

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.

Imperialism Is Not "New or Revolutionary"

Editor: For the sake of those socialists dismayed by the rise of the "new" (even "revolutionary") phenomenon of Fascism I would like to print these verses I found quoted in an old travel book, copyrighted in 1905. Except that the Abyssinians are now called Ethiopians and that the rulers of Italy are now called Fascists, these lines might have been written yesterday.

Unfortunately the name of the poet was omitted. The future I am sure will have good cause to remember it.

Wilt thou, Italia, spurn their prayers with scorn? Snatch the last morsel from thy serfs' white lips, Ravish for murderous strife their eldest born, And squander millions on thy useless ships?

Make thee ill-paid officials band-ed knaves, Drive thy starved sons by thousands from thy shore, Send them to rot in Abyssinian graves, And hide the cancer festering at thy core?

Yet none the less shalt thou most dearly pay For playing thus the war-lord's pompous part, When thou shalt feel, at no far-distant day, The people's dagger drive through thy heart.

Egitdio Mattina

The Death of Frank Halstead

Editor: It is with deep sorrow that we report the news of the death of Frank Halstead, of Los Angeles. Comrade Halstead was one of the founders of the Left Opposition movement in Los Angeles. Previous to that, he had been a member of the Young Peoples Socialist League in the days before the War, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, and an active member of the progressive group in the Machinists Union.

When the writer of these lines arrived in Los Angeles, comrade Halstead was receiving and distributing a bundle of "Millitants," and speaking wherever he could for the Left Opposition, doing pioneer work in the then "white spot" of reaction. This period marked the beginning of the unemployed movement into which the small nucleus of the Left Opposition threw itself; beginning a left wing in the large unemployed co-operative movement. In this movement comrade Halstead was a leading figure, organizing the unemployed. Working side by side with comrade Halstead, I was able to see a real rebel in action; a rebel who combined a deep loyalty to and faith in the working

Labor In Minneapolis Observes The First Anniversary of WPA Strike

MINNEAPOLIS, July 14—The labor movement of this city this week celebrated the first anniversary of the great WPA strike of 1939. Some of the leaders of that strike in Minneapolis are still in the federal prison at Sandstone, serving sentences on the charge of "conspiracy" against the WPA law.

An editorial in this week's NORTHWEST ORGANIZER, militant organ of the Teamsters Joint Council, commemorates the occasion in the following terms:

"It is difficult to remember that there was a time when WPA employed about three million workers, when it paid the prevailing wage scale, when workers who were denied jobs in private industry were retained on WPA, when some WPA workers made from \$70 to \$103 monthly. All that was changed by the Roosevelt-Woodrum relief law that went into effect a year ago, and it was these terrible alterations in relief standards that precipitated the spontaneous strike of half a million workers in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas and elsewhere. The strike turned out to be the most popular movement of mass protest ever organized in the United States.

"In Minneapolis the entire labor movement joined hands in protesting the attack on union wage scales and relief standards. Under the leadership of the Minneapolis Building Trades Council, supported by the Central Labor Union, Local 544's Federal Workers Section, the CIO and the local Workers Alliance (but not the Alliance nationally), thousands of Minneapolis WPA workers joined the demonstration.

"It is ironic to recall how those who today protest so much their love for "democracy" treated the Minneapolis WPA strikers last July. How the WPA authorities refused to close down the projects in the manner customary in disputes; how Roosevelt and Attorney General Murphy fired their opening salvos in the campaign to psychologize the American workers that "You can't strike against the government."

We recall the revelations that FBI agents were sent into Minneapolis, disguised as unemployed workers and directed to the sewing project to spy on the strikers. And we recall the mass indictments by a federal grand jury for the flimsy charge of "conspiracy," the arrests of strikers in the middle of the night, the astronomical bail figures set, the trials before hand-picked federal juries, and the sentencing of 32 of our brothers and sisters.

