

# Con-Edison Moves to Split IBEW Locals

## "INDEPENDENT" UNION IS A COMPANY TOOL

### IBEW Militants Will Build Union Anew On Progressive Basis

Two class "B" locals, 829 and 830 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL), representing the Bronx and Manhattan electrical divisions and the gas division of the Consolidated Edison Company, announced on Jan. 25 their withdrawal from the IBEW and their decision to set up a new "independent" union, the Brotherhood of Consolidated Edison Employees. Five other class "B" locals are scheduled to vote on this same proposition within the coming two weeks.

These seven locals comprise the New York IBEW Utility Council, which claims to represent the 35,000 employees of the Consolidated Edison Company.

#### Claim Jurisdictional Raid

The leaders of the secession movement, Patrick J. McGrath, former business manager of Local B-829 and Joseph Fisher, former business manager of B-830 and President of the Utility Council, claim that they are withdrawing from the IBEW because the International office recently awarded jurisdiction over construction work of the Waterside Generating plant and other disputed projects to Local 3, the New York electricians local.

"It is not my intention," Wm. McGrath stated, "to be identified with any organization whose constitution has as its purpose the taking away of work from members of this company. I say, leave this constitution and identify ourselves with the company."

#### Branded Company Move

Harry Van Arsdale, Business Manager of Local 3, IBEW, branded the "secession" as an out and out union move. He stated: "Bluntly, this is an effort to deliver many thousands of workers into the hands of one of the most powerful monopolies in the world—the Consolidated Edison Company."

Every union man at the Consolidated Edison Company knows full well that the formation of the new "independent" union is nothing but the revival of the old company union representation system. The campaign to destroy unionism on the properties of the Consolidated Edison Company has been deliberately prepared and carefully organized for the past year by Floyd Carlisle, Vice-President of the company. In this nefarious scheme, Carlisle was well aided by the archaic, inefficient and inept union machinery of the IBEW.

#### Background of Fight

The year 1937 saw a great revolt flaring up among the employees of the Consolidated, against the insecurity and the tyranny of the open shop. Tremendous enthusiasm was displayed for union organization and the IBEW was called in to conduct the drive. The IBEW, however, repelled immediately these workers by its ultra-conservative policies and its outmoded union structure. The IBEW offered these men a class "B" local set-up. (A class "B" local is composed of "non-benefit" members who pay lower dues. Such locals enjoy no autonomy and are entitled to only one vote at national conventions, regardless of membership.)

The Consolidated Edison workers, keenly disappointed by this proposal, began turning towards the CIO for redress of their many grievances. Suddenly, in March, 1937, like a bolt from the blue, came the announcement that a "closed shop" contract was signed by Carlisle with Dan Tracy, International President of the IBEW. The contract negotiations were conducted only from the top, with no consultation of the workers or reference to their desires and needs. The workers found themselves suddenly herded into a union like a pack of sheep. They had just "won" a closed shop contract and a check off system, but no increase in wages, no improvement in working conditions, no redress of their grievances.

The following day, the company union declared itself "dissolved." The IBEW then proceeded to set up seven class "B" locals. All workers were forced to join the union and pay dues through the check-off system. Overnight, the IBEW bloomed out into a huge organization on the properties. It had all of the outward attributes of a legiti-

# Crucible Steel Signs A Pact

### But What It Says, Union Members Don't Know—Resent SWOC's Dictatorship

The recent "accord" reached between the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and the Crucible Steel Co., as announced in the December issue of "Steel Labor," which abrogated strike votes taken in nine plants of the Company, is no longer a mystery to the rank and file of the Crucible workers.

Clinton S. Golden, director for the north-eastern region of the SWOC, informed the membership of lodge 1289 (Harrison, N.J.) through a circular letter January 25, that a new contract had been signed to remain in effect for a period of one year. (Provision is made, however, for opening up the contract for revision of wage rates at any time by either party upon ten days' written notice.) Another highlight of this letter was the announcement that "the charter of lodge 1289 has been suspended until further notice; that all lodge officers, committeemen and stewards have likewise been suspended."

#### Terms of Contract Unknown

The rank and file of the Crucible lodges have waited two years for a new contract. Last July, the leadership in the Jersey City and Harrison plants took the initiative and instituted a drive for a new contract. As a result of this action the SWOC was forced to institute proceedings for bargaining with the Company.

