

# VETS STORM INTO VACANT GOV'T. HOUSES

At 60th and Keeler Aves. in Chicago the government has built a block-big housing project for veterans and their families. The buildings, which have the same architectural style as army barracks, are divided up into 2, 3 and 4 room units. They are jerry-built of green lumber and composition board; stove-heated; showers - no bathtubs; recesses with shelves over which a curtain may be hung - no closets; two-burner gas plates - no oven - in the two room units; windows without sash-cords or locks; and wooden fire-escapes for the second-story flats. The rent is \$25 for two rooms, \$29.50 for three and \$32.50 for four. They are rented to veterans only. "A world fit for heroes to live in" - 1946 model.

To the veterans living in basements and single rooms, or crowded in with their in-laws, or those who had to live separately from their wives for lack of space - to these veterans in the neighborhood of 60th and Keeler the jerry-built housing project looked like a dream. It meant to them a place of their own for their wives and children. It meant living with their wives again, a room for the kids so they would not have to sleep in the same bed, or moving out of a damp basement, or getting out of the crowded flats (and the hair) of their in-laws, or getting their own furniture out of storage, or whatever the individual case might be. For a year they have watched the buildings going up and being finished. For six to eight months they have had their applications in with the Chicago Housing Authority. For six weeks prior to November 5th they saw 62 of the 186 flats standing finished and vacant while the Chicago Housing Authority gave them the run-around, shunting them from office to office and finally telling a number of them that their applications were "lost" and could not be found.

The night of November 4th, a group of these veterans from the neighborhood apparently went to a Democratic ward meeting asking



what was going to be done for them. Evidently the local politicians, put on the spot the night before election day, hinted that the best thing to do was to move in. (The exact sequence of events is not clear; the boys are "not talking" about it.) "While a crowd which included 20 women and several children stood outside, 16 veterans entered the quarters of Albert Horn, 4129 W. 60th Place, caretaker of the project...Horn offered no resistance, and the veterans seized a rack of 80 keys...

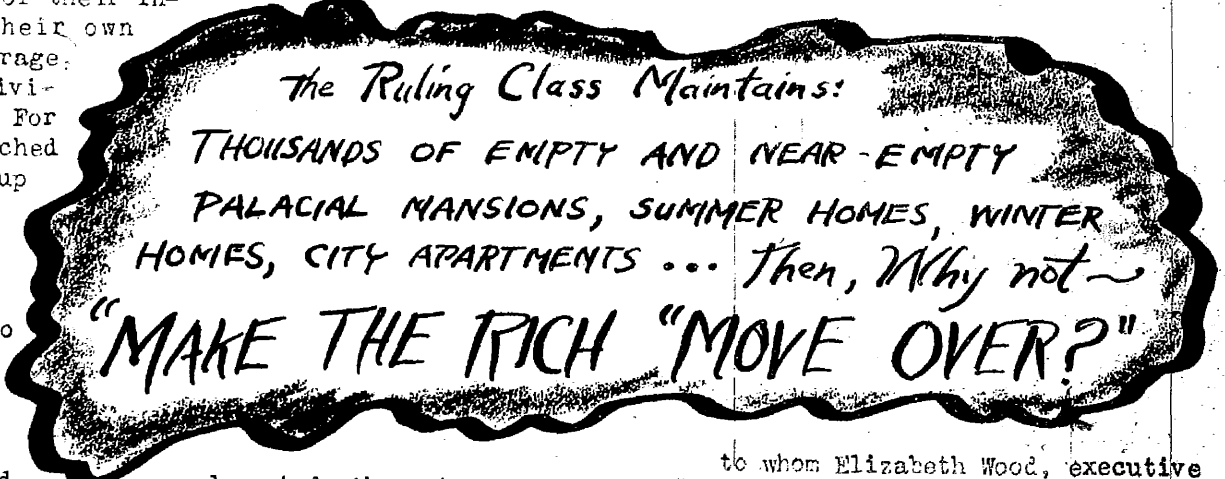
"The veterans...passed out the keys, giving those for larger apartments to exservicemen with families. When police arrived, the crowd had disappeared, but two and a half hours later, after the police had

this was not true.

After his return from the army he bought a small grocery store and truck in partnership with his brother. The truck has come in handy to move the furniture of six or eight of his buddies into the housing project without charge.

