

Socialist Appeal

Official Organ of the Socialist Workers Party, Section of the Fourth International—Issued Twice Weekly

VOL. III, No. 33

TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1939

Set up and Printed by Union Labor Application for Label Pending

3c a Copy

FIGHT THE RELIEF CUTS!

F.D.R. and the 60 Families Understand Only the Language of Class Action!

US Mayors Admit Relief Cuts Disastrous

Avoid Reference to FDR's Responsibility—Need Increases

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)
WASHINGTON, May 9.—Results of discontinuing W.P.A. or cutting it—as Roosevelt has proposed—would be "tragic... too terrible to contemplate," the United States Conference of Mayors stated, in closing its case today before the members of the House Appropriations Committee investigation of W.P.A.

The mayors who appeared at the hearings represented some of the largest cities in the nation, including New York, Chicago, Cleveland and Milwaukee. They were unanimous in opposing the cuts and insisting that the relief program must be expanded.

When questioned about how funds shall be provided, however, the mayors got tongue-tied, not a single one daring to cross the interests of the capitalist class and demand that the staggering sums siphoned from the unemployed to build the war machine be returned to the relief program.

New Deal Henchman
Their whole presentation studiously avoided reference to the fact that the W.P.A. cuts are geared to President Roosevelt's April 27 relief message, proposing a one-third slash for the year beginning July 1. La Guardia, leader of the mayorally group, the "Socialist" Hoan of Milwaukee, etc.—all are henchmen of the Roosevelt "New Deal."

The mayors limited their whole case to two points: (1) the W.P.A. is of great benefit in providing employment and carrying out constructive work of "great benefit to the nation" and (2) hinting at the danger to the capitalist regime of the United States through the likelihood that those thrown off relief rolls would turn to the road of revolution to fight starvation.

Mayor LaGuardia, frequently pounding the table to emphasize his points, declared that the W.P.A. had "done a good job," and that its discontinuance would have "tragic and disastrous" results.

The unemployment situation in New York, he declared was only "slightly better" than in 1933—a damning indictment of the New Deal policies which were to end forever the hunger and misery of the "forgotten" man.

It was erroneous, he declared, to argue that if business picked up, relief costs could be eliminated. Business recovery, he said, would have to first absorb those on relief and the employables on the rolls before the W.P.A. could be liquidated. Although all statistics show that business activity has declined, Roosevelt attempted to justify his latest slash of relief funds by declaring that industry would absorb those thrown on the streets.

Hours Too Long
LaGuardia did not advocate a sliding scale of hours and wages to solve the problem of unemployment, but he did admit that working hours as a whole in the nation must be reduced in order to make room for at least 3,000,000 persons.

Mayor Kelly of Chicago reported that one out of every five persons in Chicago was

We address these words to the unemployed.

We ask, fellow-workers and comrades: do you understand what is happening in this country? Do you realize that, under the combined leadership of Roosevelt and the Congress, there is now taking place THE SHARPEST AND MOST BRUTAL ATTACK ON THE UNEMPLOYED—ON YOURSELVES AND YOUR FAMILIES—SINCE THE GREAT CRISIS BEGAN IN 1929?

Does this sound like an exaggeration? It is easy enough to prove it beyond doubt.

On election day last November the W.P.A. rolls stood at 3,350,000. This figure was itself completely inadequate to provide jobs. There were around twelve million unemployed at the time, not counting workers on part-time.

Cuts Begin Day after Election

The average wage on W.P.A. was \$55 per month. This figure is less than half what the government experts declare is necessary for a minimum standard of health and decency.

But, shamefully low as were the number of jobs and average wage in November, they were prosperity compared to what will be the case three months from now—unless you do something about it.

The day after the elections were safely out of the way, the cuts on W.P.A. started. With Congress not in session, Roosevelt slashed 310,000 off the rolls between election day and the first of this year.

Between January 1 and April 1, 40,000 alien workers were dropped, bringing the number on W.P.A. down to 3,000,000.