"Proud of Labor's Record "But labor's memories of that strike and its aftermath are not altogether dark. It is with tremendous pride that union men and women can recall how staunchly organized labor acquitted itself in rallying to the defense of the strike victims in the very teeth of the government's opposition; how unions throughout the country sent in generous contributions to the Central Labor Union's WPA Defense Committee—how the defendants and the Defense Committee attorneys were able to prove to the satisfaction of every fair-minded person the monstrously unjust nature of the government's persecution and the innocence of the government's victims. We recall how the strong arm of labor was able at the last moment to snatch 125 workers out of the clutches of District Attorney Victor Ander-

son and the federal government; how labor throughout the nation solidized itself with the martyred defendants and flooded the White House with demands that President Roosevelt grant executive clemency. It is to the eternal shame of Roosevelt that he curiously rejected the broad popular demand to pardon all the strikers.

"The Fight Was Right "The fight made by organized labor in defense of union standards was a thousand times justified and correct. The instincts and understanding of all the hundreds of thousands who participated in the 1939 strike were sound to the core. "It is always better for organized labor to resist stubbornly new repressions of the enemy, than to give up the battle without a struggle. "The Minneapolis labor movement did well to throw itself with fervor into the fight. Naturally, there were not and could not be any assurances beforehand that the fight would be won. But had there been FIVE MORE MINNEAPOLIS'S in the nation, five more cities where the labor movement took a progressive and responsible attitude towards their unemployed brothers and sisters, the strike would have been won hands down, and organized labor and the unemployed would have

been in a much stronger position today.

"If there is still a WPA program at all in the United States, if the government has not yet dared to draft and regiment the jobless into the army, if the new 8-months relief bill provides jobs for an average of 1,900,000 workers monthly (insufficient as that is), the workers can thank themselves and above all, thank the Minneapolis labor movement. The WPA strike of 1939 taught the rulers of this country that there are still limits beyond which they cannot venture safely.

"The workers and unemployed of the United States, like all mankind, are now confronting one of the darkest and most reactionary periods in human history, an epoch of a terrible new imperialism. The approaching entrance of the United States into that war, impelled by the laws of capitalism and the desire of the wealthy American industrialists and bankers for new colonies, new sources of raw materials, new markets and spheres of investment, will bring about vast changes in the status of the unemployed and the problems that confront organized labor.

"In the last few months alone, Roosevelt has asked for and Congress has united in giving him, sixteen billion dollars for the war machine—more money than the federal government has spent for relief in the entire last six years, much more money.

"How very wrong and cowardly were those politicians and fake liberals who refused to demand

SELLING THE APPEAL

APPEAL SALES GOING WAY UP!

- 500 to San Francisco! 500 to Los Angeles! 500 to Boston! 400 to St. Paul! 100 to Youngstown! 100 to Toledo!

Pushing the APPEAL with unprecedented enthusiasm, the comrades of nine branches, to date, throughout the country have drastically increased their bundle orders. Week after week they take by storm working-class districts, factories, mills, union halls—always pleasantly surprised by the excellent reception the workers accord them.

This is not a new experience to the comrades in auto, who have been carrying on mass activity with the Appeal for months. But even the auto comrades are taking a big step forward today: previously aided financially by the National Office. The live-wire Detroit Branch now informs us that it will assume complete financial responsibility for its 500-a-week bundle! We look forward to hearing from Flint and Toledo.

The way the comrades throughout the country have rallied their forces to build the circulation of the Appeal—and the warm reception given them by the workers—is an inspiration and a foreshadowing of the successful future of our movement.

SAN FRANCISCO PLACES ITS ORDER

San Francisco, Calif.—"We are very anxious to take advantage of the offer of 500 copies of the Appeal at a reduced rate. It might interest you to know that very extensive plans for circulating the Appeal have been made and the comrades are very determined to see these plans carried out."

MINNEAPOLIS REPORTS—

Mpls., Minn.—"We are very much inspired by the results of our APPEAL house-to-house work. Workers are reading the paper, some get extra copies to take to their places of work to pass out to fellow workers. Very shortly we plan to solicit the neighborhoods for subscriptions."

NEWARK'S ELECTION CAMPAIGN NEEDS APPEALS

Newark, N. J.—"The Newark branches are doing well with the Appeal. We are trying out an experiment, and will let you know the results soon:

"Some of the branches do their house-to-house work on a wide scale by going into one neighborhood one week, and then moving on into a new neighborhood the next. The others are concentrating on one neighborhood alone, going through with the paper one week, and then the next having talks with the workers. Both methods are bringing good results.

"The attitude of the people we come across is on the whole still anti-war. Although here and there we do come across a few who have been won over by the war pressure, these still constitute a real minority among the workers.