The committee's efforts seem to be directed primarily to rallying the support of the veterans' organizations. Most of the participants in the movement belong to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and they want to rally the support of other posts and of the American Legion and make their regional and national officials come out in their support.

"Police Commissioner Prendergast,



departed, the veterans returned." (Chgo. Herald American, Nov. 5, 1946)

The veterans have formed a committee headed by Paul Principato who served 2½ years in the European theater and received the Rhine Crossing Medal and a presidential citation. He was in Patton's outfit and thinks that Patton was the best general the army had. He is a strong Democrat and sincerely regrets Roosevelt's death, feeling that "things would have been different" if he had lived. He was worried about a rumor that they had moved in to keep colored veterans out and asked us particularly to tell any Negroes we knew that

to whom Elizabeth Wood, executive secretary of the Chicago Housing Authority, went yesterday with a request that police evict the 'squatters', said the problem was one for the CHA to solve 'by due process of law', and that the police department would take no steps 'to oust any veterans from any houses.'

"Mayor Kelly also termed it a CHA problem and said he did not intend to enter into the dispute. He added: 'I understand that every family who moved in there has an application on file with the CHA.'" (Chicago Tribune Nov. 7, 1946).

The capitalist press and radio have given publicity to this event. (to page 2)

THE FIRST 156 LINES OF THE ABOVE ARTICLE IS A DIRECT QUOTATION FROM AN ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY THE GROUP OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS PUBLISHERS OF POLITICAL NOTES.

## Vet's Move In (from page one)

The Herald-American devoted a page of pictures to it on November 5th. Life magazine sent reporters to cover the committee meeting of Nov. 7th and to take pictures. The NBC system arranged a nationwide newscast at 6:15 PM, November 8th, on which Charles Whittaker, a member of the veterans' committee, spoke.

The Chicago Housing Authority is attempting to pit veteran against veteran and reduce it to a question of whether a squatter veteran with 2 children should move into a flat which, they say, they were going to give to a veteran with 4 children. Having issued notices to the 60-odd vet families to move, this agency has brought six of them to court on charges of trespassing. Last Tuesday (Nov. 12th) Judge H. P. Beam of the municipal court continued the case until Dec. 2nd. He insisted that the "squatters" and the CHA meanwhile attempt to settle their dispute in meetings out of court.

The first such meeting held last Wednesday afternoon in the judges chambers, was unsuccessful. Alderman Hogan was present and the neighborhood American Legion post commander and the lawyers. The judge urged them to meet again.

But despite Judge Beam's pre-



## HOUSING PROBLEM - IN A 40-ROOM MANSION

"... haven't been able to find my wife in two days!"

tense at impartiality, this incident has produced a solid wall of alarm from the Chicago capitalist press, administration and organizations. All the local papers, Mayor Kelly thru his CHA, and the Metropolitan Housing Council have pounced upon this action as being shamefully illegal. They are in dread that this direct action might open up a more general assault upon the homes of the rich.

privately owned or not?"

One vet, who believes he was in line for one of the occupied apartments, wrote to the Tribune asking that the squatters be evicted. For, he reasons, "If nothing is done... what is to prevent people from moving into any vacant house or apartment in the city, whether

The answer to that question will be found in the Chicago police force, courts, the lies of the press. But this need not necessarily be so if the trade union movement and the other labor organizations take a personal responsibility in seeing that the rich are made to share their spacious homes with workers in need of quarters. A firm step in that direction would be for the trade union movement and other labor organizations to claim this current fight of veterans as their own and not leave the decision up to a judge prejudiced to defend capitalist legality and possession.

### Labor Views

THIS IS YOUR PAPER

You are invited to write, come or call  
LABOR VIEWS OFFICE  
333 W. North Ave.  
Michigan 5484

LABOR VIEWS is issued by the Revolutionary Workers League to further the struggle of the working class against the constant attack of the industrialists and bankers.

We propose independent working class action beginning at the shops, mines and mills against this ruling class and its government - its police forces, its courts and laws - operating as its "big stick".

LABOR VIEWS recognizes that although today the working class fights to defend its living standards, tomorrow it will face the task of abolishing this rotting system of capitalist slavery, and creating a government which will organize society for the welfare of all who labor. The chief instrument needed for achieving this goal is a Revolutionary Workers Party.

