

New Deal Officials' Threats Fail to Slow Up National W.P.A. Strike

In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

Victory for organized labor in this W.P.A. battle can mark the beginning of a real offensive against the wave of reaction that gathered strength in the past two years.

This fight should serve as an inspiration for the unemployed and project workers throughout the country. Unless the Workers Alliance, and this is doubtful, can completely divert the energy of the workers. Strong attention to the need of organizing all W.P.A. and unemployed workers has been brought on by this strike.

Life or Death

To the A.F.L. unions involved in this battle is virtually a life and death struggle. Unless union scales are maintained on W.P.A. projects, the door would be opened for a nationwide employers' drive against the building trade union contracts.

Considerable dissatisfaction already exists among the building trades rank and file unionists. The C.I.O. has been exploring the possibility of entering that field.

Reports from Washington indicate that top A.F.L. leaders are already looking around for the scapegoat in the situation. Mathew Woll, prominent in legislative lobbying, it has been hinted, was responsible for the fact that the A.F.L. didn't put up a fight against the Woodrum bill.

The A.F.L. simply can not afford to lose this strike, and the top leaders apparently know it.

The whole problem of the unemployed and project workers has received a nationwide spotlight because of the current strike wave. Never again will it be easy to hide it on the last pages of the newspapers.

Victory in this battle brings the possibility of further struggles and victories for the unemployed and project workers. Just as the first C.I.O. strike victories became a national trend, an A.F.L. victory now should serve as a powerful stimulant for all labor.

Up to Unions

The value of organized labor taking up the problem of organizing the unemployed and the W.P.A. workers has been clearly demonstrated by the present situation.

Contrast the "Right to Work Congress" of the Workers Alliance and all its phoney ballyhoo, to the militant action of the A.F.L. building trades unions. The Workers Alliance served simply to fool the unemployed and project workers into a false sense of security "by trusting our friend Roosevelt."

The A.F.L. building trades not only have showed themselves as more militant than the Alliance but more capable of putting up a fight for its rights.

And when one reads the Northwest Organizer, organ of the Minneapolis teamsters movement, on the real fight and victories of the unemployed section of the truck drivers union, one sees again the tremendous value and vital necessity of organized labor directly handling the problems of the unemployed and project workers.

FASCISTS THREATEN NEGRO ACTOR

NEW YORK—Lou Layne, acting executive secretary of the Negro Actors Guild of America this week received a swastika signed letter which threatened to "finish Jew kikes and Niggers."

The vilifying message scrawled in a semi-literate hand, asserted "We American Nazis will finish the Jew kikes, then we will get rid of you Niggers and we will keep you for horses, till we kill you all by order of our Hitler."

This letter is another indication that the fascists will attempt to whip up a tremendous race hatred campaign in this country against the Negro and the Jew.

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'WE ARE NOT INTIMIDATED IN THE LEAST' SAY UNION LEADERS

The strike clash between the A.F.L. unions and the government over W.P.A. wage rates grows more grim each day as government officials make threats to carry out punitive actions against the strikers.

BULLETIN
The A.F.L. National Council has called a conference for July 12 of all heads of its international unions on the W.P.A. strike.

and union leaders answer with sharp condemnations and redoubled strike efforts.

Above all, the stage is set for head on collision by the threat of President Roosevelt's appointee, national W.P.A. administrator Col. F. C. Harrington, that any striker absent from work five days would be permanently removed from W.P.A. rolls.

Answering a similar threat by the N. Y. administrator, Col. Brehon Somervell, Thomas Murray, president of the New York building trades council, told him off Monday afternoon: "We are not intimidated in the least by the threat of Colonel Somervell that men who do not return to work tomorrow will be dismissed."

"Our work-stoppage protest against the vicious new W.P.A. law will continue tomorrow and thereafter until the prevailing rate principle, which Congress had steadfastly upheld for five years until July 1, is restored."

"Utterly contemptible," was the characterization applied by George Meany, president of the New York State Federation of Labor, to New York City Welfare Commissioner William Hodson's threat to refuse home relief to all strikers, and President Meany applied the same extraordinarily sharp term to a like threat by David C. Adie, N. Y. State Commissioner of Social Welfare.

