

WORKERS' FORUM

Write to us—tell us what's going on in your part of the labor movement—what are the workers thinking about?—tell us what the bosses are up to—and the G-men and the local cops—and the Stalinists—send us that story the capitalist press didn't print and that story they buried or distorted—our pages are open to you. Letters must carry name and address, but indicate if you do not want your name printed.

New Recruiting Trick Tried Out In Detroit

Editor: While driving down the main thoroughfare here in Detroit, my eyes came upon—a cannon, large, interesting and intriguing, to say the least. So clean, so many nice wheels. Turn this one for aim, watch the shell feed, etc. Young men who still get a kick out of shaving, dressed in full regalia, were there to explain this fascinating mechanism. Upon asking what the purpose of the demonstration was—I got a blunt "recruiting campaign" speech. But that was already clear from the billboard signs all over the city. "Join the Army," which broke the ground for this method of recruiting. And this is only preparation for more determined methods that will soon follow. But watch, it may not pass off so slick. They may have their cards thrown in their faces and they themselves cast into the ashcan, these war dealers. It's high time we played another kind of game anyway! Detroit, Mich. F. Bertone

A Heartening Note About Spain

Editor: In a letter I have just received from a Spanish comrade now in Mexico there is the following passage which gives us a good insight into the situation of the Spanish revolutionists, etc. "The morale of the Spanish comrades is astonishingly high considering what they have gone through. We get favorable reports from Spain—via France. There seems to be an unusual amount of solidarity among the workers and peasants. We have been told of one instance where one of our comrades had walked a hundred kilometers to the border while under suspicion by the authorities; and the peasants, in the most backward section of the country, shielded him and directed his course so that he would avoid the authorities. In Madrid, too, reports have it that there is a high degree of solidarity among the workers. The oppression is vicious and thorough, but Franco hasn't yet broken their spirit. Los Angeles C. C.

Ohio Has Okies Like the Joads

Editor: The showing of the movie, "Grapes of Wrath" caused something of a stir in certain Toledo circles. One pastor devoted a Sunday sermon to the question, "What shall be done with the Joads?" Businessmen's discussion groups and literary tea societies also talked over the problem. There was considerable shaking of heads, and many sighs that such things should exist in democratic America. Unfortunately, their sighs would have a truer sound if the objects of their good intentions were not two thousand miles away. These people seem perfectly blind to the fact that right here in Toledo, people are living in conditions that would make those of the Joads seem relatively luxurious by comparison. On Toledo's dumps you will find shacks constructed of driftwood and cardboard cartons in which whole families are living. They eke out a miserable pittance by going through the rubbish that is thrown onto the dump. Paper and scrap iron has a certain cash value, you know—but not much. Children of 8 and 10, old men and women, all fight like a pack of wolves over every piece of metal, every strip of wire that is found. Their whole days are spent rummaging through the filth of the city's rubbish. Fires are kept burning constantly so that the rubber surrounding copper wire may be burned away. But these are only a few of the most oppressed of Toledo's suffering thousands. What of the hundreds of families who have not yet been returned to the relief rolls? You hear no exclamations from the gear for them. Only amazement—"I wonder how they do it?" Still, I suppose it would be wrong to expect anything else from the liberal pastors, the busi-

nessmen discussers and the literary tea societies. I haven't the slightest doubt but what their California counterparts are shedding the same sort of crocodile tears for the terrible conditions—in Ohio.

Nor does it seem to me that their sympathy would be of any great value anyway. What could they do about it? It is to the unions that we must look for help. They must be made to realize what a threat to union standards the existence of such conditions are. This is a job which the Appeal and the SWP must and can do. Toledo, Ohio Ed Davis

Editor: I would like to know if you could give me the names of organizations that work against religion. That expose these misleaders and tell the truth. I would like to have the names of such organizations and their addresses. I still believe your party is the right party. You ought to have more force. I will send you some money soon to help you carry on the fight. Franklin Wolfinger

There is an "American Association for the Advancement of Atheism," located at 38 Park Row, New York City. It does not, however, publish any material showing the pro-capitalist role of the churches. It carries on a very abstract and therefore ineffectual campaign. It is worth noting that this kind of old-fashioned atheism, which once played a big role in the pre-war American socialist movement, has today completely disappeared from the labor movement.

