

In the Labor Unions

By B. J. WIDICK

Behind the headlines of the news that the Hollywood technicians obtained a ten per cent wage increase from the movie producers is the story of a long struggle conducted by rank and file movements within the AFL unions there.

For nearly two years, the agitation among the membership of the American Federation of Studio Workers, an affiliate of the International Alliance of the Theatrical Stage Employees, rocked the hide-bound conservatism of the union leadership.

Accuse "Czar"

William Bioff, "czar" of the AFL unions in Hollywood, was accused, among other things, of receiving a "cut" of \$100,000 from movie producers to keep the union in line. Subsequently, his defense against the charge was that he had merely borrowed the money.

Conditions in the AFL unions there created a basis for the entry of the CIO through an industrial union. A National Labor Relations Board election held this fall brought victory to the AFL party because Bioff announced a determination to obtain a wage increase for all the employees, and actually did negotiate raises for 12,000 craftsmen in the industry.

Stimulated by this success, greater sections of the AFL membership demanded wage increases. Negotiations between Bioff and the producers.

Failure of the movie producers to yield an inch brought the threat of a strike, which could have enlisted the support of the entire I.T.A.S.E. with 40,000 movie projection workers in 25,000 theaters, tying up an industry of 250,000 employees.

Win Increase

This threat brought a last-minute compromise which was accepted by the union. A ten per cent wage increase was given to 23,000 technicians effective until Feb. 15, 1940.

The employers submitted the following written proposal to the union: "On or about Feb. 15, 1940 you will give us an opportunity to show you that the condition of this industry makes a continuation of wage increases impossible, and further to show you that we have taken every step possible within our power to readjust our business so as to make it possible to continue without recalling these wage increases."

The movie employers hope to prove that the wages cannot be paid, and thus the raises would be rescinded from the day they were put into effect.

In event of a disagreement, an arbitration board will be agreed upon with final decision in their hands. Of course, there will be plenty of disagreement, since the union would hardly give up the increases it has already won.

The pay increases mean a total of \$3,000,000 more in wages for the workers in one year. Because of the seasonal nature of present employment the studio craftsmen actually earn only \$900 a year, and the raises are a good step forward.

A Shady Past

During the negotiations the employers dug up an old conviction against Bioff for which he has not yet served his time, in an effort to discredit the union.

Actually, that conviction had nothing to do with unionism. Bioff was convicted in 1923 in Chicago of collecting money from women in the red-light section of the city.

Subsequently, he became the bodyguard of George Browne, president of the I.A.T.S.E., during a bitter and bloody inter-union fight in Chicago marked by a couple of mysterious killings.

From there he rose to vice-president of the union, a position he now holds. He was connected with the attempted raid of the I.A.T.S.E. on the Actor's union this fall, an attempt that failed.

The AFL unions in the movie industry would be in a much stronger position to defend themselves from the employers if the dictatorial rule of Bioff were overthrown.

Perhaps the present victories of the union on the wage issue will spur the rank and file movements in their struggle against the Bioff leadership.

A house-cleaning from below rather than allowing the courts to settle the question is the only progressive method of removing Bioff.

F.D.R. INCITES WAR AGAINST SOVIET UNION

(Continued from Page 1)

workers of Russia to free themselves of this grotesque beast that has fastened itself upon their backs. And we say at the same time to the American workers: fight the bosses at home. Fight starvation and misery at home. That's the way we'll end wars and the threats of wars.

What a foul travesty it is to hear Roosevelt crying over "poor little Finland!"

Roosevelt's Foul Record

When Spain was being crushed under the Fascist boot, the Democratic hero in the White House ruthlessly choked off in this country the sources of material supplies that would have helped the Loyalists to equalize the struggle.

When his friends Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier made a deal with Hitler over the dismembered corpse of Czechoslovakia, Roosevelt gave forth a fervent prayer of thanksgiving.

Nobody has ever heard Roosevelt get indignant over British bombing of defenseless villages on the Indian frontier, the ruthless dynamiting of Arab towns in Palestine, or the brutal French suppression by bombing plane, machine gun and sword of rebel tribesmen in Syria.