After five months of interrupted negotiations—broken off from time to time by the Company—Golden announced the signing of a new agreement—the terms of which are shrouded in deepest secrecy, and buried in the files of the SWOC.

#### Local Leaders Removed

The January 2 issue of the "Voice of 1289" informed the mate labor union—dues books, by-laws, charters, constitution—everything but the support and the loyalty of the membership it was supposed to represent. In the two and a half years of the IBEW existence at the Consolidated Edison Company, no more than a few hundred members have attended union meetings in an organization supposed to represent well over 35,000 men. Most of the union officers were the same officers as of the "dissolved" company union.

#### CIO Contests Contract

The CIO Amalgamated Utility Workers Union immediately contested the contract and filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board. For the last two and a half years, this case has been tossed around in various courts, governmental boards and the US Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the IBEW National Office has permitted a situation to exist where, under its name, functioned a semi-company union at the Consolidated Edison.

Van Arsdale lifted part of the veil when he stated in his interview: "It must be admitted that the International Organization was unwise in permitting inexperienced and incompetent leaders, in many cases former officers of the Edison Company, to head the IBEW locals.

"These officials have consistently sabotaged the efforts of the CIO and are now attempting to sabotage the work of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers."

The scheduled NLRB election, which was supposed to take place in the next weeks, brought the whole situation to a head. The local IBEW officers, McGrath and Fisher, in collusion with company officials, cleverly engineered the "secession" scheme in order to throw the elections into further turmoil and legal red tape and thus further discredit the cause of unionism among the workers.

Now that the horse has been stolen, Tracy rushes to shut the gate. From Washington, he announces that the "IBEW will go the limit" to fight the company now and build a union on the Consolidated Edison properties.

#### IBEW Militants Reorganize

Militant union men in the IBEW are now planning to reorganize the union from the ground up. They realize that they must build their union at the Edison Company under the banner of the IBEW, because the IBEW is the national organization of the utility workers. The IBEW men are now demanding full autonomy in the conduct of the local union and its affairs, to enable them to regain the confidence of the Edison workers and to rebuild the union on a new healthy foundation.

# MPLS. DRIVERS VICTIMS OF COURT RULING

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Several hundred members of the Transport Workers Union picketed City Hall last Saturday afternoon, protesting the demolition program of the La Guardia administration and demanding that jobs be provided for the three thousand employees of the Second and Ninth Avenue elevated lines, before these lines are razed.

A letter addressed to the Mayor by Austin Hogan, President of Local 100 of the TWU demanded that "employment be provided for every man now employed on these lines."

Attorneys for the Transport Workers Union submitted a brief to the Transit Commission on January 8, refuting the arguments set forth by the New York City administration in its application to demolish the Second and Ninth Avenue elevated lines.

# WPA UNION WORKERS OPEN NEW DRIVE

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During the course of the meeting, many workers took the floor and told how the WPA administration, believing that the WPA trials meant that the FWS was licked, was bearing down on the workers on the projects. With the weather 20 below zero last week, the administration attempted to force the men to continue working on the outdoor projects. Much to the administration's surprise, members of the FWS immediately contacted their union officials and very shortly after that, the WPA district director was forced to issue an order directing that outdoor projects be closed and that workers be given opportunity to make up lost time when the weather became warmer.

#### Fighting Spirit High

Many of those present had never been at a FWS mass meeting before. At the conclusion of the meeting, the great majority of those who were non-members indicated their willingness to join the organization. The spirit of the membership was typified by the remark of Max Goldman during his speech, who said, "It will take more than 162 indictments or convictions to smash this organization. If the government wants to stop the unemployed from demanding their right to live, they will have to indict and jail not a hundred or even a thousand, but all 12,000,000 of us."

#### Membership Aroused

The rank and file of 1289, frustrated by the National Office of the SWOC in their fight for a real contract, are fuming because of the unprovoked attack by Golden against their progressive and militant leadership and the consequent sell-out in the fight for a new and better contract. Their major demands: For a 62½ cent minimum with proportionate increases in pay, and a Monday to Friday work week with time and one half for Saturday and Sunday (as against the stagger system), have been apparently scuttled by the SWOC.

# QUICK ACTION STOPS FLINT WPA LAYOFFS

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The attempt to fire the 120 men was only the first gun in a planned general stream of lay-offs. With this attempt effectively frustrated, new efforts will be even more difficult, and will be met with even more determination by the union, which now feels its strength.