In Rochester, N. Y. the Roosevelt appointed W.P.A. director, Robert Hoffman, fired permanently 68 W.P.A. workers as "agitators." Police were called in by W.P.A. directors in the Twin Cities and other places to "protect" the projects.

Murray vs. Somervell
In New York, Monday afternoon the W.P.A. administrator, Col. Somervell, moved to direct

Strike Sidelights . . .

By STAN LAUREN
At the Strike Front, North Beach Airport, Queens, Monday.

The North Beach Airport W.P.A. construction project, the biggest project of them all, is completely tied up. Picket lines are maintained at all times. The airport project usually employs 23,000 men.

A mass meeting was held this morning by the Building and Construction Trades Council on an open lot a few blocks from the airport. A better demonstration of workers' solidarity could not be found. Every union involved in the strike was present. Speakers from every union pledged to continue the fight until victory is assured. Thousands attended.

Hundreds of men, coming to report for work, saw the picket line, put their tools aside, and joined the line.

A worker, Herman F., told of the plight of the North Beach Airport workers. He lives in the Bronx, and works on one of the electrical construction projects at the airport. Herman F.'s story is practically the story of every W.P.A. worker who works on one of the six hangars under construction at North Beach.

"We found it damn difficult before the cut, when we were making \$85 a month for 120 hours' work. Now it's the same pay for 130 hours. I live very uptown in the Bronx. To travel here to work every day costs me thirty cents a day, plus three and a half hours wasted by traveling. That's about \$6 alone for carfare. Rent costs me \$35 a month and my family don't live like kings. Before I get done spending money for food for my wife and child there is nothing left. If any one can figure out how we can buy clothes, or pay for a doctor when someone in the family is sick, we would damn well like

strikebreaking attempts, ordering skilled men from other jobs to report to work on projects closed down by the strikers. "Work will go on, regardless of what the unions say," said Somervell. But the men so ordered in almost all cases refused to check in on the job when they found it had been struck.

On Friday, Col. Somervell had attempted to frighten the strikers by announcing that he would prosecute on felony charges all persons who interfere with work on W.P.A.

He got the answer he deserved from Thomas Murray, president of the building trades council:

"The demand of Col. Somervell for the arrest and confinement in prison of these men is at once a long step away from our cherished American democracy and a running broad jump in the direction of a dictatorship of the Nazi-fascist type."

"It is the most unspeakably shameful and vicious attack ever made on American workers in the entire history of our country. The workers will not be intimidated one iota by his monstrous and utterly contemptible threat."

When Somervell pulled the old trick of saying he had lots of letters from "loyal workers" who wanted to go back to work but wanted protection on the job—the "back to work" formula which has come to be known as the "Mohawk valley formula" because of its use there in breaking a strike by the Remington-Rand company, President Murray said:

"It appears that Col. Somervell is trying to employ the noisome Mohawk Valley formula. . . . The people of New York are thoroughly familiar with the despicable tricks of this strikebreaking formula and won't be deceived one iota by it."

"Back to work on Monday or lose your jobs," threatened John C. Clarke, Supervisor of W.P.A. in Upstate New York.

In Toledo, O., O. P. Van Schoik, Chief Relief Examiner, told 14,000 striking W.P.A. workers that they will be ineligible for relief while on strike, and gave them until Tuesday to return to work.

to hear about it. We just can't do it."

Another worker told of the hazards the men go through daily when they work for this starvation wage. "The men are always in danger," he said. "I have been out on this project since last September and I know of about twelve men who have lost their lives in that time. Nobody knows how many hundreds have been injured. And we are expected to lose our lives and take pay cuts without a whimper. Like hell we will. Why, only the other day, one of the Negro workers got his foot caught as he tried to take a truck out of the mud. He lost his foot, and he was taken to the hospital after he was bleeding for two hours. He was dead an hour after he arrived at the hospital. We haven't even a doctor at the project where 23,000 of us are constantly facing danger."

Still another worker told of the conditions on the job. "A lot of people say that W.P.A. is a racket. Far from it. We sweat like hell while we're working and it's no bowl of cherries. When it rains, we have to spend our time getting out here to report and then get told there is no pay that day. If we miss three days' work because we have to . . . well, we're just fired. When we work we give everything we've got and don't think they permit us to let up for a second. The story that we W.P.A. workers sleep on our shovels is just a lot of hot air."

