

# In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

## Marceau Pivert Joins List of Persecuted Anti-Militarists

In addition to our comrades Rigal, Steve and Schmitt, a whole series of other militants in the labor movement, ranging from the anarchists to the Socialist Workers and Peasants Party (P.S.O.P.) are now facing full-barrelled persecution for anti-militarist work in France.

Latest among the attacks against the anti-militarists is the prosecution initiated by the Daladier regime against Marceau Pivert, leader of the P.S.O.P. Pivert has been indicted for "provoking the military to disobedience." The charge is based on a leaflet issued by the party at Cherbourg, calling upon the reservists to act against their arbitrary detention in barracks beyond the twenty-one day period they were called out for. A local leader of the organization, comrade Mariette, had already been charged on the same grounds.

In a statement to the court, comrade Pivert takes full responsibility for the action of the Cherbourg branch of the P.S.O.P. Defending their action, he reaffirms its correctness and denounces the war-mongers in the following terms:

"I declare that the appeal to the reservists seems to us especially justified since, as we have proved in the columns of our paper Juin 36, the big capitalist powers which are the origin of the war threat continue to exchange among themselves the materials necessary for war—minerals, gas masks, airplane motors, etc."

The first hearing of the case was held on June 21. The actual trial is due to be held later this month.

## Strikes Against Lower Living Standard Spreading in Indo-China

Numerous important strikes are spreading throughout French Indo-China, linked with mass demonstrations against the new pro-war taxes. Both the strikes and the demonstrations are directed at the declining living standards.

On May 8, more than 3,000 workers went out on strike at Halphong with the following demands: 1. Increase of 30 per cent in wages; 2. Regular payment; 3. Sick benefits; 4. Recognition of shop delegates; 5. Suppression of

unjust fines. The strike started with the weavers of the "Cotonnière" factory, and soon spread to the whole textile field. After sixteen days of struggle the basic demands of the strikers were accepted and the strike settled.

On May 31, more than 2,000 workers at the navy yard in Saigon went out on strike against an attempt to cut down the rate for overtime work. The strikers are demanding time and a quarter for overtime during the day and time and a half for night work. At the present writing the strike is still spreading.

A strike of 3,000 unskilled coolies in the Saigon-Cholon region has broken out recently with a demand for a twenty per cent increase in wages.

Anti-tax demonstrations have been held in Saigon, Hanoi and Haiphong.

At the same time, the colonial lackeys of French imperialism have cracked down on the native working class press. No less than three editors of working class journals have been arrested in recent weeks, among them our comrade Nguyen Van Qua of La Lutte, organ of the Indo-Chinese section of the Fourth International.

## Canadian Comrades Organize Farmers Branches in West

Within the last month, our Canadian comrades, the Socialist Workers League, have organized two new branches in the Western part of the Dominion. The branches are located in the towns of Wiseton and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and are composed almost exclusively of farmers. So popular has the party become in these towns that for the first time in its history the local authorities granted the use of the schoolhouse for a meeting of a political party. A meeting held there on June 14 attracted farmers from the whole countryside who came to listen to Carl Hichin, Western organizer of the League. Most of the participants braved heavy rainstorms and almost impassable roads in order to attend.

Congratulations to the Canadian section of the Fourth International! In breaking the ground among the farmers they have accomplished a real pioneering job for our movement in North America. It is an example worthy of emulation by our comrades in the farming regions right here in the States.

## WAA Head Snipes at WPA Strike

### Term Strike Action "Impractical"; Hang On to Roosevelt

By RAY ROBBINS  
NEW YORK CITY, July 14—Almost three thousand W.P.A. workers and unemployed, eager for action under the inspiration of the strike wave now in progress on the W.P.A. projects, gathered tonight at a mass meeting of the New York Local of the Workers Alliance led at Stuyvesant High School, to hear the program their organization had proposed to back up the fast-growing strike. But what did they hear! A dastardly, underhanded attack against the valiant strike led by the building trades unions! Yes, that is what the statements made by Sam Wiseman, Stalinist chieftain of the Workers Alliance, meant. Here is an exact quotation: "The A.F.L. leaders say that they are going to fight to a finish. Now that means that the W.P.A. workers have been called out on an unlimited strike until they win, and that means when Congress changes its mind. To us such an action is impractical."

