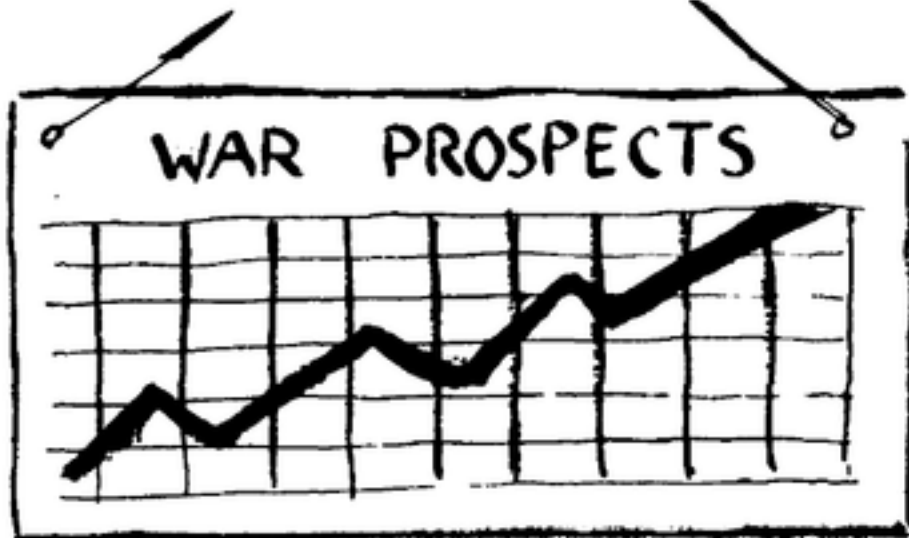
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Something to Be Thankful For



Layoffs, Labor Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

the momentum taken on by the drive in Congress and in Administration circles.

Arthur Krock, the authoritative Washington commentator of the N. Y. Times, reports that "for the first time since 1933, the President (has) accepted the idea of aiding industry on its own terms. . . . What "its own terms" means is self-evident. To be sure, Mr. Roosevelt will once more say that the policies of industry are responsible for whatever conditions exist. But Mr. Krock remarks, that will be "just politics", in the same way as when business was "good" a few months ago, Mr. Roosevelt said: "We planned it this way". In other words, the "New Deal" demagoguery will remain unchanged, but the course itself will veer sharply to the right.

In the meantime, with the President himself accepting "industry's own terms," Congress appears to be even more anxious to make them its property, too. Under the general ballyhoo for the "balancing of the budget", a move is on foot to repeal the undistributed profit tax and the capital gains tax, the two pet grievances of Big Business. The House Ways and Means Subcommittee has, in fact, already taken action to this effect. To meet this drop in federal revenue, the capitalist politicians controlling the House and the Senate can have recourse to only one method: drastic cuts in W.P.A. and relief appropriations. That these cuts, along with the repeal of the two taxes on big business, are on their way, is conceded by

every political observer.

Behind the People's Front Mask

Just as the business "recession" shatters the illusion of the possibility of industrial planning under the system of private ownership of the means of production, so the very first reaction of the "New Deal" administration and Congress to this same "recession" completely demolishes the feasibility of class collaboration politics for labor. The "New Deal" has proved as incapable of providing any sensible measure of economic security for the masses of the population as capitalism generally. People's Frontism—the policy of backing capitalist politicians like Roosevelt, as a friend of labor—has proved quite as unreliable a means of expressing the political interests of the working class.

Events are driving home the lessons of class collaborationist politics with merciless logic. A hard winter, full of miserable prospects for the working class, lies ahead of us. Unemployment, starvation wages, hunger amid drastic cuts in relief, face the working class, unless it bestirs itself into reawakened militancy.

The campaign of the bosses must be met head-on. The rank and file in the auto and rubber industries have given a splendid example of their awareness of the danger ahead. Only by its own, independent strength, only by courageous and aggressive action can the workers in industry head off the lay-off campaign.

Only by the most wide-spread solidarity can organized labor beat back the attack against the trades unions and against the agreements fought for so bitterly in the past four years.

Reliance on LaGuardia and demagogues of his stripe will merely disarm and demoralize the W.P.A. workers and the unemployed. A program of mass action, independent of the so-called liberal and progressive politicians and concentrated with full force upon the local, state and federal governments, is the only way of preventing such scenes of working class misery and starvation as have not been seen here since the days of Hoover.

The new economic crisis is a challenge and a test for labor. Apprehensiveness and discontent are growing in its ranks. It is the task of the revolutionists to gain for the ranks a democratic expression of their sentiments, to expose and defeat the bureaucrats and the People's Fronters who seek to obstruct their militancy, and to organize them for the counter-attack which, under revolutionary leadership, can alone bring a real solution: the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of workers democracy in a system of socialized, planned production.

