

# North Beach Airport Is Center of W.P.A. New York Strike Struggle

## In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

The National Labor Relations Board took a long step backward this week when it announced that hereafter it would permit elections in plants upon an employer's request.

In the past this is a right which the employers have not had and which they sought keenly because it gave them another weapon with which to harass the unions.

Plenty of trouble lies ahead for the union movement under the new ruling. Take the current C.I.O.-U.A.W.A. strike in General Motors. How will the new N.L.R.B. ruling that goes into effect July 14 effect the strike? The strikers are asking, according to press releases, for a contract covering only their own members. Will the new ruling give General Motors a loophole?

Fortunately, in the auto strike, the stories of the militancy of the workers, reminiscent of the glorious days of the 1937 General Motors strike, give promise that the N.L.R.B. or anyone else will have a hard time turning back the boys.

The auto workers certainly are on the march again. And this serves simply to emphasize the capitulation of the N.L.R.B.

### Scab Roosevelt

Any doubt that the present reduction in the W.P.A. wages that caused the nation-wide strike was a deliberate move on the part of the Roosevelt administration to bring labor into line for war should be removed in every worker's mind by two events of this week.

President Roosevelt endorsed the wage reduction and the strike-breaking policies of Colonel Harrington, W.P.A. administrator.

Another despicable blow at the W.P.A. workers was hurled by the administration in announcing that 3,500 theatre workers of the Federal Theatre project would be laid off this month although Congress, in cutting out this project, allowed funds for it to continue until Sept. 1. Since Broadway already has hit its low summer ebb, the W.P.A. ruling is an order of starvation to the workers involved.

### A.F.L. Conference

A spectator at the A.F.L. conference in Washington to map out a fight against the Roosevelt administration wage cutting policy on W.P.A. would hardly believe this could be an A.F.L. gathering.

There was some pretty strong language used against the Roosevelt administration. Richard Gray, secretary of the International Bricklayers Union, bluntly blamed Roosevelt for the wage reduction.

Another speaker said Roosevelt had given the A.F.L. the run around and had even refused to see a committee to talk over the matter.

Speakers urged a nation-wide strike on W.P.A. until Congress rectified its error.

New Jersey and Pennsylvania delegates said their members would never go back to work until the wage cuts were rescinded. They urged all other states to pursue a similar policy.

Of course, Bill Green tried to divert the sentiment from direct action channels into purely parliamentary pressure. Both are necessary—especially strike action.

When the most conservative section of the American labor movement is thus aroused it is a hint of the days of struggle to come.

### Bloody Harlan

"Bloody Harlan" came into its own again this week.

One man was killed and six wounded in a day of shooting involving United Mine Worker pickets, National Guardsmen and scabs.

Garbled press reports fail to say on what side the dead and wounded belonged. Two of the six wounded were strike-breaking guardsmen.

First result of the shooting was to give the guardsmen an "excuse" for rounding up strikers. 250 were hurled in jail.

A reign of terror against the U.M.W.U. has ensued. Here is a real job for the C.I.O. The Harlan strike must be won.

## Press Tour of Project Gives Somervell the Lie

### Union Wins Battle of Figures as Evidence Shows Work to Be at a Standstill

By TONY CHAPMAN

North Beach Airport is the biggest W.P.A. construction project in the country. It employed 23,000 men. The New York Building and Construction Trades Council of the A.F.L. said the airport job was tied up.

Colonel Somervell, the W.P.A. administrator, said it was working. The unions accepted the gauge of battle. They issued an invitation to the entire press to join union officials the next day (Tuesday, the 11th) in a tour of the project which would prove whether they or the W.P.A. officials were telling the truth. They invited the colonel to come along, but he ducked. The reporters went.

As the four-car caravan drew up at the main gate, the way was blocked by three city cops and four khaki-clad guards. "Have you got permission?" asked the guard, ignoring their police press cards. Apparently the colonel hadn't cleared the way for them.

### Bar Photographers

The reporters and the photos went into conference outside the main gate. It was decided to call the "Brains" at 70 Columbus Avenue. In a little while, the reporter selected for the task returned with official permission from Colonel Somervell. The reporters were to be permitted to enter—but photographers were barred.

Once inside the grounds, the reporters walked to the administration building, where Gayle McFadden, Director of the Airport Project, met them.

McFadden marshalled two cars and personally conducted the tour to the land-plane administration building. Inside the court of the building, men, most of them unskilled laborers, were at work. They did not number more than thirty. Upstairs, four plasterers were at work. In the main upstairs court no one was on the job. High above, surrounded by scaffolding, a blue and gold mural was untouched. The painters had left the job.