All the building trades craftsmen were sorry to see the laborers unorganized. "Something should be done about it" was the unanimous sentiment of the strikers. Even without a union, hundreds of laborers walked off the projects.

The laborers want organization too. Every laborer that I talked to explained his desire to be a union man and strike with the skilled workers. "The only trouble is that no union

American Fund Answers Somervell Threat By Offering Free Legal Aid to Arrested W.P.A. Strikers

With an offer of free legal defense to all W.P.A. workers who are arrested for striking or picketing or other issues connected with the strike, the American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees, 125 W. 33rd St., New York City, yesterday attacked the threats of Colonel Somervell, W.P.A. Administrator, that he would arrest those going out on strike on W.P.A. projects.

"Section 28 of the Federal Relief Bill cited by Colonel Somervell says absolutely nothing about strikes," stated the American Fund in a legal opinion. "The right to strike is one of the democratic rights gained by the workers which has been recognized by all the courts of the country. The workers on W.P.A. have this right as well as all other workers and there is nothing in the Federal Relief Bill or any other act of Congress which takes away this right. It is therefore utterly monstrous for a federal official to threaten the workers with arrest."

"That the government operates the W.P.A. projects in no way deprives the workers of the right to strike," maintains the American Fund. Where the government places orders with private industry the right of workers to strike has never been questioned. Merely because the work is not farmed out but handled by a subsidiary of the government does not make the least difference."

Intimately tied up with the right to strike is the right to picket. This right is guaranteed to workers under the Wagner Act.

Law Requires Relief
"It has been contended by Colonel F. C. Harrington, W.P.A. Administrator, and local Relief Commissioner Hodson and Mayor LaGuardia that striking W.P.A. workers are not entitled to relief. Such a contention has no basis in law or precedent."

"Striking mine workers in Pennsylvania recently received relief from that state while on strike. Many cases of similar nature are well-known."

"Mr. Hodson and Mayor LaGuardia object to paying relief because it imposes a burden

upon the City of New York which does not allegedly have the necessary funds. That is a question which must be settled between the city and the government officials or the city and the bankers. The needy must not starve."

"Mr. Hodson further states that 'persons who voluntarily refuse to work' should not be given relief. It is amazing that workers who are striking to defend a union scale of wages which has existed for more than a generation should be accused of 'voluntarily refusing to work'."

The American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees supports the strikers in their attempt to defend the union scale of wages and will do all in its power to assure them of the relief to which they are entitled.

"It offers free legal defense to any and all W.P.A. workers who are arrested either for striking or picketing or for inducing others to strike and picket."

The telephone number of the American Fund is Longacre 5-8891.

WORKERS SECURITY FEDERATION LEADERS SCAB ON WPA STRIKE

Newly Formed S.P. Organization "Advises" Members to Return to Work

By E. R. MCKINNEY
The Workers Security Federation is the organization of the unemployed formed in Washington a few weeks ago by the Socialist Party under the leadership of Art McDowell, National Labor Secretary of the S. P. While thousands of W.P.A. skilled workers are on strike against wage cuts and increase in hours, the S.P. leaders of the Workers Security Federation provide the capitalist press with a statement that they are instructing members of the organization to return to work.

J. Clark Waldron, S. P. national publicity chairman of the federation, said that their members were only being "advised" to return to work and "we are leaving final decision in the matter to them." Waldron said that the federation is not giving up the fight but that the leadership does not want

the members to lose their jobs. True to Type
This scabbing action of the leadership of the Workers Security Federation is right in line with their actions when they set up the organization in Washington. There these leaders—McDowell, Leith, Waldron and Rourke made it clear and unmistakable that not only would they personally be opposed to the federation being a militant unemployed organization, but they would be against the admission of individuals with political beliefs that would drive the federation inevitably in a militant direction. This was the real meaning of the clause, inserted in the constitution, excluding workers from membership who held certain political beliefs, including the belief in a dictatorship of the working class.

Opposed Demonstration
This attitude on the part of Waldron, McDowell, Leith and Rourke was further demonstrated in their attitude toward the demonstration which was scheduled for the White House. Leith and Rourke were flatly against the demonstration, the others giving only lukewarm support. In the face of this opposition, the militants could only get through a vote to hold the demonstration on Sunday night with the White House empty and the streets deserted.