On the one hand the reformist "socialists"—the Socialist party of Norman Thomas and the Social Democratic Federation—include pious religionists in their leadership and have made their peace with the churches. The Stalinists also go in for a good deal of opportunistic catering to the churches. On the other hand we revolutionary socialists, as Marxists, recognize that "religion is the opium of the people." We recognize the reactionary role of the churches, which are tied by innumerable threads into the service of the capitalist class. But we also were taught by Marx and Lenin that religion will not die away so long as man is not master of his environment and thereby do away with religion. But the socialist revolution will be made by tens of millions of workers who will still be religious. To arouse these great masses to struggle is the task of our party.

Given these considerations, the struggle against religion in general is necessarily subordinated to the economic and political struggle against capitalism. In the course of that struggle, we know, the most advanced workers, as they find the churches lined up with the capitalists, tend to leave the churches—Editor.

S.W.P. OPENS CONVENTION

(Continued from Page 1) been elaborated, as readers of the last two issues of the New International have already been able to judge, the party convention will have the task of overhauling drastically the work of forging deeper into the ranks of the industrial working class.

All Invited to Dinner Our sympathizers and friends will have an opportunity for direct contact with the delegates coming from all fields of the American class struggle at the Dinner being given to greet the delegates on Sunday, April 7, 1940 at the Beethoven Hall, 210 East 5th Street, New York City. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Reservations can be made at 116 University Place, or by telephoning ALgonquin 4-8547. An unforgettable experience is in store for all on that historic occasion. We urge every reader to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

N.Y. Transport Union Retains Union Shop

The Flint WPA Union—History Of Growth Through Struggle

FLINT, Mich.—The story of Local 12, WPA and Unemployed Auxiliary of the United Auto Workers (CIO), is well worth careful reading by militants everywhere. It is the story of the struggle against terrific odds to organize the unemployed, to interest the employed workers in the plight of the jobless. It is the story of a successful fight against the union-wrecking sabotage of the Stalinists and their Workers Alliance.

Today Local 12 is a great success. Everyone in Flint pays it respect. But not until three or four months ago. When the last UAW convention made provision for organization of the WPA workers and unemployed into auxiliaries, Flint militants immediately set about to do the job. A half dozen self-sacrificing workers began the arduous task.

The UAW top officials were not interested. Local union leaders gave little or no assistance. Strongly CP-dominated UAW local officers sabotaged efforts by referring unemployed to the Workers Alliance and aiding that bankrupt outfit in every possible way.

The "Death Watch" After carrying through a few militant actions such as the famed "Death Watch," the WPA union began to grow.

At that time the Stalinist and union-wrecking elements figured it was ripe for them to step in. They sent in a couple of agents to whisper, malign and work against the leaders of the union, who were such well-known militants as Genora Johnson and Roy Lawrence.

A meeting called for the election of permanent officers was flooded with Workers Alliance stooges. Union by-laws were violated by the distribution of slates in the hall by members of the stooge election committee. A hurry-up count was held and the militant elements who had built the union were defeated for the main offices.

They did not quit, however. They carried on the fight. In a few weeks the stooge Workers Alliance hangers-on drifted off. They did nothing to build the union. The union membership fell. But the militants kept plugging.

away, visiting WPA jobs, giving union talks, signing up members. Union-Wreckers Beaten And finally they succeeded in putting new life into the dangerously wounded organization. A new election was held and the original builders and militants were elected by overwhelming majority. A campaign of action was put into effect.

On the CIO Council of Flint, under the influence of Communist Party members, the Workers Alliance was seated as a fraternal organization, given the same rights as the WPA and Unemployed auxiliary.

The WPA union delegates to the council put up a battle to oust the Workers Alliance from the council, and finally after bitter debates, after every trick and subterfuge had been tried by the Stalinists, the Workers Alliance was shown the door. The WPA union took its place as the only legitimate CIO union of the WPA workers in Flint.

WPA Boss Eats Crow A series of demonstrations were then held at the WPA administration offices, protesting the lay-off of 200 men. The demonstrations were so militant, so well-planned, that the WPA administrator was forced to rescind all 403's and put the men back to work!

This victory became news. Men in the shops began to hear more and more about the WPA Union, about the militancy of its leaders, about its victories.

When the WPA officials locally were tamed, and the union leaders realized national pressure was now needed in this field for further progress, they began to turn their eyes on the notoriously cruel local Welfare Board.