Roosevelt's War Plans

Roosevelt's moral indignation comes to light only in the cases of prospective enemies of Wall Street imperialism—Germany, Japan, and now above all, the Soviet Union. Above all, the Soviet Union, because Roosevelt, helped by Stalin's brutal course, is moving rapidly into fresh efforts to transform the war among the Powers into a war of some or all of them against Russia. And in aiming at Russia, Roosevelt is not aiming at the rapacity or totalitarianism of Stalin—F.D.R. will be plenty totalitarian himself when war comes!—but against the very basis of the workers' state that still remains despite the Stalin dictatorship: the collectivized property, the national ownership of all the plants and factories.

25 Hunger-Fighters Are Railroaded by the FBI

(Continued from Page 1)

torney Victor Anderson, prosecuted the case in a flag-waving orgy. Federal Judge M. M. Joyce gave the jury a "definition" of conspiracy broad enough to hang the strikers. The jury itself was hand-picked from rural parts of the federal district to insure a minimum of sympathy for organized labor.

Shortly before midnight Sunday jurors in the third trial of WPA strikers arrived at their decision, 36 hours after receiving the case. The court was notified this morning and at ten o'clock all 25 defendants took their seats in the federal courtroom. Ed Palmquist, leader of the Federal Workers Section and one of the defendants in the present trial, addressed his fellow workers, instructing them to remain silent at the verdict and not to express themselves until they were in the Union Hall.

At 10:30 the jury filed in and it was immediately apparent it had headed the plea of the United States District Attorney and the instructions of the judge to find all defendants guilty.

Not a single juror could look across the courtroom at the defendants sitting opposite.

The jury foreman—L.H. Rouse, Minneapolis accountant, the only local person on the jury—handed a sealed envelope containing the verdict to the clerk of court. The clerk opened the envelope, showed the verdict to the judge, turned to the court and read it quickly: "We, the jury, find the following defendants guilty of conspiracy: Eddie Alberts, Victor Nicholas, Margaret Schoenfeld, Ralph Core", etc., etc.

There wasn't a sound in the courtroom. Not a single defendant, man or woman, batted an eye. Reporters for the boss press tiptoed hurriedly to the judge's chambers to phone their papers.

The black-robed judge turned to the defendants and told them what he had told the eight defendants found guilty in the first two trials: that he was referring their cases to the probation office prior to passing sentence. The empty legal formality of asking counsel for the defense and for the United States government if they were satisfied with the verdict was observed, after which the defendants filed silently from the room and were driven to the Drivers Union Hall.

The judge was praising, the jury as onlookers fled out after the defendants.

Union Hall Meeting

At the Union Hall, no defendant expressed himself or herself as surprised at the verdict. They understood, just as does the Minneapolis labor movement which has supported them from the beginning, that they never had a chance. There was quiet, bitter laughter at the judicial farce.

At the meeting which followed, George Murk, chairman of the AFL-WPA Defense Committee, V. R. Dunne of the General Drivers Union, and Walter Frank of the Lathers Union, spoke.

Government Is Guilty

Murk, placing the blame for the persecution of these poor men and women directly on the federal government and its reactionary accomplices in Minnesota and Minneapolis, pledged the group that organized labor would continue to support them to the bitter end, would stand by them, would carry their case to the highest court in the land, and would not stop until it had vindicated them, if not before the government, at least before the people of America.

Defense counsel had already announced the convictions would be appealed to the United States circuit court of appeals.

Dunne briefly explained that the verdict was only the latest in the growing series of government persecutions directed against organized labor, and that the defendants were being persecuted because they symbolized the struggle of organized labor.

One defendant arose to ask a question of Gilbert Carlson, defense attorney: "Does this verdict mean that we are deprived of our citizenship?"

"Yes, that is what it means." "I just wanted to know. I don't think much of this country any more."

Union Goes On

Max Goldman, chairman, announced that the regular stewards meeting of Local 544's Federal Workers Section would convene this evening, and that the work of building the organization must continue exactly as before.

"This is the democracy my husband gave his life for in France," one woman defendant observed bitterly at the meeting adjourned.