During the first week of April 200,000 more got their pink slips. Another 200,000 the first week of this month, with at least as many scheduled for June. By the end of the first week of June, W.P.A. rolls will be down to a maximum of 2,400,000.

Unemployment Increases

According to the relief budget which Roosevelt has presented to Congress, this will be cut to 2,000,000 in July.

In eight months: from 3,350,000 to 2,000,000, a drop of more than 40%! 1,350,000 men, with their families totalling well over 5,000,000 people!

To these 5,000,000 people, a wage of \$55 a month would be riches. Some of them, including many of the aliens, are simply being left to starve. The others, at best, are being transferred to a home relief which is hardly better than starvation.

During these same months, the total of unemployed in the country has not decreased, but on the contrary has gone up by the hundreds of thousands. Industrial production is running about 15% behind the November rate, and 300,000 or 400,000 youth have in this period reached what is ironically called "employable age."

What to Do About It?

We want to ask you, fellow-workers: what are you going to do about this attack on the health and very lives of yourselves and your families?

Are you going to sit back and take it like slaves and cowards? Are you going to watch, and do nothing, while your wives and children go hungry, while they get sick and you have no money to call a doctor, while all of you get evicted, thrown literally on the street?

This attack is not going to stop because of any prayers or hopes on your part. It will continue, and get more vicious month by month. Not merely will more hundreds of thousands be dropped from W.P.A.; the average wage of those who remain will be lowered, and home relief will be driven down toward the vanishing point.

The attack has succeeded up to now for one and only one reason: because you, the unemployed who are the victims, have not fought back.

The attack will stop and the trend will be reversed when, and only when, you really begin fighting.

Roosevelt Acts for Sixty Families

You have not been fighting because you have trusted what you have been told by John L. Lewis and his associates, by Earl Browder and his party and his Workers' Alliance. You have believed them when they told you that Roosevelt was your President and leader and would help you out of your difficulties.

This is a direct, flat lie.

Roosevelt is not your President, but the President of the banks and the Sixty Families. He began this attack on you, began it in November on his own sole responsibility, and cut 310,000 before Congress even met. It is he, not Congress, who has proposed to cut the rolls to 2,000,000 in July. He and Congress sometimes have minor

differences about the speed and methods to be used in carrying on the attack: that is all.

Why Not Use the War Money?

Lewis and Browder and the Workers' Alliance support Roosevelt and his policies and his war. That is why they do not and cannot and will not ask you to fight back militantly against his attack on you. They appear once in a while before a Congressional committee, or suggest that you write postcards to Congressmen. But Congress and the President naturally pay not the slightest attention to such pitiful gestures.

Your money, fellow-workers, comes from the Federal government, Roosevelt's government. That is the boss against whom you have got to fight. You will have to make up your minds to that, no matter what Lewis and Browder tell you, or give up in advance.

Is there any money available for the unemployed?

Think a minute: The present Congress has already voted two billion dollars for Roosevelt's war machine. Plenty of money for guns and bullets! Why not take that money and use it for the unemployed?

We Have Got to Fight!

The Sixty Families alone have fifteen or twenty billion dollars of wealth in their strong boxes! Fifteen or twenty billion! Compare that with what sixty families in your neighborhood have got salted away. Do you agree that it right and just and sensible that Sixty Families should have ten times the money that Roosevelt proposes for thirteen million unemployed? Couldn't the Sixty Families manage to get by on a few less billion? Why not take some of those billions and use them to give jobs at decent wages to every man who is out of work?

But you've got to fight. Not with postcards and lobbying in Washington, but with militant mass demonstrations in the streets, with strikes and picketings on the projects, with death watches and hunger marches.

This is the only sort of language that Roosevelt and Congress and the Sixty Families who direct them can understand.

What are you waiting for? There is no time to be lost! Reaction is advancing in this country with the speed of airplanes. If we don't begin fighting soon, we will wake up one fine day to war and concentration camps, and never know what hit us.