Previously a 403 was considered to be irrevocable and final. Trying to put men back who had received 403's was like trying to bring the dead back to life. But militant action did it!

#### Changed His Mind!

Negotiators for the union said that when they first went into the administrators' office they were met with a firm refusal. But all obstacles melted away, when he heard the shouts and singing of the union men massed in the hall just outside his room.

Union leaders made very clear in several speeches to the workers that the reason for lay-offs is the Roosevelt policy of spending billions for guns at the expense of the unemployed, and they demanded that the unemployed be provided with JOBS NOT GUNS.

# Transport Union Brief Poses Security Demand

### Hasty Demolitions Imperiling Jobs Of 3,000 Men in New York Pressure Needed to Force

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Attorneys for the Transport Workers Union submitted a brief to the Transit Commission on January 8, refuting the arguments set forth by the New York City administration in its application to demolish the Second and Ninth Avenue elevated lines.

The Transport Workers Union brief proves that the hasty demolition program is motivated solely by the needs of the administration to pay out large sums of money to the bankers in conformity with the infamous "unification" deal put over last year by the La Guardia administration. It is estimated that eleven million dollars will be raised in increased property assessments on the adjoining properties when the demolition program is approved.

The Transport Workers Union repeated its demands for complete protection of the more than three thousand members who stand in danger of losing their jobs, if the present demolition program goes through.

In spite of the repeated promises of the phony "friend of labor," Mayor LaGuardia, about providing jobs for all of the men who are thrown out of employment, the La Guardia administration is rushing to jam through the demolition program in order to hasten its "unification" deal with the bankers.

The Transport Workers Union should by all means continue to fight this rotten demolition scheme through the courts and through every conceivable legal action. But legal action alone, will not save the jobs of the three thousand union members. It is necessary to supplement the legal fight by mass pressure on the city administration. It is necessary that the Transport Workers Union inaugurate a dramatic campaign of mass meetings and demonstrations and call for support upon the whole labor movement in order to stop the La Guardia administration cold, smash the La Guardia anti-union program which is designed to destroy the Transport Workers Union and to weaken the whole New York labor movement. Only in this way will the jobs of three thousand union members be saved and the open shop campaign of the bankers and their agents be successfully repulsed.

# Pressure Needed to Force Anti-Lynching Bill Through

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lynching of 1938. Because of this a grand jury investigation was started. The witnesses did not show up, and a no-true bill was returned by the jury. No action was taken against either the witnesses or Standard. The case died. But because a grand jury had been called, this was not a lynching.

#### Bill Has a Chance

The bill in Congress will never stop lynching; only the abolition of the capitalist system can do that. But the mere threat of its passage has reduced somewhat this pastime of Southern gentlemen, and its passage would undoubtedly reduce it more. This time the bill has a better chance than ever before. This is an election year, and in half a dozen Northern states the Negro vote holds the balance of power between the two capitalist parties. If sufficient pressure is brought to bear on the Senate, the bill will pass.

# February 'New Int'l' Is Out

The February issue of the New International will be off the press by the time this paper reaches you. Financial difficulties and the fire in our headquarters compelled us to skip the January number.

The omission of the January number is more than compensated for by the excellence of the new magazine which will be thirty-two pages.

The issue features a discussion on the Russian question which is once again the hub of all revolutionary politics. The role of the Soviet Union in the war, the invasion of Finland, the foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy since the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the question of "Soviet imperialism"—all of these are treated extensively.

Among the articles on this question are: "Again and Once More Again on the Nature of the U.S.S.R." by Leon Trotsky.

Resolutions of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the Soviet Union and on Stalin's invasion of Finland.

A speech by James P. Cannon on the attitude of revolutionists toward the Soviet Union. Also included in this issue is an important speech by Leon Trotsky on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death of the Russian scientist, Mendeleev: "Dialectical Materialism and Science."

A revolutionary Marxist cannot afford to miss this issue. Order your copies now!

# WORKERS' FORUM

Editor: In your four points for Congressional legislation before Congress you forget one big item—and that is cost of production for the farmer.

Because the farmer having no buying power would flock into the cities and wreck your No. 2 proposition.

On the other hand when the farmer gets cost of production he will take a lot of labor out of the cities also buy so much more of labor's products.

Except for this I think you have a splendid program.

FLOYD A. LARSON  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Editor: While Old Man Knudsen, \$500,000-a-year President of General Motors, went up and down Michigan whipping up a Jingo War Spirit under the guise of aid to "Poor Little Finland", abject misery typical of the dark ages

Knudsen's salary is sufficient in itself to more than support all Flint's unemployed.