In the three trials to date, five out of eight were convicted of conspiracy in the first trial; three

out of four in the second; twenty-five out of twenty-five in the third. Those convicted today are among ninety charged with conspiracy in a single indictment. One hundred and sixty-two men and women have been indicted so far on federal charges of conspiracy. It is not yet known when the fourth trial will get under way. All the cases are to be appealed to the higher courts by the AFL-WPA Defense Committee.

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 2 After five weeks of testimony, the third WPA trial ended today when Judge Joyce gave the case to the jury.

Two Defendants Collapse

During the last week of the trial two of the women defendants collapsed in the courtroom from strain and malnutrition. On Tuesday afternoon, during a particularly grueling cross-examination by the U.S. District Attorney, Mrs. Sigrid Assunta, one of the 25 defendants, collapsed in court, forcing adjournment of the case. Defense counsel several times objected strenuously to Anderson's tactics involving lengthy questioning, and the judge twice rebuked Anderson for covering ground often covered before. Anderson persisted, however, until finally the elderly defendant crumpled in her chair. The examining physician attributed her collapse to hunger. Like most of the defendants, she is in desperate poverty.

At the court's insistence, the trial was convened on Thanksgiving morning, but was adjourned abruptly when another of the defendants, Mrs. Lois Driscoll Viens, collapsed. Mrs. Viens, wife of George Viens, a leader of the Federal Workers Section, had been under a physician's care because of illness.

Refuses Dismissal Motion

Earlier Thanksgiving morning Tom Davis presented a brief listing 42 reasons for dismissing all charges in the present trial. Davis held that the evidence was insufficient to sustain the government's charge of conspiracy. He also attacked the prosecution on the ground that the Roosevelt-Woodrum Relief Law was faulty as a criminal statute, and that the defendants had been denied a fair trial, trial of 25 persons at one time violating the constitutional rights of each defendant. The court overrode the defense's motion in short order.

Justify Conspiracy Law

Friday morning the federal courtroom was packed as Assistant U.S. District Attorney Giblin concluded his closing argument. Giblin's approach indicated the government's eagerness to justify its "conspiracy" charge. "From time immemorial all sovereign governments have had conspiracy laws," Giblin argued. "The danger to the U.S. government" from the Minneapolis WPA strike was his theme. Painting a horrendous picture of the strike spreading to all parts of the nation and challenging the government, both Giblin and District Attorney Anderson defended the Minneapolis police's murderous brutality against the strikers and bystanders.

Giblin named Ed Palmquist and Max Goldman of the Federal Workers Section of Local 544 as the "very fountainhead of the Minneapolis WPA strike conspiracy." He made a big point of the fact that 24 of the 25 defendants in the third trial are members of the Federal Workers Section, that the FWWS was the backbone of the strike, and that Workers Alliance members, on the other hand, opposed picketing of projects.

In his final argument Defense Attorney Tom Davis told the jury that "While some of the defendants may have been guilty of individual acts, they could not be found guilty of conspiracy against the government. All that could be laid against the defendants could be covered by assault charges to be tried in state or city courts."

Government Is Real Conspirator

Describing the trial as the most unusual case ever tried in the United States, he defended the right of workers to protest wages and working conditions, which were the issues involved in the strike. "If there was any conspiracy in this case, it was a conspiracy of the U.S. Department of Justice to fasten a crime against these helpless defendants," Davis stated.

Brings in "Moscow"

U.S. District Attorney Anderson put on a typical ham act in his summation. "Minneapolis, so long as I am here, is not going to be the Moscow of America. I have no fear of invasion by a foreign foe," he told the bug-

Negroes Arm Against Ku Klux Terrorists

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

GILLESPIE, Ill.—United action against the Superior Coal Co. in fighting that companies lock-out of 2,200 miners has been announced by the CIO United Mine Workers and the AFL Progressive Mine Workers. This fighting united front climaxes a series of unity moves on the part of these two unions in the state of Illinois.

Ray Edmondson, President of District 12 (Illinois) of the UMW pledged the support of his organization to the strikers.