## Local 120 Reports: WAGES MUST MEET LIVING COSTS

(Submitted by a steward of Local 120)

The militant spirit of the workers was outstanding at the regular monthly meeting of Local 120 URWA (Nov. 3rd) which included workers from Rapid Roller, American Roller and Sam'l Bingham.

They approved heartily of plans to make a drive for higher wages. The report about the 26¢ hourly increase being the next goal set by the URWA International president, L. Buckmaster was explained. The membership approved the idea that in the event of any substantial increase in the cost of living between now and the time of settlement this figure should be revised upward.

Local 120 is not committing itself on exact wage demands now.

Since the completion of wage negotiations at the plants under the jurisdiction of Local 120, and the winning of higher wages at that time, the workers find that living costs exceed what they have won. They find it necessary to again force their employers to

give them higher wages to enable them to meet the increasing prices.

The workers should put every effort and confidence behind their local officers in order to assure a quick and complete victory! It is each worker's duty to gain an honest living wage to allow them to support their families, who deserve as good a living as the bosses who profit from their labors.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Local 120 has consistently remained ahead of the rest of the locals in the URWA international - ahead of the entire CIO for that matter - in wage increases and improvements in conditions. In the last year while the rest of the union movement was settling for 18¢ or less this local insisted on wage raises that matched or moved ahead of the rising cost of living.

In the coming period when union after union will be forced to drive for higher wages militant workers will be keeping their eye on the progress made by Local 120.

## Local 288 Workers Learn:

# COMPANY CAN PAY MORE

The first negotiating meeting between Local 288 and American Industrial Rubber Co. last Tuesday Nov. 12th, has shown the workers here two things: first that they have made some noteworthy progress and second that this company has not lost its greed for extra profit.

One positive bid that Local 288 took away from the meeting was Mr. Trilling's (owner of the company) statement that he would grant 26¢ pay raises if other rubber companies did the same. Then he qualified his statement by saying he would not grant 26¢ to everyone, but was willing to negotiate different raises on the different jobs.

Here are the facts that come from these statements:

First, if Mr. Trilling can give 26¢ when other companies give it, he is admitting he can afford to give this raise. He admits that he can afford to give this raise now and refuses to give it UNTIL FORCED TO DO SO.

Second, his proposal that some workers should take less pay raise than others is completely out of line with the needs of these workers. The rise in the cost of living has been the same for everyone in the plant. Why should the pay raises be different?

Trilling further refused to grant any retroactive pay raise - that is, an agreement that the pay raise agreed to later will be paid from the date when negotiations began. "Boss Trilling" as the workers in 288 call him, plans to hold on to every cent of the workers' wages he can.

Once again Trilling threatened the workers with the possibility of closing the business and selling the equipment in the plant. But the fact that Trilling can afford to give a pay raise, as he has admitted, the fact that he continues to invest thousands of dollars in equipment and machinery, shows that this threat is merely a cheap lie. Trilling is paying wages far below those of other rubber plants in Chicago. To name one, Bingham, workers in the mill-room who a year ago were making \$.80 an hour are now making \$1.25 an hour.

It is the greed for extra profit which moves this management to refuse a wage raise now.

Tuesday's negotiating meeting was marked by a calm, friendly attitude on the part of everyone and in this atmosphere Boss Trilling assured the workers that he had their good at heart. But then in the same touching tones he refused to move from his position that he

may violate the seniority of helpless workers in the plant when they get sick and are absent because of this sickness. In one such case a few weeks ago, one of the women workers was carried out of the plant, sick, to the doctor. Three weeks later when she returned management refused to rehire her and after the union insisted, then refused to recognize her as an old employee but gave her a new card.

This management attempts to give a new employee status to every worker who is absent for three days or more, even if he offers a legitimate excuse. This is just one of the clauses of the contract which this management treats like a piece of paper.

But some improvement has occurred in this plant. It is marked by the fact that when three months ago the workers asked for a raise Mr. Trilling went into a wild Indian act. Since that time certain improvements such as the beginning of a lunch room and some attempt at putting safety levers on the mills, and new clothes facilities in the shower room have made their appearance. And now Mr. Trilling is willing to sit down and talk with the workers' representatives in a manner more befitting their dignity as men. This change has not "just happened". It is the result of a determined and organized resistance on the part of workers in Local 288 - a militancy which has put them 100% behind their representatives.