EXPROPRIATE the 60 Families! Provide a decent standard of living for the workers!

G. M. Flint, Mich.

# FIRST RESPONSE TO RED SUNDAY:

Several branches of the New York local have made a good beginning in response to the request for renewed and redoubled sales of the weekly Socialist Appeal.

These branches conducted house-to-house and street sales last Sunday and all report good success. They sold many Appeals, pamphlets and other party literature.

We repeat here the requests we made of all branches last week:

- Organize a special sales campaign.
- Make every Sunday of the week a RED SUNDAY, on which every available member of your branch goes from house-to-house to sell the press and literature of our Party.
- Send in the proceeds of RED SUNDAY immediately to help pay on your regular bundle order account.

And don't forget to send us in regular reports on your successes and experience of your RED SUNDAY activities. We'll publish all of these reports in the Appeal Army column.

The following subscriptions have come in during the past 2 weeks time. They represent a substantial increase in new subscribers and readers over the past period. We hope branches can keep up and build on this improvement:

NEW YORK CITY	7
BOSTON	7
Minneapolis	6
Foreign	8
Los Angeles	4
Pennsylvania	3
Chicago	2
Akron	2
Oakland	1
Syracuse	1
Florida	1
Newark	1
Ann Arbor	1
St. Louis	1
Youngstown	1
TOTAL:	46

The Detroit Party branch has increased bundle order by the substantial amount of 75 copies and now takes a total of 100 per issue.

**ANTI-WAR MASS MEETING**

**Jobs Not Battleships!**

Speakers:  
**SARAH RICE**  
*Former Yorkville C.P. leader*  
**JAMES P. CANNON**  
*Natl. Secretary, Socialist Workers Party*

**FRIDAY, 8 P. M., FEBRUARY 16th**

**YORKVILLE CASINO**  
210 East 86th Street, New York City

**ADMISSION: TWENTY-FIVE CENTS**

*Auspices: Local New York, Socialist Workers Party*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WANTED:** Girl share light, airy 4½ room apartment. Rental \$16 with or without furniture. Subways convenient. Rhoda Pearson, Sarah Hertzberg-151 w. 97th St. New York City.

**FOOD WORKERS** Branch dance has been postponed to Saturday, Feb. 10. Place: Upper West Side branch headquarters, 910 Ninth Ave., N.Y.C. Beginning 8:30 p.m. Admission twenty-five cents.

**UNSER WORT** No. 1 (99) is available at the following bookshops and newsstands in New York City:

Modern Book Shop, 27 University Pl.

Rand School, 7 East 15th St. 42nd St. & 6th Ave., S.E. Cor. 42nd St., Southern Side, near Library.

200 East 86th St. Moderne Deutsche Buchhandlung, 250 East 84th St.

Get it at once! It contains the article of W.H. on the War in Finland, a commentary on the Riots in Bohemia, and the important article by L. Trotsky, the USSR in War.

Boro Park Presents: Info Please with Gould and Gordon as our experts. An auction of auto-

graphed Diego Rivera prints. Dancing in a private ballroom. Bring 2 bits to 1181 E. 49St. B'klyn and the fun is all yours.

**FOR SALE:** Microscope, Spencer Binoculars, crystal sub-stage condenser-950 power, good condition. Reasonable. See S. Stanley in Socialist Appeal office at 116 University Place-N.Y.C.

**THE HISTORY OF TROTSKYISM** is incorporated in the file of the Militant and the New Militant which we have. Vol.1 No.1 Nov. 1928 to June 1936 except for about 25 of the later issues. We will sell it for the best offer we receive.

We have all books and pamphlets of interest to Socialists. Send for our lists. We pay cash for used and old books and pamphlets.

Have You Read: Unemployment and the American Workers—Swaback—10c; The Meaning of Marx—Hook, Eddy, Russell, Dewey—20c; Hearst by Oliver Carlson—50c; Why Jews are Persecuted—A Catholic viewpoint—10c. LABOR PUBLICATIONS Dept. T. Box 785 Chicago, Ill.

**G O H A R L E M!** This Saturday, Feb. 3, 8 P.M. Dance to the JIVE Music of the

SAVOY BEARCATS BAND Entertainment, Refreshments, etc. Sub. 49c 186 Lenox Ave. Harlem Branch, S.W.P.