"Thus far the Newark branches have more than paid for our first two 500-a-week bundles. We expect to keep this up, and in a short while to pay off our back debt as well.

"At the next meeting of the District Committee we are going to take up the question of increasing our bundle again, as the paper is invaluable in our campaign for George Breitman for U. S. Senator from New Jersey."

SUB DRIVE GOING SLOWLY

Subs continue to come in steadily, but at a discouraging low rate. It is to be hoped that the large scale house-to-house work will result in an increase in subs in the near future.

- The past two weeks brought in a total of 32 subscriptions: St. Paul 7 Los Angeles 4 Boston 3 Chicago 3 Omaha 2 Minneapolis 2 And one each for Allentown, Youngstown, Toledo, Rochester, Houston, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, California, and South America.

Tell your contacts not to let the war pressure get them down! Tell them that in this fair democratic land the Appeal is certainly good for another six months—and it'll be the best dollars' worth they ever collected for 100 pennies!

What the Last War Taught Some American Workers

By MARVEL SCHOLL

During the last war, the rising cost of living was one of the contributing factors to the greatest wave of strikes which have ever struck this country. Real wages dropped while apparent wages rose—living costs so far outstripped the increases in wages that by the end of the war real wage rates had dropped 25 points.

A very graphic picture of how real and apparent wages stood in relation to both the cost of living and the profits garnered by the United States Steel Corporation is shown by the following figures:

Year	Apparent cost of living	Real wages	Profits of the United States Steel Corporation
1914	102	103	99
1915	102	103	99
1916	106	118.3	89
1917	112	142.1	79
1918	130	174.4	74

Thus we see that while apparent wage rates rose from 102 in 1914 to 130 in 1918 they actually fell 25 points because the cost of living which stood at 103 in '14 rose to 174.4 in '18. And that during this same period the profits of the U.S. Steel Corporation rose over four hundred and fifty million dollars!

In the shipbuilding centers such as Baltimore, Bath, Maine, etc., rent rates rose 65%. In Detroit rents went up 380% by 1918! The average increases in commodity prices were—clothing 77%, food 62%, rent (average) 15%, light and heat 45%, and incidentals 50%. In many cities where war industries were concentrated the landlords raised the rent every time there was a wage increase and the raise was in the same proportion!

Butter retailed at one time during the war at \$1.25 per pound. Sugar sold for 35c per pound and a family of five was allowed only two pounds per week. White flour was almost unobtainable.

Clothing and shoes were practically out of sight for many working class families. Shoes for school children were made with paper soles that had to be replaced on the average of once every ten days.

Huge fortunes were made by speculators who cornered the markets on needed commodities and held them until the prices went up. Income tax returns for 1917 show that there were thousands of new millionaires created by this method.

A FEW OF THE STRIKES DURING THE LAST WAR

The working class did not like these conditions and they did not peaceably accept them as their patriotic lot. Economists and historians call the period from 1916 to 1918 one of "turbulent industrial unrest." During that period there were a total of 11,430 strikes and 336 lock-outs. The strike wave was not con-

BUT THEY'LL OUTLAW STRIKES THIS TIME

During that period capitalism could still afford to grant the concessions they demanded. Today the story is different. Instead of a rising capitalism, we have today an economic system which is fast falling to pieces.

Roosevelt, as spokesman for the capitalist class, knows full well that the only way the United States can come out of the projected war with its present economic system intact, is if he is able to whip the labor movement to a pulp before the country is sent into the war.

The present wave of legislation against the aliens, the WPA workers, conscription, the use of the Sherman Anti-trust Act against unions—all these are only fore-runners of what is coming. The persecution to which the labor movement will be subjected once the war is under way will be designed with one purpose in mind—to break the back of the trade union and radical political movement—to destroy the threat which the organized labor movement today holds out to the capitalist class.

From April 6, to October 6, 1917 there were 3,000 strikes. The wage increases as a result of these strikes amounted to 65%—in some industries the rate of increase was more than 200%.

Auto Union Convention Spotlights Weaknesses

(Continued from Page 1)

shops lost by the union during the same period. A conference called on the competitive parts situation over six months ago turned out to be a 100% fiasco. The situation is so bad that the officers of the union have even stopped making promises and excuses for the lack of progress in this field and are attempting to forget the unpleasant subject altogether.

