



NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE LABOR FRONT

Incentive Pay Revealed As Scheme to Rob Labor

By WALTER WEISS
In our issue of September 13 we discussed and exposed at some length an article by Earl Browder in the Sunday Worker of September 5 and a long three-column letter by Albert Ramond in the New York Times of the same date, both of which pieces of literature were enthusiastic endorsements of the piecework speed-up system now known as incentive pay.

After all, says Ramond, if they turn out the goods with only half as much work under a new set-up, we can only pay them half as much per piece, no matter what they may imagine.
An English Expert Joins in
The capitalists play this same game all over the world. Personnel Journal, an American magazine for the personnel managers of big business, asked an English expert, R. E. Jefferson, to write for them an account of British wage policy during the war.

Ramond proceeds to give an example which he presumably thinks fairly typical. It is certainly tempting—for employers. Suppose, says he, the studies show that a group is turning out only eighty-five per cent of what the engineers decide they ought to do at normal (according to the engineers) rates of work. That means that if the group is averaging 170 units a week per man, they should be doing 200 units. Here comes the grand climax: "...The extra incentive wage would be paid only when the production per man exceeded this" (that is, 200—W.W.).

he goes on to reassure them. One or two groups may be above standard (that, by the way, would help to make the set-up look good to the workers—W. W.), but it "would only be a RARE EXCEPTION...when an ENTIRE PLANT operating on straight hourly pay would average more than 100 per cent productivity" (our emphasis).

Is it any wonder that workers are to use Mr. Hard's word, "wary" of incentive pay? Is it any wonder that they sometimes imagine (?) that they are being gypped?

World Events
By Europacus

Italian Fascism in New Dress

At last the negotiations and deals which have been going on since the fall of Mussolini have come to a conclusion: Badoglio has capitulated to the Allies. The whereabouts of the gentleman are unknown at the time of this writing. This suggests that something may have gone wrong in spite of all the careful preparations.
The Badoglio government was too weak from the outset to play any kind of independent role. It had either to lean for support on the Nazis or to consider the tempting offer of the Allies to remain in office and, under appropriate control, safeguard "law and order" against the Italian masses.

UE Paper Attacks Auto Union

The combined offensive of Earl Browder and the National Assn. of Manufacturers to destroy the standard of living of the workers has gained momentum during the past week. Camouflaged under the label of "incentive pay," they are seeking to place the union label on the anti-union piecework, speed-up system.

Browder's boys, unable to get to first base in the UAW, have wormed their way into the leadership of the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers Union of America, which they maintain in their characteristically totalitarian way. Today they are using this union to carry out the Stalinist party line, of which this infamous incentive pay scheme is an integral part.

mouthpiece in the UE, immediately let the company know it was dealing, not with militant unionists but with a new friend of big business.
In Matles' reply to the executives of GMC, he stated that they evidently made a mistake in not reading the UE proposals. He said that not only had the proposal of the UE been for the incentive pay scheme, but it had even advocated its extension. Matles went on to chastise the management for not knowing the difference between the UAW and the UE "...and without attention being given to the actual conditions which prevail in our plants as compared with those under contract with the UAW."

Sperry Workers Still Fight For a Democratic Union

NEW YORK—If nothing else was accomplished at the last general stewards' meeting at Sperry's, the rank and file who attended had an opportunity to watch and wonder at the steam-rolling tactics used by the union leadership.
The meeting was called only after two months of bitter fighting and campaigning on the part of a few stewards and the rank and file of the shop. Throughout this fight, the leadership was against holding such a meeting and did everything it could to prevent its occurrence. The rank and file pressure brought to bear on the leadership through department and floor meetings finally did the trick, and the meeting was called.

Despite the completely undemocratic manner in which the meeting was run, with name-calling by the officials as the only answer for good arguments, a few people speaking for the members in the shop managed to take the floor and hold it. Those who did, spoke very convincingly against the WLB, which, they pointed out, was clamping down on labor and allowing big business to carry on not only "as usual," but even better than that.