"Impractical!"—that is the Stalinist way of looking at a mass movement which has raised anew the hopes and aspirations of every worker, employed or unemployed, skilled or unskilled.

"Impractical!"—a movement which the most conservative stratum in the labor movement has been impelled to undertake, because that is the only way to save the skilled crafts from starvation wages and joblessness.

The main part of the meeting was consumed by the long-winded speeches of Benjamin and Wiseman, Stalinist big shots. Desperately they tried to distort and gloss over the real anti-Roosevelt meaning of the strike movement and re-direct it into the safe channels of a fight only against Republicans.

Wiseman once again pulled out the moth-eaten apology the Stalinists use to explain away Roosevelt's leadership of the relief-smashing campaign. According to his fantastic tale, the Roosevelt-Woodrum starvation law was solely the work "of a small band of fascist minded Republicans like Senator Carter Glass" who put over their slick conspiracy in the dark secrecy of a smoke-filled congressional conference chamber.

Finally, after a long harangue filled with evasions and sniping remarks against the strike, Wiseman perfunctorily put the Workers Alliance on record in support of the strike. "But the A.F.L. called the strike," Wiseman quickly added, "and they're the only ones responsible for it. We take no responsibility." This "no responsibility" refrain cropped up time after time in the Stalinist speeches.

But the masses wanted a real program of action, and the Stalinist leaders, caught in a tight corner between their loyalty to the Roosevelt war deal and their desire to remain militants in the eyes of the membership, had to come through with some sort of proposal.

The four point program which the Stalinists proposed, apart from the building trades strike demand, were: restoration of the Federal Theatre Projects; maintenance of the former wage differential for the North; abolition of the eighteen months "rotation" plan. These four points are completely within the confines set by Roosevelt's hypocritical criticism of his own relief-slashing bill. Not a word is said in the program about the amount of the appropriation itself. That is sacred ground, for the figure of the new appropriation, cutting one third off W.P.A., is Roosevelt's own figure.

As usual, the Stalinists propose legislative action to win such proposals, but impelled by the strike wave they also proposed a local one day stoppage on W.P.A. Suspicion of the good faith of the Stalinist leaders was aroused, however, when after proposing the stoppage, every speaker apologized in advance for the possibility of failing to put through the action. That is certainly not the best way to mobilize the fighting enthusiasm of the Alliance membership for militant action.

**Voice of Workers**  
When the floor was finally taken over by the rank and file, the wide gap that separates the

# Workers! One Hundred Percent Support to the WPA Strikers!

## Akron

(Continued from page 1)  
The Akron branch of the Socialist Workers Party distributed hundreds of copies of the Socialist Appeal to project workers who massed in front of the W.P.A. headquarters in an attempt to get their jobs back. Workers surrounded the comrades who distributed the Appeal, and listened with keen interest as the party's program of action was explained.

**Other Workers Act**  
On the projects, unskilled workers planned their own protest after seeing that the Alliance had sold them out for the last time. One plan is to mass hundreds of unemployed to besiege the Chamber of Commerce and rubber factory employment offices, demanding the jobs which Congress said they could find if they only looked hard enough.

Many workers who will not be laid off intend to put out one-fourth less work since their wages have been cut one-fourth.

"Our wages have been cut from 60 to 46 cents. So we'll give them 46 cents work for 46 cents an hour!" is the battle cry.

Both C.I.O. and A.F.L. central bodies in this county have passed strong resolutions condemning the new law. But thus far only the A.F.L. has backed up its words with action.

Forced by mass indignation to make some show of opposition, the Workers Alliance has called a half day "holiday" tomorrow.

The urgent need of the day is united militant action by both the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. to aid in organizing a genuine project workers and unemployed organization backed up by the rubber workers.

## Minneapolis

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MINNEAPOLIS, July 8.—The strike of W.P.A. workers that began spontaneously July 5 in Minneapolis and St. Paul has now spread to Duluth, the iron range, southern Minnesota and the Dakotas. An estimated 10,000 are out in Minneapolis, 7,000 in St. Paul, 5,000 in Duluth, 10,000 in the iron range, and thousands more in southern Minnesota and the Dakotas.

The Minneapolis Building Trades Council of the A.F.L. has officially sanctioned the strike and agreed to stay out until all W.P.A. workers receive union wages and conditions, and to encourage support for the strike from all other working class organizations.