"In this situation," Edmondson stated, "the UMW of D does not intend to be used as an instrumentality for breaking down conditions of employment prevailing in the mines of this state. We hope that the dispute between local union No. 1 of the PMA and the Superior Coal Co. will be settled at once in the interest of employees, the company and community welfare. To this end we pledge our full and complete cooperation."

The cause of the dispute is the refusal of the company to continue to recognize the division of work which has been in effect for the last six years and which was won and maintained by militant struggle on the part of the miners. This same fight over giving the lower-paid men more hours of work during the slack season in order that their total revenue will be equal to that received by the higher paid workers was the cause of the militant stay-down strike in 1937.

The company is attempting to institute an hour for hour division of work between the high and low paid employees which would automatically reduce the wages of 75 per cent of the workers. The company claims that the union has resisted this by calling a slow-down strike and so, without first calling the matter to the attention of the joint board as provided for in their contract, closed their mines and locked out the men.

Progressive Gives Union Position

John Battuello, militant District Board member of the Progressive Miners, pointed out: "In this instance, the Superior Coal Co. elected to ignore the contract, and locked out its employees. The miners being confronted with an action that is entirely outside of the courts of joint relations, are compelled to meet the situation in a similar manner."

"In this connection local No. 1 and board member district No. 6 of the PMA welcomes the assurance that the miners of both unions will co-operate to the end that the miners' organizations and the few conditions still remaining in the mines are not completely destroyed. This assurance of co-operation by the UMW of A and the PMA is being rendered specifically because it is realized that if the Superior Coal Co. succeeds in setting aside the courts provided for by the contract, it will thereby render the interests of the miners." (The courts referred to in this statement are the arbitration courts of miner and employer representatives provided for in the contract.)

Reactionary Against Unity

This fighting unity has naturally not been achieved without opposition from the reactionaries. George P. Ritchie, State vice-president and a conservative even among the reactionaries, mutters that neither Dave Reed, state president, nor John Battuello (the two leaders who negotiated the unity move with the UMW) "is vested with the authority to cooperate with the UMW of A in such a manner." Ritchie further claims that in securing the assistance of one of the most powerful unions in America in their fight against the boss these two men "do not express the sentiment of the district executive board... nor the desires of the membership."

Wm. Campion, president of local No. 1, all of whose members are involved in the lockout replied, "The question raised by Vice President Ritchie is a regrettable one. Since he should have the interests of his own men in mind, how can he refuse help from anyone."

"However, if he represents the operators in this case it is well that the miners know it before the case gets to any court in which he might be the judge. As president of No. 1 local, I invite Vice President Ritchie to attend the local union meeting, when they, the miners, will tell him officially what they think of the present controversy and of him."

Battuello and Reed refused to dignify Ritchie's attack on them with a reply. Battuello's only comment was, "Who is George Ritchie?"

THREE STRIKES STAY SOLID IN CAIRO, ILL.

CAIRO, Ill.—The Labor Board election which was scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 2, was called off at the request of AFL Federal Local 22199 because of the actions of the Valley Steel Co. and the Cairo Association of Commerce in attempting to buy votes at \$10 a throw. The moment the union agreed to end the month-long strike for recognition by consenting to an election, the company agents and the business men began to circulate the rumor that the plant would move if the union won the election and offering \$10 to any man who informed them that he had voted against the union provided, of course that the union lost the election. As soon as these events took place the union called off the election and decided to continue to show the company officials their majority—on the picket line.

Negro Strikers Firm

The two other strikes in this town are still completely effective with the 170 Negro workers holding the lines militantly. These strikes are in progress at two of the four cotton seed oil mills in town.

The business men, who boast that their greatest contribution to Cairo is a low wage scale, are bending every effort to stir up racial antagonism between the Negro and white workers on the picket line and turn the strikes into race riots. These business men deserted the town when there was a flood danger in the winter of 1936 and returned only after the workers had saved the town by working day and night on the levee. They are the same men who broke up the unemployed strike early in 1937 with guns and bloodshed and then held the strike leader, Eddie Parker, incommunicado for weeks.