Airplane Campaign On Paper

At least half a dozen resolutions have been passed by the UAW conventions, the UAW International Executive Board and the CIO Executive Board on the immediate necessity of launching a nation-wide organization campaign to organize the key airplane and aircraft industry. The fact still remains, however, that the union is no further along on the road in this job than it was at the time it first adopted its resolutions. This week we see the International Executive Board has adopted still another resolution that the aircraft industry must be organized!

30-Hour Week Dropped

Particularly disgraceful is the record of the union top leadership on the 30-hour week. In direct violation of the instructions of the Cleveland convention, in flagrant disregard of the requests of numerous large GM locals to live up to these instructions, the leadership has not even made a pretense of trying to fight for the establishment of a 30-hour week at 40-hours pay throughout the automobile industry.

Fifth Column Hysteria Running Riot in Ohio

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio, July 12—"Fifth columnist" is hurled already at everyone who speaks against the war or who questions Britain's role as the savior of "democracy." In Youngstown the latest development of the fifth column drive has taken a ridiculous turn, with the Sheriff announcing that Milton Lake, source of the industrial water supply in the valley, is being guarded by men armed with heavy double-barrelled shotguns ready to take "immediate action against suspected saboteurs." Milton Lake, besides being a reser-

voir, is also the site of an amusement park and of many picnics and swimming parties and more than one young couple has returned lately telling stories of armed guards stealthily creeping up on them "looking for fifth columnists."

Already the leaflets of our Young Peoples Socialist League, telling the high-school students to beware of the imperialist war, are torn down by orders of the local police because, according to the local newspaper, "they suspect fifth column activity."

The war veterans, the American Legion, the Mahoning County Bar Association have organized a "sixth column"—"to deal with fifth column elements by direct action." When we remember the strike-breaking role these self-styled patriots played in the Little Steel strike in 1937 and their consistent anti-labor activity we know full well that it is the union militants they will attack first.

UNION OFFICIALS SUCCUMB TO BOSS PRESSURE

The workers will deal with these gentry as they do with all scabs and strike-breakers, but for this they need to be organized politically in a labor party as well as economically in their unions. Unfortunately they can expect little help from their leaders. From the top officials to the lowest business agent all are becoming 100% pro-Ally. Even some of the outstanding leaders of the Youngstown truck drivers union, long regarded as the pillar of progressive unionism in this district, are now capitulating in advance to the war for profits and the 100% pro-Roosevelt line.

But the contradictions these people are finding themselves in must certainly cause a few twinges at least. They find that in the Democratic Party they sit down beside the very bosses they have been fighting for years, that these bosses, not the union leaders have the decisive voice.

LONG ISLAND CITY BRANCH BEER and DANCE at Rainbow Ball Room 10-21-47 Road Long Island City (in New York) SAT., AUG. 3, 1940 CONTINUOUS DANCING PROFESSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

OUT TODAY! Manifesto of the Fourth International The Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution A 48-page pamphlet on— CAUSES OF THE PRESENT WAR ROLE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM WHAT NAZI WAR SLOGANS REALLY MEAN RESPONSIBILITY OF 2nd & 3rd INTERNATIONALS WHAT TO DO NOW! A COMPLETE PROGRAM! A CALL TO ACTION! So per copy to all branches of the S.W.P. 5c per single copy Published by the: SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY 116 UNIVERSITY PLACE NEW YORK, N. Y.

BAKERY DRIVERS WIN SIX-WEEK STRIKE IN OHIO LORAIN, Ohio—Showing some of the first signs of life in a long while on the part of AFL unions in this open shop town, the bakery drivers won a six weeks' strike at the Spang Baking Company here. Working as a part of the Cleveland Bakery Drivers Local No. 52, these drivers won recognition, pay increases, and vacations after the union threatened to pull the company's drivers in Cleveland. The CIO steel workers in Lorain also stood ready to cooperate with these drivers. After organization of the bakery drivers of other companies in Lorain is completed, the Spang contract will be reopened with the idea of negotiating a joint agreement which will bring conditions here into harmony with those which prevail among Cleveland bakery drivers. This should be the beginning of a real organizational drive in Lorain which is the most backward of the small cities in the Cleveland area.