Buick Workers' Solidarity A demonstration, reported in last week's Socialist Appeal, was held at the Welfare offices and great strides were made in training these welfare officials in dealing with the union.

The Welfare building, across the street from the Buick plants, was picketed by a militant colorful squad. In the plants, a Buick worker reported, men working on the production lines kept looking out the window, talked the situation over thoroughly, and unanimously resolved that should the police attack the pickets the

men would lay down their tools, turn off the machines, grab their wrenches and pour out to protect their unemployed brothers. A world of significance lies in that incident.

By this time union officials, both locally and nationally, in the UAW-CIO had been forced by rank and file pressure to take some action in support of the WPA local which had won the hearts of the auto workers.

Union Backs Lawrence When Roy Lawrence, sit-down veteran and WPA union president, was attacked in the reactionary Flint Journal for allegedly threatening to use violence against relief heads, OFFICERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND OF ALL LOCAL UNIONS IN FLINT went to his support immediately, issued a joint statement to the press, and backed up the WPA union official unanimously.

Today a full page in every issue of the Flint Auto Worker, weekly organ of the local UAW-CIO, is devoted to the problems of the unemployed and WPA workers. Speakers from all local unions of the UAW-CIO now feel honored to attend and speak at the auxiliary's meetings, which are building up to such a point that they overflow the hall.

Workers Alliance Finished The Workers Alliance membership has transferred en masse to the UAW-CIO local, leaving behind only the hard-bitten and worthless elements. The WPA and Welfare officials tremble every time the WPA Auxiliary speaks.

Negroes in Flint, 90% of whom are unemployed, are gradually joining up, one of the members of the colored race having been elected recently to the Executive Board of the local.

Throughout the city of Flint, as a result of militant action and consistent work, union men are proud of Local 12. Its uphill struggle should be a lesson to militants in every area.

Its program is: a job for every worker; at least a \$10,000,000,000 emergency WPA appropriation; all war funds to the unemployed; an adequate youth program to employ all unemployed youth at union wages, etc. It will not give up the struggle until these demands are met.

Expect Big Vote For CIO at GM

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look twice at this garbage to know that it was borrowed directly from the propaganda files of the National Manufacturers Association or the Chamber of Commerce.

That the auto workers union and its great strikes was a "sea of troubles" for the AFL big shots is true to the last word. When the auto workers threw Green's Mr. Dillon into the ashcan after he had kept the auto workers disorganized in pre-CIO days by feeding the newly organized workers to the craft union sharks; when Green sold out the infamous NRA settlement; when Dillon turned over the Toledo Chevrolet strikers in 1935 to the tender mercies of General Motors; when Green, acting in union with every anti-labor boss and banker and vigilante in the country, stabbed the Flint sit-downers in the back by urging Murphy and General Motors not to deal with the CIO; when Martin committed a hundred other crimes against the auto workers—when all these things were happening the CIO auto workers were a "sea of troubles" for Mr. Green, and there isn't a doubt in any auto workers' mind that both the face and bellies of Green and his lieutenants will be the color of sea-green!—when they see the results of the NLRB elections.

The real problems for General Motors workers, however, don't end but only begin the day Bill Green and his crowd are cleaned out of the industry. The Reuther-Thomas leadership of the UAW has accumulated a host of problems for General Motors workers not by acting like the "wild-eyed radicals" the AFL accuses them of being but, on the contrary, by their timidity toward the corporation. GM is taking full advantage of this attitude.

Company Bears Down In many of the plants here the line is being constantly speeded up. When workers refuse to accept the speed-up they are either penalized with a layoff or their wages are cut to the percent of the standard the management claims they are meeting.

In Chevrolet Gear and Axle, seven men were recently penalized for refusal to meet company standards. They were allowed to return to the job a week later on the condition that they accepted company standards. The company made a concession in agreeing to a lower quality of work. But it is certain the men will be forced to raise the quality of their work before long. In this way the company is driving more production out of the men.

In Ternstedt's, women workers were cut ten cents per hour until they met company standards. Many of the workers quit paying dues to the union in view of its failure to help them. In Fleetwood, where the situation is better than in most GM plants, the factory operates five days a week, but workers with several years seniority are walking the streets. New methods of production are throwing men out of the shop almost daily, but wherever possible the management is favoring new men as against the old union employees.