A test of strength will take place in the Valley Steel Co. strike on Dec. 4 when the company will once more try to lead a back to work movement through the picket lines. As this is being written foremen are going among the workers offering ten dollars bonus to anyone who will try to break the strike. The last time this was tried, Nov. 13, thirty-one scabs and one hundred and fifty armed deputies marched up to the unarmed mass picket line which didn't yield an inch. At this point they found that they didn't have the guts to push through. The scab herders are having a hard time overcoming the memory of this event.

eyed jury of rural folk. "I am concerned with conditions within our borders. Forty-seven states are watching Minnesota and this jury. Eighty-seven counties in this state are watching it, too, to see what tomorrow will bring."

The labor movement here understands well that the cards are all stacked against their brothers and sisters whom the government is victimizing, that the system of picking federal juries and the court's definition of "conspiracy" makes a "guilty" verdict almost certain.

Next Trial Postponed

Friday morning the judge indicated that the fourth WPA trial, involving other defendants charged with "conspiracy," would be postponed at least until after he has completed a federal court calendar in another part of the state. The significance of the postponement is not clear.

ILLINOIS MINERS UNITED IN FIGHT AGAINST BOSSES

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WORKERS' FORUM

TWO AUTO WORKERS BELIEVED "REINCARNATION"—AND WHAT HAPPENED

Editor:

I see by the papers that the New York City police have a "Reincarnation File" of fingerprints of people wishing to "establish their identity on returning to earth." I knew two fellows who believed in "Reincarnation" and if what happened to them means anything, those New York fingerprints won't do nobody any good.

These two fellows worked next to me at the Fisher Body plant here in St. Louis. They made a deal that if one should pass away he should come back and let the other know.

One of the fellows, Bill, was playing pinoche, he got a 1500 hand, it was too much for his heart, he passed away, that was in 1933. The other day Joe—the other fellow—was going to work, he was waiting for the street car. No one happened to be on the car stop that morning, so Joe was very puzzled when he heard a voice say, "Hello Joe." He looked all around, saw no one. The voice again said hello. Joe looked up to the buildings, he looked all around him again. By this time he thought his studies of the occult had cussed him into insanity, or maybe the work on the trim line was getting him.

Then the voice again said "Hel-

lo Joe. Don't you know me? Here I am, Joe, your old friend Bill, hitched up to this ice wagon." And Joe sees this horse—talking to him!

"Yes, Joe," says the horse, "reincarnation is authentic, I came back."

"Joe," said the horse, "you are lucky. Remember how you and I used to beef about the long hours. Well, I sure wish I had that easy job on the trim line."

Joe said: "Why Bill, we don't work those long hours, anymore, we got a union now' and get twice as much dough." Gee, says the horse, "I wish us horses had a union. I get hitched up to this ice wagon at three in the morning. I haul ice until noon, and then I get unhitched from the ice wagon only to get hitched up to a coal wagon. Until six or seven, and then the bosses' kids hitch me to the old buggy, they run me around until twelve o'clock."

Just about this time the horse looked around and saw a man coming. The horse said: "Cheese it Joe, that's my boss. If he finds out I can talk, he will make me yell Iee too."

The motto of this tale is that we need a writer like Bill Morgan again, with his funny jokes at the bosses, and fewer of these multiloquacious.

St. Louis, Mo. M. V. Romer
P.S.: Many of the auto workers here are reading the Appeal.



As we explained in last week's issue of the Appeal, unfavorable circumstances made it necessary for us to temporarily retreat to weekly publication.

We issued the Appeal twice each week on the dot for a ten month period. This was done during a period of great defeats for the working class, culminating in the launching of the present imperialist world war. It is a sure sign of the vitality of our movement, that we were able thus to work against the stream. It is also a sure indication that our present retreat is only a temporary affair—and that we should resume the twice-weekly publication before long.

Readjustments necessary:

(1) The Socialist Appeal is now published weekly and is off the press every Wednesday of the week.

(2) The price for each copy is now 5 cents. The price to the branches is 3 cents per copy.