You, of course, Brother Green, find it easy to answer these beefs. You send around another circular letter to be read at the local meeting saying that the GEB has set up a special committee to deal with "trouble makers" who call stoppages. Or you appear at a local meeting to say "Build more ships" and "Hurrah for our Commander-in-Chief" and then run out in a hurry. But if you would spend eight hours a day with our gang of shipfitters down here at New York Ship it would make your ears burn to hear what they say about you.

men called three stoppages and forced the company to reinstate him. Then the Navy inspector framed him and reclassified him from a first-class welder to a tacker! He still stuck around.
Then the local official board suspended him from office for having been involved in the stoppages resulting from his being fired! The local meeting overruled this and voted him reinstated in office. Then finally the company framed him again and fired him.

whom you stabbed in the back during their strike last spring.)
But that's all past history. Now you have joined the Bill Greens, the Wolls, the Tobins, the Dubinskys, the Hillmans, the Murrays. You have gone over to the other side. But the men who have to work for a living need a fighting industrial union now more than ever. And they will get it no matter what your administration does. Groups are forming in every local around the wide-awake union men. They know what they want:

- 1. Repeat the no-strike pledge.
2. Withdraw from the Ship Stabilization Agreement.
3. Take the \$1.20 ceiling off ship mechanics' pay.
4. Withdraw the CIO men from the War Labor Board.
5. Repeal the Smith-Connally bill.
6. Form an Independent Labor Party.
The men are sore. They feel betrayed. They're a little confused as to where to begin. But they will be in there fighting—and damn soon. And rebuilding the union—from the bottom up.
Old Timer from Camden.

An Open Letter to President John Green --

Union Needs Democracy
Up at Kearny, you couldn't control the rank and file any more so you put in a "receiver" to dictate to the local. Over in Chester, at Sun Ship, Local 2 still doesn't have its charter, even though the CIO has now organized the yard. And the national organizers went in to negotiate with the company without submitting the proposed contract to the local meeting for approval. Meanwhile there is no grievance machinery, and good union men are still being fired.

which they never do. They get their orders from Browder, who gets them from Moscow, and they don't give a hoot about what the union members want done.
However, the bad situation in our union is the same in this whole area. Everywhere it is the same story: the company has the union on the defensive, conditions getting worse, union men are grumbling, discontented union men try to change the situation by democratic procedure at local meetings, the local administration connives and maneuvers and becomes more dictatorial in dealing with the men, then they frame up and run out of the yards the spokesmen of the rank and file. That's what has been happening, isn't it?

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At this stage, the international representative, Joseph Dermody, broke in and in honeyed tones began to talk about everything else but the raises. Then, almost as an admission, he informed the meeting that everyone would not be able to get a nickel raise on the grounds which he had presented to the board, and that new evidence was being presented. In other words, the WLB has already refused the five-cent raise, and a new case is now being prepared.

But the Communist line boys don't say or do anything that's against what you say or do, Brother Green. They usually only say it louder and a little more raw. If they ever go out after your scalp, it will only be because they feel that you may give way under rank and file pressure, which they never do. They get their orders from Browder, who gets them from Moscow, and they don't give a hoot about what the union members want done.

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September N. I. Is Out Now!
Timeliness is the theme that runs through the September issue of The New Internationalist, which made its appearance this week.
The feature of the magazine this month is a searching review of the significance of the recent events in Italy by Max Shachtman, in which the national secretary of the Workers Party analyzes the ignominious dumping of Mussolini by the Italian boss class, the subsequent upheavals by the Italian masses and the problems arising from these first indica-

ATTENTION!
Detroit Readers of Labor Action—
You are invited to attend a series of four discussions on problems vitally affecting the labor movement:
Sunday, September 26, 8:00 p.m.
"Labor's 'Friend' in the White House"
Sunday, October 3, 8:00 p.m.
"The Labor Movement and the Fight for Equal Rights for Negroes"
To be held at the
LABOR FORUM
WESLEY BUILDING, ROOM 304
2847 GRAND RIVER (NEAR TEMPLE)
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