The Basic Cause The lack of militancy on the part of the union leadership in its daily relations with the corporations arises almost directly out of its failure to wage a militant fight for the most basic demand of the auto workers: THE 30 HOUR WEEK AT 40 HOUR PAY.

Without this solution—which would in itself solve the ticklish questions of seniority, working conditions, etc.—there can be no real solution to the problems of the auto workers. The tremendous unemployment of workers in the auto industry is the most pressing problem for the auto union.

Everywhere in Detroit and in Flint workers are seeking a more fundamental treatment of their problems than mere change in bargaining relations with the corporation. And everywhere the feeling is arising, and it will not be downed by soft speeches, that there must be action for the 30 hour week at 40 hour pay if the auto workers union is to go forward.

The spirit of 1937 is present in these big auto centers. The auto workers will fight—they need only leadership and a program.

La Guardia Finally Forced To Agree To City's Observance of Union's Contracts

(Continued on Page 2)

can understand. The union continuing full preparations for the calling of a city wide strike. It held an emergency meeting on Monday night of the 500 members of the union executive board. They announced the setting up of special strike headquarters in the different sections of Brooklyn and the Bronx and the organization of a special press headquarters at the uptown Empire Hotel.

Mayor's Strikebreaking Plans As late as Monday, Mayor La Guardia, phoney friend of labor, sent a letter by special messenger to union headquarters, advising the union officials that the differences between the city officials and the union were purely "imaginary" and suggesting that the whole matter of a strike of New York's transportation system "was not really serious and just a little April Fool's day fun." He threatened to break the strike if one were called.

To back up this vicious policy, La Guardia issued the unprecedented order placing ten city departments under the direct command of Police Commissioner Valentine, instructing these departments heads to keep their departments open 24 hours a day and keep all personnel and equipment at the complete disposal of the police. An emergency meeting of police commanders, held Monday night at Police Commissioner Valentine's office, outlined police strategy to attempt to smash the union strike when and if it was called.

To further intimidate the transport workers, notices were posted at all I.R.T. subway stations of an injunction obtained in 1932, prohibiting the workers from interfering with the receiver's possession or management of the I.R.T. or any of its properties.

Mayor Backs Down But in spite of the threats and the intimidations, the union ranks held firm and late Tuesday the mayor was forced to withdraw his previous union-busting proposals.

The precise formulation which the mayor was finally compelled to give in writing was: "When a ruling is made by the board affecting any of the provisions of the contract it

will be held in abeyance pending a final judicial decision and the provisions of the contract affected will be performed in the meantime."

Anti-Labor Conspiracy The present controversy has demonstrated beyond doubt that the mayor is in a combination with the Wall Street bankers in a vile conspiracy to achieve unification of the city's transport system at the expense of and on the backs of the poor people and the labor movement of this city.

The last two weeks have also demonstrated that the Transport Workers Union can gain real security and achievements only by relying on its own strength, courage and solidarity.

Battle Not Over It is unquestionable that the TWU has won the first battle of the present war. But the battle is by no means over.

There are still 4,800 workers, employed at the present time on the city's elevated lines who will be dumped out into the street to join the huge army of unemployed as soon as demolition of the elevated lines begin.

There are still the closed shop and other provisions of the present union contracts which must be passed on by the court. La Guardia, the rest of the city administration, the judges of the courts, and the whole gang of capitalist politicians are not interested or sympathetic to labor but serve the Wall Street bankers, the deadly enemies of labor.

The Transport Workers have reason to be proud of their initial victory. But this initial victory must not make them over-cocky. The unions must now begin a great campaign to use all possible influence and pressure upon the courts to honor the full contract including the closed shop, and to see that jobs at equal pay are guaranteed to the 4,800 union members employed on the elevated lines. Only the same solidarity, the same militancy, the same reliance upon the strength and powers of the union itself that won the initial victory, will carry the transport workers through to final victory, in this great fight.

TEAMSTERS' PACT GUARDS UNION GAINS UNDER WAR CONDITIONS

KANSAS CITY—Grim realism toward the prospects of war and a determination that organized labor shall not be penalized by war-time conditions are written into the provisions of the contract which General Drivers Union Local 41 of Kansas City has secured from the employers here.

The contract, which runs from March 1 for one year includes the following provisions: "22... if this nation is called to war the contract shall be reopened for wage and hour negotiations only.