Demand a job for every worker!

Thirty-thirty! A thirty dollar minimum weekly wage and thirty hour maximum week throughout industry, W.P.A. and public works!

A twenty billion dollar public works and housing program!

Expropriate the Sixty Families! Use their billions to give jobs to the workers!

All war funds to the unemployed!

"Death Watch" Casts Shadow Over Flint W.P.A. Offices

Washington "Worried" as Union Continues 24-Hour Vigil in Defense of 900 Families

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)
FLINT, Mich., May 6.—The "Death Watch" initiated by the Unemployed and W.P.A. Workers Union, affiliated with the C.I.O., has cast a haunting shadow over the Flint welfare offices across the street, while resentment and anger grows among union men and women at the harsh and inhuman treatment given to the 900 families cut off relief last week.

Today, as a family of thirteen was thrown out on the streets by the sheriff, they moved into the park neighboring the welfare office and joined the others who have maintained a 24-hour vigil for the past five days. Consternation spread from Flint to Lansing, the state capital, to Washington officialdom, and back to Flint again.

So disturbed was Washington at the reports of the "watch" that with amazing speed they arranged to send more than 200,000 pounds of surplus commodities to be distributed to the needy. So deathly afraid are the Federal authorities that the "death watch" will continue to grow and crystallize working class anger at W.P.A. and relief slashes, that they ruled that the commodities may be distributed to all in need regardless of relief certification.

And the "death watch" has only begun. Friday morning Charles Adams, his wife, and children were evicted from their home. The authorities immediately told him to let

them store his furniture and move into "the community center"—a concentration camp for evicted unemployed, where they are herded together, regardless of sex or health, and where the unfortunate families are treated worse than cattle.

Adams refused. The General Drivers Union Local 332 donated a truck and helped Adams deliver his furniture to the Park where the "death watch" is located. Two tents in which the Adams family now live, stand as a constant reproach and a living condemnation of Flint relief conditions.

At a mass meeting last Friday night, the Unemployed and W.P.A. Workers Union voted unanimously to carry on a "death watch" until all 900 families are put back on relief at decent standards.

After the meeting in the Buick C.I.O. hall, the members marched down the street singing

(Continued on Page 2)

NO RELIEF
HERBERT HOOVER



THE OLD DEAL



THE NEW DEAL

Roosevelt's Stand In Coal Crisis Draws Lewis Blast

President's Ultimatum Endangers Welfare Of Miners; Kentucky Governor Threatens Use of Strike-breaking National Guard

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)
WASHINGTON, D. C.—Three major developments featured the coal crisis this week:

1. An open break between John L. Lewis, C.I.O. chairman, and President Roosevelt became imminent following a sharp public attack by Lewis on the administration's policy in the strike.

2. Roosevelt's ultimatum to the coal operators and the officials of the United Mine Workers of America to open the mines following a White House conference jeopardized the welfare of the 485,000 strikers.

3. Democratic Governor Chandler of Kentucky announced his intention of using National Guardsmen to break the strike in Harlan County by furnishing armed protection to scabs.

The coal operators and the U.M.W.A. committee were in virtually continuous session in New York City following these developments.

Accuses Roosevelt
In making public a letter he sent to John R. Steelman, federal conciliator in the coal negotiations, Lewis bluntly charged that the Roosevelt administration was directly responsible for the open shop drive against the miners' union.

Lewis pointed out that the Roosevelt administration failure to support the union's original proposal that the expired agreement be extended and that the industry be kept in operation pending negotiations, "caused many operators to believe that they had carte blanche from the government to disembowel the United Mine Workers."

Blame on the Roosevelt administration for the resulting deadlock and the consequent fuel shortage confronting the country was also placed by Lewis.

"Your department must accept responsibility for its own administrative blunder," Lewis emphasized in the letter.