This policy now bears its thoroughly rotten fruit. The federation members are told to return to work, to scab on their fellow-workers who are fighting the government for the right to eat and against long hours and reduction in pay. Waldron says that the leadership of the federation has not ceased to protest. That is, Waldron will continue to give out press releases, Rourke will interview congressmen and Leith will sit in his office in Baltimore. But the rank and file who have proven indisputably that they want to fight, have been told to surrender, to scab, to betray their fellow workers on the picket line.

The membership of the Workers Security Federation have a job to do. First they should refuse to carry out the instructions of the leaders of the federation. Support the strike by remaining away from work; participate in the picket lines, bombard the Security Federation leadership with protests, repudiate them. Maintain solidarity in action with the W.P.A. striking workers.

"We don't what's really going on," workers complain to Appeal reporters. "You can't trust these fellows on the big papers to tell the truth. They make us out to be a pack of relief-fakers. They're not on our side." Strikers add, "They lie, and we know it, about how many of us are out; and they keep trying to scare off the non-striking who want to come out and join us."

Popovich Raps Strike-Breaking Of Federation

NEW YORK, July 11.—Condemnation of the strike-breaking statement issued by J. Clark Waldron, publicity chairman of the Workers Security Federation was voiced today by Otto Popovich, President of the Unemployed and Relief Workers' Union, Jamaica Division, an affiliate of the Workers Security Federation.

Mr. Waldron had advised members of the Workers Security Federation to return to work in violation of the A.F.L. Building Trades strike called to restore the prevailing rate of wages on all W.P.A. projects. "Waldron's advice," declared Popovich indignantly, "does not reflect our sentiments. W.P.A. workers in Jamaica are supporting the strike 100 percent and will continue to do so despite the press releases of publicity chairman Waldron."

"Who gave Waldron permission to issue such strike-breaking statements? Certainly not the Jamaica Division. We condemn and absolutely repudiate this stooge of the headline Congress and President Roosevelt."

Y.P.S.L. WILL PICKET FRENCH CONSULATE

On July 14, Bastille Day, members of the Young People's Socialist League (4th International) will participate in a picket line before the French Consulate, 610 Fifth Avenue (near 49th St.) at 1 P.M. This demonstration has been called in protest against the repressive measures taken by the Daladier government against the French Fourth Internationalists, including the Youth, and other working-class militants, for their anti-war and anti-imperialist activity.

As reported by the Challenge of Youth, twice-a-month organ of the League, "Among the 4th Internationalist youth who have been jailed in Paris is Suzanne Charpy, administrator of 'Revolution,' until recently the monthly organ of the French Fourth Internationalist Youth. She was sentenced to 10 months in prison for asking the French workers not to support the coming imperialist war. Comrades Morel and Boheys were arrested and jailed on similar charges."

"Subsequently, comrade Steve was arrested on the charge of putting up a sticker which said 'This is not our war.' Comrades Schmidt and Regal were also arrested for anti-militarist work."

The French Government has also imprisoned the leaders of the Constitutional Party of Tu-

MONDAY MORNING TEST FINDS NEW YORK STRIKE LINES SOLID

By TONY CHAPMAN
NEW YORK, July 10.—The W.P.A. strike gained ground in its Monday morning test, 68,000 out of 75,000 workers being recorded off the job.

Picketing began this morning, with thousands of building trades workers reporting for picket duty.

When Col. Somervell, W.P.A. local administrator, tried to belittle union estimates of those striking, his bluff was called by Thomas Murray, president of the building trades council, who telegraphed him:

Calling His Bluff
"The figures which you are giving out reveal that you either do not have the facts in your possession or else you are deliberately concealing the truth. As the administrator of W.P.A. in this city, it would seem like a good idea that you should take a look-see so that it will be possible for you to appear a little less laughable."

"Tomorrow morning (Tuesday) at 10 o'clock, we will have several automobiles available to take newspapermen on a tour of the projects. I shall be very happy to have you come along on this trip. I think you will find it illuminating."

"Will you accept my invitation and come along to learn the facts at first-hand or are you determined to continue to play the ostrich?"

Col. Somervell ducked the invitation, and continued to deny union estimates.