(3) The subscription price remains the same as before—\$1.00 for 6 months; \$2.00 for 1 year. This includes Bronx and Manhattan in New York City.

(4) All those who subscribed before suspension of the twice-weekly will be given the full benefit of their subscriptions.

(5) Branch literature agents should take immediate steps to readjust their bundle orders. Branches and members of our Party are now completely used to handling the Appeal twice each week at a minimum. This means that every branch should be able to handle much larger bundle orders of the weekly Appeal.

We expect all branch literature agents to send in greatly increased bundle orders shortly. Up to

date statements on bundle order accounts are being mailed out this week.

Subscriptions received during the last two weeks:

NEW SUBS

Minneapolis 5
Allentown, Pa. 2
Columbus 2
Worcester 2
Chicago 4
Madison 1
Philadelphia 2
St. Paul 1
Akron 3
Evansville 1
New York City 2
St. Louis 2
Pasadena 1
Foreign 1
Total 29

RENEWALS

Washington, D.C. 2
Chicago 1
Columbus 1
New York City 3
Flint 1
Worcester 1
San Diego 1
Detroit 2
Los Angeles 1
Trenton 1
Akron 3
Youngstown 1
Minneapolis 2
Total 20

If the Party branches continue to make prompt payments on their bundle orders and if an attempt is made to obtain many new subscriptions for the Appeal, then we may be able to return to the twice-weekly paper sooner than we expect. The entire thing depends upon the activity of the branches and their response to our needs.

Party Statement on Stalin's Invasion of Finland

(Continued from Page 1)

the Finnish puppet government of Wall Street and London. The Finnish Fourth Internationalists are partisans of an independent Soviet Finland and the irreconcilable foes of the treacherous and blood-spotted Kremlin bureaucracy and its hand-picked Kuusinen regime in Finland.

(c) For the Fourth Internationalists in the Soviet Union: Soviet patriotism—the main enemy is world imperialism. Unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist world. Only agents of imperialism, standing for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, can desire the defeat of the Red Army by the bourgeois Finnish outpost of the imperialist armies. Irreconcilable struggle for the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which betrays the world proletariat and undermines the defense of the Soviet Union. Against the military-bureaucratic annexation of Finnish territory. For the independence of Soviet Finland. Unceasing criticism and exposure of the Stalinist methods of starting and conducting the war, but not the slightest relaxation of material and military support. The Fourth Internationalists in the Soviet Union will be the best soldiers in the Red Army and inspire it to victory over the imperialist bandits and the Stalinist betrayers.

TOLEDO SCHOOLS CLOSED DOWN, 'LACK OF FUNDS'

TOLEDO, Ohio—All our public schools have been closed since Nov. 22 and will remain closed until after Jan. 1—a total of six weeks—because the funds of the school board are "exhausted."

Y.P.S.L. and Socialist Workers Party leaflets were issued on the three days prior to the closing of the schools, and distributed at the high schools. The leaflets contrasted the lack of funds for schools with the growing expenditure of public funds for the army and navy. It denounced the reactionary attempts to blame the teachers and the over-taxed parents, and fixed the blame for the closing of the schools on the big industrialists and landlords and their political tools.

ATTENTION MINNEAPOLIS READERS! Christmas Turkey Party. Benefit Anti-War Fund. Wednesday, December 20, 1939 at 8 p.m., 919 Marquette Avenue. Entertainment—Refreshments—Adm. 10c.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THEATER PARTY tendered by the Friends of the Russian Opposition Bulletin. "Chaver Nachman," by I. J. Singer, a Jewish play based on the Russian Revolution, with Joseph Ben-Ami, Celia Adler, and Ludwig Satz. At the National Theater, 2nd Ave. at Houston St., N.Y.C., on Tuesday evening, Dec. 12. Tickets are available at the National Office, 116 University Pl. Get yours early for choice seats.

NEXT WEEK! Analysis of the Chrysler Agreement

Lack of space kept out of this issue of the SOCIALIST APPEAL an important article dealing with the lessons of the Chrysler lockout and an analysis of the agreement recently signed by the Auto Union and the corporation. Watch for it in next week's SOCIALIST APPEAL.