Friday morning the Policy Committee of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union, authorized to speak for all the unions on strike questions, endorsed the strike.

**F.W.S. Joins Strike**  
Saturday morning the Federal Workers Section of General Drivers Local 544 held a mass meeting in the strike headquarters of 544's Transfer Section at 7th and Bryant, and voted to concur in the program of the Minneapolis Building Trades Council, to strike all W.P.A. projects until the government backs down and restores the prevailing wage clause.

Speakers made it plain that conditions on W.P.A. will get worse and worse, that even more ugly aspects of the Roosevelt-Woodrum act will confront the unemployed, such as the "30-day holiday"—actually permanent—to go into effect August 31, and the shower of 800,000 Four-O-Three slips which Roosevelt has handed the jobless.

The mass meeting voiced its vigorous approval as Carlos Hudson of the Northwest Organizer, Teamsters' Joint Council organ, spoke in favor of supporting the Building Trades Council and urged the unemployed to demand a Twenty Billion Dollar public works and housing program, to be financed by expropriating the Sixty Families; to transfer all war funds to the unemployed; to force the government to appropriate billions to open up the idle factories and give jobs to all workers at union wages and conditions.

**Hudson Speaks**  
I. S. Joseph of the Minneapolis Public Welfare Board tells us all to go quietly back to work and wait for OUR representatives in Congress to fix the wages and hour provisions. WE haven't any representatives in Congress. The Congressmen who passed the Roosevelt-Woodrum bill aren't our representatives, they are the representatives of the bosses. And they might as well know right now that we don't want them to come back to Minnesota. Let

Stalinist bureaucrats from the unemployed ready for struggle, became clear from the fighting words of one worker after another.

One worker demanded that the Workers Alliance send a delegation to LaGuardia to demand removal of Hodson, the relief czar who threatened the strikers with starvation if they stayed on the picket lines over the five day limit. Wiseman stepped in immediately and stifled this militant demand, which would have put his friend, LaGuardia, in an embarrassing position, saying that Hodson is not an issue at the moment. "I don't think," said Wiseman in reply to this worker, "that the administration supports Hodson's statement. It was a very stupid thing for him to do."

Another worker asked why the W.A.A. didn't pull out the laborers on all the W.P.A. projects. No answer from the leader. Another member spoke against the Hodson "scab or starve edict." He was greeted with a thunder of applause when he said, "We're not going to take that bluff from Hodson or anybody else. We'll go right

them stay on the Potomac," stated Hudson.

"The new relief bill is shocking proof of the need for real workers' representatives and a workers' government, for a break with both the New Deal and the Old Deal, for the building of an independent labor party both locally and nationally. This won't be the first demonstration provoked by the Roosevelt-Woodrum bill. There will be others. This one is a spontaneous action on the part of hundreds of thousands of W.P.A. workers throughout the nation. The demonstrations to come must be better organized, more centralized and coordinated."

**Committee of Five Hundred**  
The Committee of Five Hundred, set up a few days ago by 544's Federal Workers Section, will meet at 5 a.m. Monday morning to direct the closing of the projects. All W.P.A. workers were instructed to come to the Federal Workers Section strike headquarters at 6 a.m. to aid in shutting the projects.

The Saturday evening papers have just come out and record that Minnesota W.P.A. officials are concerned because even the watchmen are striking the jobs and leaving the equipment unguarded. The W.P.A. heads are planning to call the cops to guard the tools and give protection to those who may try to fink.

It was pointed out at the Federal Workers Sections meeting that the boss papers are hiding the truth about the extent of the W.P.A. walkout. Each locality is seeking to make it appear that the W.P.A. workers in that city are isolated and that very little strike action is being taken elsewhere. A reading of the press from a dozen or so widely scattered cities indicates that the boss press is consciously following out a policy of belittling and underestimating the widespread strike action.

## Rochester

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The W.P.A. workers continued the strike with undaunted enthusiasm.

The reactionary role of the Stalinist-controlled Workers Alliance came clearly into view as soon as the strike broke. In the first place, the W.A.A. stooges called on the W.P.A. officials and announced that the strike really wasn't a strike at all but only a "protest." Then at a mass meeting which they held at the Labor Lyceum, they spent a major part of their time attacking the Socialist Workers Party for handing out leaflets to the workers telling the workers the truth about Roosevelt's role as relief-smasher-in-chief.