### "An Open Shop"

Asked by reporters how the job on the airport was coming along, McFadden answered, "we're operating at 75 percent efficiency and have 90 percent of our men on the job." But had there really been even 25 percent efficiency on the job, McFadden would have had to shout above the humdrum of men-at-work to make himself heard.

Asked if the plasterers on the job were union men, McFadden replied evasively. "We make no distinction." Pressed by the reporters, McFadden declared, "This is an open shop."

On return to his office in the Project Administration Building, reporters got down to the business of asking for figures. The figures, released by McFadden, proved more than his eloquence the almost complete shutdown of work on the airport.

"I have purposely unbalanced my schedules to provide for a majority of men working in daylight," McFadden explained.

### Grounds Deserted

That same night this writer visited North Beach Airport by car and found that the grounds were almost totally deserted. All work on hangars during the night was at a complete standstill. In other words, in rearranging his schedules, McFadden has shifted all available men to daylight work in order to make a good impression on all who might visit the project.

McFadden's figures revealed that he could claim only 87 bricklayers; 789 are usually employed daily. The day before, McFadden said, there were 54 on the job. Throughout the tour, newspapermen were unable to see any bricklayers

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## BOSTON SUBWAY WORKERS JOIN IN W.P.A. STRIKE

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

BOSTON, July 10—Fifty hoisting engineers employed on the W.P.A. Huntington Avenue subway project today left their cranes to join the nationwide W.P.A. strike. Members of the Hoisting and Portable Engineers Union, they voted unanimously to stop work last night at a meeting in Gainsboro Hall.

James R. MacDonald, business agent of the union, said the strike was a protest against a 50 per cent slash in wages. 2,600 laborers, remaining at work and excavating with shovels, endanger the engineers' strike. These laborers do not realize that the engineers are fighting the battle of all subway workers, and need all the support they can get.

McFadden had 56 plumbers, he claimed. Forty-six had reported the day before, McFadden said. He needs 131. Forty-six steamfitters were on the job as against 203 normally required, said McFadden. After McFadden recited these figures, indicating his need for skilled workers, reporters asked how the Director was making up for it.

"This is an open shop," McFadden answered. "Bricklayers are now being put on curb setting and semi-skilled workers are being put on skilled work. If they prove themselves to be competent, we'll keep them there."

At the conclusion of the airport tour, John J. Brennan, secretary-treasurer of the Building and Construction Trades Council, who accompanied the reporters on the tour from one project to another, pointed his finger at the east hangars and said triumphantly, "Look down at those hangars. If you see any man working there you're a better man than I am. There isn't a soul on those hangars. Not a living soul."

### Turn Back Trucks

According to the captain of the pickets outside the main gate of the airport, 36 out of 41 delivering materials had been turned back by the pickets up to 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Photographers, waiting for the reporters to return, "shot" a picture of pickets turning back a truck. The battle of figures at North Beach Airport was over. The union had won.

The discussion waxed hotter as the crowd grew larger. A few minutes later a large squad of police and plainclothesmen rushed up. A dick threatened one of the leaders with "inciting to riot." Meanwhile the "anti-strike" elements were winning out and the men trickled back to work.

The meeting was held in response to a leaflet put out by the South End Workers Alliance, which meets Wednesday night at 8 p.m. at the Lincoln House.

The same day, at a morning meeting of 500 strikers in an open field before the Airport, Abe Dollinger, member of the Unskilled Workers Organizing Committee of the Jamaica local of project workers, spoke to the men, presenting a program to win the strike by militant action on the picket line and the unity of skilled and unskilled workers. Stalinists made a vain attempt to stifle the voice of the militants by making speech after speech in the usual slanderous style.

Many workers, fed up to the neck with these crusaders for Roosevelt, demanded that the members of the Unemployed and Project Workers Union get the floor to answer the Stalinist charges. As one worker put it: "You guys (the Stalinists) been running these fellows down all morning. Now I don't know whether you're right or wrong, but I'd like to hear what they have to say for themselves. That is the democratic way to handle it."

The will of the workers prevailed and Dollinger spoke. "Why is the Workers Alliance so scared of us and our program?" Dollinger asked. "Are they afraid of our campaign to organize the unskilled workers? Are they afraid that if we organize the unskilled workers and pull them out on strike in support of the skilled workers, Roosevelt will be embarrassed again? Are they afraid of the militant proposals that make victory for you strikers a dead certainty?"