Union Proved Right
But even the daily capitalist press, checking Somervell's claims with eye-witness accounts of their own reporters, had to lean toward the unions.

The chief test was at the huge North Beach airport project, usually employing 23,000 workers. Somervell claimed the work was moving along.

"It will take twenty years to finish the airport at the rate they are going today," declared Thomas Murray for the unions, and the press reports had to concede his point.

Adding to national W.P.A. administrator Col. F. C. Harrington's arguments for the 130-hour work-month, Col. Somervell today went further than his chief. Harrington had argued primarily on the pretext of efficiency; Somervell, answering reporters' questions, went on to indict skilled workers as "chiselers." "The short hour system permitted workmen to work on W.P.A. and then go out and chisel on their fellow workers at less than prevailing wages during the rest of the month," said Somervell.

This slimy piece of hypocrisy won't get Somervell out from under. The unions of this city know how to defend the prevailing wage, on W.P.A. and private industry, and don't need Somervell or the government's help. And what help! By destroying the prevailing wage on W.P.A., according to Somervell, he is helping the prevailing wage in private industry. Unionists greeted Somervell's alibi with a horse-laugh.

This professional militarist, who has had nothing else to do all his life but play soldier-boy and get three square a day on the government cuff, has the nerve to call decent union men chiselers. The workers have answered the colonel with the only action he could ever understand: STRIKE.

Rochester Gears into Nat'l Anti-Coughlin Campaign

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)
ROCHESTER, N. Y.—The opening gun in its campaign against the Coughlin fascists was fired this week by the Rochester local of the Socialist Workers Party, when it put salesmen on the streets selling the Socialist Appeal and the pamphlet "Father Coughlin—Fascist Demagogue."

Cops Interfere
Despite the fact that for sev-

eral weeks Coughlin salesmen have been hawking "Social Justice" unhindered in the busy downtown streets, as soon as the S.W.P. members appeared with the Appeal they were taken by the cops to the police station and told they couldn't sell papers on Main Street. When the S.W.P. salesmen gave the lie to the cops by pointing out that the Coughlinites were given freedom of the Main Street, the city's "finest" pleaded ignorance of the fascists' existence.

When the S.W.P. members pressed the cops to the wall by showing them flesh and blood "Social Justice" salesmen on the corner, the station house boys ducked by saying that the Coughlin crowd had newsboy badges. On inquiry, the S.W.P. members were told by the informant that they could get no permit whatsoever to sell on the main street. The S.W.P. salesmen were given the same run-around when they attempted to sell the anti-Coughlin pamphlet, only this time they were threatened by arrest.

But Sales Continue
This police persecution, however, did not check the carrying forward of the anti-fascist campaign. Socialist Appeals and pamphlets were sold on the streets just off the Main Street and canvassed from house to house with great success. Several large outdoor rallies were held and young workers at the meeting volunteered to sell the anti-Coughlin pamphlet.

Thus far, over 500 pamphlets have been sold in this town by the Rochester branch. The workers of this city are learning from the Trotskyist activity and the rest of the organizations' inactivity who the real anti-fascists are.

Important Notice
"AMERICA'S 60 FAMILIES" by Ferdinand Lundberg now available at \$1.49
A book that reveals who really controls America and how they keep their power. No revolutionary agitator should be without a copy.
LABOR BOOKSHOP
116 University Place
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(Add 3c per book postage)

THE CONVENTION PHOTOS
By an unfortunate error, the descriptive lines underneath the series of photographs of men and scenes at the National Anti-War Convention of the Socialist Workers Party printed in the last issue, were omitted. Interested readers may compare the photographs with the following:
TOP ROW (from left to right): Howard Stump, Quaker-town, Pa.; Robert Birchman, Indianapolis, Ind.; Vincent R. Dunne, Minneapolis, Minn.; Ernest Erber, editor of Challenge of Youth; Ernest R. McKinney, New York City.
BOTTOM ROW (from left to right): Reuben Plaskett, leader of Newark, N. J. unemployed, speaking at convention mass meeting; James P. Cannon, national secretary, S.W.P., opening the meeting; Genora Johnson, Flint, Mich., women's leader, addressing meeting; Max Shachtman, editor, Socialist Appeal, delivering anti-war report.

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