Robert Hoffman, local W.P.A. director, struck savagely at the strike by immediately dismissing without hearings 65 workers whom he labelled "agitators." He also made public the Roosevelt administration's answer to the workers' demands—that all workers who did not return to work by Tuesday would be fired.

**The Postcard Brigade**  
In response to the demand of the workers present for the formation of a strike committee, Costa, Stalinist leader of the W. A., called for... getting up petitions to send to Congress and "our" President. That, for the Stalinists, constitutes militant action. Clayton Benem, Socialist Workers Party organizer in Rochester, spoke to the assembled workers, and received a good hearing when he called upon them to fight to the end for a decent living standard on W.P.A.

A meeting of strikers has been called by the unskilled workers of one of the projects to form an organization of W.P.A. workers to meet the growing needs of the strike movement.

## St. Louis

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at Scott Field, army air base near Belleville, Illinois.

**Mass Picket Line**  
A mass picket line was formed by the Scott Field strikers, blocking the highway leading to the air base with a human wall of men. Afterwards, a great cavalcade of 150 automobiles and trucks carried flying squadrons of Scott Field pickets through the neighboring counties. The walkout at Scott Field, which became the spear-head of the strike movement in this area, came as a result of a mass meeting of 600 W.P.A. workers at Belleville last night, adopting a resolution to continue the strike movement despite the threats of the Roosevelt Relief Czar, Col. F. C. Harrington.

The spirit of the workers is very high, and they are determined to win their fight against the relief-smashers in the only way possible—on the picket line.

# Chicago Relief Slashed

### Officials Introduce Cut with Warning to Case Workers

By S. B. GRANT

"Don't show any fear! If the relief client thinks you're afraid of him, he'll take advantage of you!"

This was the warning that supervisors of the Chicago Relief Administration gave case workers on July 1, when the already deficient client budgets for relief were given still another stiff cut.

Bad as it was, the "scientific" budget worked out by the relief authorities, estimating just how much a family could "live" on, was a long time ago chopped down. On the basis of not having enough funds, the authorities were providing clients with 80 percent of the estimated "scientific" budget. Now they have put through an additional 15 per cent cut. In other words, the client is now to get 65 percent of the estimated budget needed for existence! No wonder the officials have to warn the case workers not to show fear.

### A Permanent Cut

Is this cut temporary? No, it may go even lower. Thousands of W.P.A. workers are being driven back to direct relief. The city is putting up no money at all; the state is giving four million dollars monthly out of its average monthly sales tax of eight million. Even this sum is the result of a compromise. Governor Horner offered only three; Mayor Kelly insisted on five. They settled it between them. Both these ardent Democrats, each trying to outdo the other in his support of the New Deal, "settled" the relief question alright. They might just as well have put the clients in trucks, taken them to the nearest quarry, dumped them in and covered them up.

The Chicago Relief Administration does not hire experts at high salaries for nothing. These experts know their stuff. They have everything figured out so that the clients will keep the breath of life in them. But very little more.

### Slow Murder

Food allotments are calculated on the barest subsistence level. Even the best planning in the world cannot prevent rickets, bad teeth, anemia. Children of two are often so undernourished that they cannot walk or even stand. The rent allotment has been reduced but the landlord has not lowered his price proportionately and, as a result, people are compelled to sacrifice some of their food money for rent.

No household items, no amusements.

Sometimes W.P.A. clothing is given away. But often there is little available besides house-dresses, slips and bloomers for the women; for the men, work shirts and overalls. All last winter there was no warm underclothing for adults and no underwears for children were given. Shoes are hard to get, but easier than overcoats.

Some families (not all: an extra dollar on the budget and you're out of luck) get surplus foods such as oranges, butter, beans, celery, flour, eggs. But who knows when these are going to be passed out? You never know what you're going to get, or how much. Besides you often get gypped because you have to sign for the articles before you get them.

### Bosses Still Balk

But according to the Tribune and the business men, relief costs are too high and have to be cut. They clamor for more efficiency and they get it.