"Supine" Attitude
The failure of the Roosevelt administration and its Democratic party machine in industrial states to allow miners either unemployment insurance or relief was exposed by Lewis. He termed the Roosevelt attitude as "supine" and "lackadaisical," and he specifically pointed out that only Pennsylvania with a Republican regime had given any relief to the strikers.

The importance of the union's original proposal to work under the old contract pending settlement of the issues took on a new turn with the announcement that the coal commission was going to set coal prices within the next two months.

The U.M.W.A. would be in a good position to ask for higher wages and better conditions while the coal commission was

The New Deal's Casualty List

Here is the New Deal's casualty list:

Between election day and Jan. 1, 1939—310,000 slashed from the relief rolls. Between Jan. 1, 1939 and April 1, an additional 40,000 "aliens" slashed.

On March 14, Roosevelt told Congress that besides these, 850,000 people certified as eligible for W.P.A. would not be considered. Total: 1,200,000 thrown into the gutter.

In the same speech Roosevelt said that the further slash carried through by Congress would "affect 5,000,000 people"—i.e., including those already thrown off relief.

Then: 1st week in April, 200,000 cut. 200,000 more in the 1st week of May. 200,000 more scheduled for the 1st week of June. 400,000 more for the 1st week of July.

Grand total—(not counting approximately 2,000,000 thrown out of work by business activity decrease of 15% since last November and some 400,000 youth eligible for jobs since November)—2,000,000 knocked off the rolls by the New Deal in little over six months.

If Roosevelt's basis for estimating is used, the number of people affected including the families of those directly cut off, therefore runs closer to 10,000,000 than to 5,000,000.

meeting to determine prices. A signed contract beforehand might exclude this possibility.

The coal operators' strategy has been to prolong all negotiations until the U.M.W.A. signed a contract that would not include either wage and hour demands and also exclude the union or closed shop. They

(Continued on Page 3)

Workers Alliance Suppresses Action Demands of Members

As W.A.A. and unemployed workers seek to organize against the pink slip and relief-cut wave, they find that they have to fight not only the relief-slashers, but also a company-union outfit, the so-called "Workers Alliance of America."

Like many company unions, the leaders of this one have had to suppress demands for action by its members. In one such maneuver, about two months ago, the W.A.A. leaders announced a referendum of the membership on the question of a "March on Washington."

What happened to the referendum? How did the W.A.A. locals vote on it? What was the final vote?—we are certain that if held it would be overwhelmingly in favor. Not a word out of the W.A.A. leaders! They have simply dumped the whole business overboard. The membership voted? Never mind. That's their idea of democracy—these people who call on us to die in a war for democracy!

Why these scoundrels have decided not to go through the motions of holding a march is clear enough. When they proposed it, the President was engaged in a sham battle with the Democratic-Republican economy bloc about just how much should be cut from the final W.P.A. appropriation for the current fiscal year: it was possible to pretend that all the cutting was not coming from Roosevelt.

But since then events have moved quickly. Roosevelt himself has taken the leadership in cutting W.P.A. rolls. His April 27 message proposed, in addition to all previous cuts, a one-third slash for the year beginning July 1. Whereupon the Workers Alliance quietly sabotaged the idea of a "March on Washington." For such a march might grow to proportions uncontrollable by the W.A.A. leaders, and might be directed at the instigator of the W.P.A. cuts, President Roosevelt.

These masters of the W.A.A. have achieved the feat of not commenting once on Roosevelt's April 27 message! Neither as the W.A.A. leadership or as the Communist Party, have they said a word about his W.P.A. budget for the coming year! Agents of the boss-president, that's what they are. Not their W.A.A., but the scores of new W.P.A. unions springing up throughout the country, will lead the fight for W.P.A. jobs and relief.

The latest maneuver of the W.A.A. is to call a "Right to Work Congress" on May 27 in Washington. "Call" is too strong a word, for one learns of it publicly only through a casual reference in the Daily Worker. We can say in advance that this "Congress," if the Stalinist leaders have their way, will whine about the Tories but not say one word about the President's W.P.A.