"23. It is agreed that in the event of war, men who are called for service will not lose their seniority with the company upon return from service if physically fit."

The first provision makes it possible for the union, when war begins—which means a rise in the cost of living—to demand higher wages and shorter hours. Local drivers now get 60 cents an hour for a 48-hour week, time and a half for overtime.

The second provision, guaranteeing their jobs to men who return from war, has broad implications. It constitutes an obstacle to employers' plans to weaken the unions by changing the employees during the war, for it means return to the industry of union men with long traditions of unionism. If such a provision became part of all union contracts, it would mean that the returning body of soldiers could not easily be used, as they were after the last war, through the American Legion, as an anti-labor force.

Over and above the specific function of these provisions, they reveal a grim understanding of how near we are to being dragged into the imperialist war and a class-conscious will to expand labor's power and gains with no concessions to jingo patriotism.

BRIDGES GIVES BOSSES HIS 'PEACE PLAN'

(Continued from Page 1)

What is more, all decisions favoring the longshoremen were on minor issues, covering such questions as the right to dispense with preferred gangs, the size of sling loads, the right to safety codes—already part of a state law!—and the right to a full day's work when work is available.

But on all fundamental questions the arbitration award has gone against the union and has served to undermine the union and union solidarity. These questions included the right to respect picket lines, union control of hiring and the right of the union to discipline its own members. These are questions affecting the life of the union and should never have been submitted to arbitration.

Union-Wreckers At Work Because of the general opposition of the rank and file to the method of arbitration, the Stalinist machine had to undertake extraordinary measures to sell the "peace plan." Under cover of one of the most intensive agitation campaigns they have ever conducted, the Stalinists maneuvered the separate maritime unions into a position of relative isolation and mutual distrust.

Whereas formerly all unions had agreements expiring at the same time, their contracts now have different expiration dates. The main purpose behind this Stalinist maneuver was to destroy the solidarity of the unions so that each would be forced to accept the principle of arbitration.

But as against arbitration, militants, inside the ILWU are demanding a program to reconstitute the original maritime federation of the real marine unions for a show-down fight against the bosses.

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This being special convention week for the party there isn't much to report because most of the comrades have their eyes turned towards New York. But it has a good side in that we can see from the enthusiasm from the incoming delegates that Appeal circulation is going to take a big spurt forward after the convention. The delegates see big possibilities ahead—and they are 100% correct.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The first thing literature agents and branches will have to apply themselves to after the convention is subs. Following is a list of subs received since the last report—we hope you remember when that was because it was a long time ago.

- Yonkers, N. Y. 1
 - Los Angeles 5
 - Rochester 2
 - St. Louis 2
 - Omaha 3
 - San Francisco 1
 - New York City 1
 - Richmond, Calif. 1
 - Kansas 2
 - Provo, Utah 1
 - Washington, D. C. 1
- The figures speak for themselves. The first convention resolution by each and every delegate must be: "Subscriptions come first!"

SPECIAL SUB OFFER

Our special sub offer has brought many good comments but results are still to come. Nick Lyons writes from New Haven: "The special offer is a very good one and I'm going to do my best to get some of these trial offers in the hands of our contacts."

SPECIAL AUTO EDITION

This week we are printing a several thousand copy special edition of the Socialist Appeal on the coming NLRB elections in General Motors for distribution at the big CIO rallies in Detroit

and in Flint. Branches in St. Louis, Los Angeles and Cleveland will also receive copies for distribution at GM plants in their localities. The special edition hits the nail on the head in dealing with the vital issues facing the auto workers. Results of this distribution will be reported later in these columns.

Detroit put part of the money right on the line: "Enclosed find money order for the special auto edition," they write, "the money was raised at the last party meeting, almost everyone (including the new members) contributing."

THE HONOR ROLL

Not all the blows of reaction can drive our devoted sympathizers away from the Fourth International. We deeply appreciate their contributions.

From Oakland, Calif., A. R. writes: Enclosed is \$10 to cover my press security pledge... The steady swing to reaction and utter confusion in most people's minds make the N.I. and S.A. more important than ever. I certainly appreciate them nowadays more than I ever did.

From Washington, D. C., M.B. sent us a five spot and apologized that he couldn't raise more on his watch.

George Stern, Appeal columnist, came through with twenty-five dollars! We hope that the comrades who like his excellent column would follow his example in coming through for the paper when it is really needed.