The Tribune editors and the business men don't have to live on beans and neckbones. They don't have to worry about milk and rent. They don't have to sleep four in a bed and put some of their relatives on the floor or chairs. They don't have to battle rats and bugs. They don't have to go to the johnny in the hall for their drinking and washing water. They don't have to burn smoky Indiana rocks to keep warm. They don't have to wait for days for an interview with some dizzy flunkie who doesn't understand that a client is a human being.

The rich only pay with their money, not with their lives, like the poor.

# On the Line . . . with Bill Morgan

Here is a story which ought to be read and thought over carefully by every worker no matter what industry he works in—especially if he is still waiting for President Roosevelt to come through with the many promises he made about the one third of the nation which, said the President, "are ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed."

Today the U. S. Government, the shipowners and the Stalinists are frantically engaged in a three-way attack on the Sailors' Union of the Pacific in a desperate effort to smash the union hiring hall and set up in its place a government-controlled hiring hall.

Now it is a fact, admitted by everyone concerned, that prior to 1934 the seamen on American ships worked and lived under conditions which no human being should be forced to endure. This was admitted by Mr. Kennedy, Chairman of the Maritime Commission, in his report to Congress in 1934.

Starvation wages, miserable, clammy, and insect-ridden quarters; rotten food, poorly prepared; long hours with no overtime pay and harsh treatment were all the order of the day.

It is also a fact, and one admitted by Mr. Kennedy, that many steamship lines subsidized by the government were then pocketing more than half the amount allowed for wages and at the same time threatening the men with the fact "there is another man on the dock to take your place if you don't like the treatment."

Where was the government then? It did not "help" the seamen then.

At last, no longer able to endure such conditions, the seamen banded together and went on strike.

It was a bitter strike. Long, weary days and nights of picket duty in thin-soled shoes and thin, ill-fitting clothes were followed by hunger and cold and tear gas and bullets. Union brothers were shot down. Martial law was declared against them. Police squads charged their ranks with clubs and horses. But because they knew they were right, because they knew they had the strength of their individual brothers welded together in compact resistance against a common wrong, the seamen won that strike.

Out of that victory the seamen won decent wages, livable quarters, conditions comparable to those won by workers in other industries. They established an organization of competent, confident, efficient seamen. They are proud of their record as seamen—proud also of the fact that in little over four years they raised the standard of their calling from veritable slavery to that of militant union men aware of the class struggle. They call their organization the Sailors' Union of the Pacific.

## New Strikebreaking Method

And now, because they know they cannot defeat them in any other way, the shipowners have turned to the government (of the people. . . ?) and have managed to induce a government agency to attempt to wreck the S.U.P. by doing away with the union's control of hiring by setting up halls run and controlled by the government.

The Maritime Commission is made up of men selected and appointed by the President and approved by Congress. The Board is supposed to be impartial; supposed to represent the people. But President Roosevelt deliberately went out of his way to select and appoint Mr. Joseph Kennedy, a man who openly represents the shipowners and who openly declares he is opposed to the Sailors' Union of the Pacific in particular and to all unions in general. He was opposed by the union because the union knows he is a shipowners' stooge. The Union notified Roosevelt of this opposition and the reason for it. But Roosevelt merely smiled and said, "I approve of Mr. Kennedy."

They attempt to magnify every little issue and every little beef in the S.U.P. in the hope that some one will be fooled into believing the Stalinists are the champions of union democracy (do you hear me laughing?), and they try to get their filthy hooks on any and all who will be bought or bulldozed or scared into pulling their chests out of the fire.

Now, if they were concerned about these vital issues—democracy, militant action on each and all questions, there are such unions as the Furriers in New York, the Longshoremen on the West Coast, the Teachers Union and the Workers Alliance—not to bring up the Painters in New York where the champions of democracy and militant action were just heaved out on their fat behinds for using rule-ruin strong arm methods to suppress the membership and where the flunky role of Weinstock, the Stalinist, in his dealings with the bosses almost wrecked the union.

It's a three-way fight to smash the strongest, most democratic, most militant and class conscious union on the West Coast if not in the U.S.A. Any little trick to force the S.U.P. to fight on some minor issue, to be drawn out of its present stronghold, i.e., the fink hall fight, is all meat to shipowners, the government and the Stalinists. But don't be surprised if the Sailors' Union of the Pacific dumps all three overboard. It will if we all recognize the real issues and get behind the fight with both fists.