Dollinger went on to blow up the fake "stoppage" program of the Alliance. "Why does the Alliance set the date for the stoppage so far in advance, nine days to be exact and even this date is only tentative? A nine days' wait before they do anything and they have the brass to attack us as disrupters. Can it be that they are hoping that they won't have to come through with the goods." Dollinger asked, "in line with their policy of not hurting Roosevelt's chances in 1940? This is undoubtedly the case."

### Exposes Alliance

Workers in the crowd took up the cry on the question of the stoppage during Dollinger's speech. "Pull them out now," the workers shouted to the silent group of Stalinists. "What the hell are you waiting for?"

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At Your Service THE APPEAL POSTER SHOP

## Drive to Organize the Unskilled Gains Speed

### Jamaica and Astoria Divisions of U.P.W.U. Direct Organization Campaign

By RAY ROBBINS

NEW YORK CITY, July 13—The intensive drive to organize the unorganized unskilled W.P.A. workers in support of the strike of skilled workers called by the A.F.L. at the North Beach Airport, center of the strike movement in the metropolitan area, has been gathering speed during the last week under the energetic leadership of the Jamaica and Astoria divisions of the Unemployed and Project Workers Union.

A campaign of meetings and leaflets, calling upon the unskilled workers to organize for struggle, led to a marked growth of sympathy for the project union's aims among the striking workers.

### Roosevelt Stock Low

The Stalinist leaders of the Workers Alliance have run to cover as a result of Roosevelt's strike-breaking statements. Up until Wednesday morning when Roosevelt made his infamous statement to the press, supporting Harrington, the Alliance had been desperately hanging on to the fringes of the militant strike, drumming up votes for the "friend of labor" in the White House. Now they are in utter confusion, their ranks disillusioned and the workers generally unresponsive to their balldozer for the New Deal.

When the workers read the papers Wednesday morning, Roosevelt's stock hit a new low. "Some New Deal," the workers were saying as they stood in groups discussing F.D.R.'s stand. "It's an out-and-out Raw Deal now." The Stalinists, fearful of losing whatever prestige they had obtained in a very delicate situation, circulated rumors that the press was distorting Roosevelt's statement. But nobody fell for that gag, and as the day progressed the anti-Roosevelt feeling among the workers grew despite all the efforts of Communist Party ward-healers.

### Dollinger Speaks

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### Why Not Now?

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### THE READERS HAVE THEIR SAY:

"You are right! I have found the Appeal's interpretation of interest and value. In these dark days yours is the only voice I know of in the periodical field that sounds a clear note in a befuddled and bewildered world."—T.P.P.

"Enclosed find \$4.00 on our account. I am now getting all literature regularly. The Appeal in particular is a tonic to us and we value it immensely both because we are having a tough struggle here and because your success encourages us more than we can say."—L.M., Melbourne branch of the Australian Revolutionary Workers League.

"We are going to try to send in news regularly to the Appeal. What I have in mind is material that can be used by the writers in New York. I think this is one of the ways to help make the paper more readable for unpolitical workers and help educate them to our political viewpoint."

"I feel that with the war danger so near we all have to work harder than ever before. This means a continued effort to sell the Appeal."—Pauline T., Worcester, Mass. literature agent.

### ON FINANCES:

Again we must sound the alarm about our financial position. The financial strain resulting from the Convention has seri-

ously affected our regular weekly income with the result that we are once again in a serious situation.

Financial statements have been sent out to all branches and are now in the hands of literature agents. Action is the keynote! We are not asking for special contributions. But we are definitely asking for immediate and substantial payments on all bundle order accounts.

New subscriptions this past week fell off considerably. No doubt the presence of many comrades at the National Convention accounted for this decline, but that is all the more reason to step up the pace for next week and make up for this last time. Here's the list:

NEW YORK CITY	6
California	5
Chicago	3
New Jersey	2
Nebraska	2
St. Paul	1
Ohio	1
New York	1
Maine	1
Total	22

Phil Axelrod of South Haven, Michigan has joined the list of those taking bundles of papers at his camp. Phil begins with a bundle of 10.

Pioneer Bookshop of London, England has already increased its bundle from 18 to 24 per issue—and pays for them, too! Cleveland, Ohio has doubled its bundle and now takes a total of 50 copies per issue.

## Newark Fires Opening Gun in Fund Drive

### Pledges \$267 in National Party Building Fund Drive for \$10,000

(Special to the Socialist Appeal) STREATOR, Ill., July 9—500 workers attended a mass meeting on Sunday, July 9, in City Park as a protest against the nationwide paycuts. The meeting was held under the auspices of the newly organized Federal Workers League of Lasalle County.

Aroused by the anti-labor and wage cutting action of F.D.R. and Congress, the W.P.A. workers of Streator, to a man, have joined the F.W.L. thereby solidifying themselves with the thousands of W.P.A. workers now on strike, by closing down every project in Streator, Monday morning. Prospects are that all projects in Lasalle County, employing about 1800 men, will be shut down tight by Monday night.

### Union Backing

The Federal Workers League, which is about five days old, was organized on the initiative of John Malone, Amalgamated Clothing Workers organizer, Mat Coley, Gus Mandula, and other leading labor militants in Streator. This new organization has the wholehearted support of both the C.I.O. and the A.F.L. of Lasalle County.

At the Sunday mass meeting the speakers included John Scot, Federation of Glass Workers; Gus Mandula, Chairman F.W.L.; Lydia Beidel from Chicago, and P. C. Sunkel, editor of the Streator Labor News. The highlight of the meeting was the speech delivered by Lydia Beidel, who set the tone of the meeting by declaring to an enthusiastic audience, "either we stand up on our hind legs and fight this anti-labor action of the capitalist politicians or remain a bunch of 24-cent-an-hour jackasses."

The revival of militant labor action in Streator has aroused the entire working class in the vicinity with a new spirit and enthusiasm that has not been witnessed here for many years. The demands of the strikers include "Stop the payout and the layoff." "Give every unemployed worker a job at a living wage"; "Find jobs by making the 30-hour week a national law"; and "All war funds to the unemployed."

Latest reports are that in Streator 600 to 700 are out with only six working. In Marseilles, two projects are out. In Ottawa, a mass meeting has been called for Monday night and 400 strikers are going to Ottawa for the meeting. Sixty-five are out in Peru.

"P. S. I should appreciate the reprinting of this letter in the next issue of the Appeal, inasmuch as the article in the Appeal was a misrepresentation of my political affiliation."

This letter, dated July 10, was received by the Socialist

start even before the Convention sessions had come to a close. In response to the pre-convention articles written by Comrade James P. Cannon, the Boston organizer sent in a donation of \$100 from an anonymous contributor, while convention delegates were still meeting. Close on its heels came another check for \$10 from an active militant in Rochester, New York. With the splendid action of the Newark Branch, the \$10,000 campaign is going at top-speed in the first week since the convention decision.

Comrades at the meeting dug down in their pockets and handed over the first cash installment on the pledge of \$23.50. This pledge represents a new high for Newark fund-raising, as it is the largest amount they have ever undertaken to collect for the Party.

The drive got off to a good

### Two Letters

## On Their Morals and Ours

This letter appeared in the Socialist Call, July 8, 1939, page 4.

"Socialist Appeal New York City To the Editor of the Socialist Appeal

"In a recent issue of your paper, an article appeared concerning the resignation of two members of the Young People's Socialist League, youth section of the Socialist party. These two individuals, Mitchell Raffner and Ernestine Simon, have supposedly joined the Fourth International.

"May I say that so far as I am concerned, the statement was nothing but a false and vicious lie, calculated to raise doubts in the minds of my comrades as to my status in my organization.

"It is a sad commentary on the revolutionary integrity of your organization when it has to resort to such tactics, perfected only by the Stalinist school of misrepresentation.

"I emphatically believe that if your organization continues in such activity, you will have earned nothing but the disrespect of all honest liberals and radicals.

MITCHELL RAFFNER Brooklyn College YPSL Circle

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Appeal:

"The Socialist Call, New York City. To the Editor of the Socialist Call:

"I asked your student director or not to print the letter she wrote and had me sign, accusing the Trotskyist organization of falsifying my political position, having come to the conclusion that the error had been entirely mine and not theirs.

"She assured me you would not use it, and yet in the Call of July 8, found it possible to betray my confidence and take advantage of the political inexperience which led me to accept it.

"I can see that loyalty to the Socialist Party should not have kept me within its ranks, despite my awareness of its ineffectual stand in current struggles. This lack of ethics has killed my loyalty.

"I herewith submit my resignation from the Young Peoples Socialist League of the Socialist Party.

Mitchell Raffner "May I ask that you give this the same prominence that you gave the letter I was promised would not be printed."

### IMPORTANT

Negro Department opening up. Badly needed: typewriter, cabinet file and other office accessories. Readers are urged to donate these absolutely essential items. Their donations will be greatly appreciated. Communicate with National Office.