## BRITISH SQUATTERS POINT THE WAY

The 60 families of veterans who moved into the government project on 60th and Keeler have raised the question as to whether a "squatters" movement, on a grand scale, could not ease the housing shortage in this country. The squatters movement in England which flared up this past September indicates some of the problems involved.

The housing problem is, of course, more severe in England. 110,000 houses were destroyed in London during the war and 220,000 more throughout the country. Millions of homes have been damaged. English workers have been obliged to live like cattle and already before September thousands of families were moving into deserted army barracks and other such establishments. To this movement the British Labor Government cast a "lenient eye".

Early in September the Communist Party of England, anxious for its

*Hundreds of homeless workers, carrying a few belongings, marched into the Duchess of Bedford House and other large apartments soon were occupied.*

own reasons to discredit the government, seized the helm of the squatters movement. Scouts were sent out to investigate the large empty apartment houses in London. The government was at that time redecorating 4 such luxurious homes before turning them back to their owners. The Duchess of Bedford House - 5 rooms renting for a minimum of \$42 a week - Ivanhoe Hotel; Abbey Lodge and the Fountain Court Apartments.

Next the Communist Party posted notices advertising unfurnished flats. An avalanche of applications were made and on September 8, fifteen hundred applicants were rounded up, carrying some of their more essential belongings, and were marched into the Duchess of Bedford House to the utter surprise and embarrassment of the authorities. The other large apartments mentioned were soon oc-

(to page 4)

# BRITISH WORKERS TOOK OVER EMPTY MANSIONS (from page three)

cupied and smaller movements not initiated by the Communist Party also developed.

The British Labor Government was horrified. The movement into deserted barracks it could tolerate but to violate the possession of the ruling class was just too much. Minister of Health and Housing, Aneurin Bevan, ordered the water and electricity turned off in the apartments taken. A strong cordon of Bobbies were thrown around the houses to prevent food or furniture from coming in. Thus the noble Minister of Health and Housing hoped to break the health of the English workers and force them into the streets.

The Labor Government and the capitalist and Labor Party press started to howl mad at the monstrous illegality of the action. How dare the English workers attempt to live in the very homes they built. Five Communist Party leaders in London were arrested for conspiracy but are not being prosecuted. The high

court of the island issued an injunction - that happens in England too, you know - which ordered the squatters out. On September 18 the Communist Party having achieved its purpose, led the demoralized workers out of the apartments.

Bevan, however, has promised to place 20,000 families in 400 deserted army camps. The Labor government has seen it fitting and proper that workers first drafted into these camps to protect the profits of the British ruling class, should now be put back into them to increase those same profits. To the ruling class a barracks is the ideal place for workers whether it be peace or war: To the English workers, therefore adequate housing will come when British capitalism goes.

When considering the possibilities of a squatters movement here, the housing space available must be determined. In this country the ruling class maintains thousands of mansions; summer homes, winter

homes, city homes, country homes. Each one of these palaces could provide for almost a city block. In Chicago and its immediate environs there are hundreds of mansions which could accommodate an additional family or two. In addition there are thousands of 7, 8, 9 and more room apartments with sufficient room for more occupants.

Such a movement, as the English experience indicates, must be led by a strong organization. For, the movement in England and the relatively unimportant incident now taking place in Chicago reveal that this direct worker action to solve their housing emergency will bring down the wrath of the ruling class, their government and organizations and their prostitute press. In the U.S. only the trade unions (besides the Communist Party) have the strength to take this leadership; but apparently the bureaucrats in control of these organizations refuse to do so.

Nonetheless the working class, abiding in terribly cramped quarters, can recognize the justice of making the rich "move over a little", and would probably give its support to such a movement.

## U.A.W. Local 6 Wins Election, but ~ ELECTIONS DON'T BEAT THE HARVESTER CO.

So - Local 6 UAW has won! The workers at Melrose Park Harvester Plant now have an official union representing them. The election last Tuesday resulted in an overwhelming victory, 714 to 231, over the Farm Equipment Union.

LABOR VIEWS supported Local 6. Why? LABOR VIEWS' attitude has been consistently that the main enemy of the Harvester workers was not the Farm Equipment Union bureaucrats but the Harvester Company itself. The record of old Local 6 indicated a militancy which benefited ALL the workers in the plant, and if organized under its former traditions, the entire 1,110 workers who voted last Tuesday can receive the benefits of the new union in its fight against the company.

Thus, LABOR VIEWS' support to Local 6 has been conditional. And the condition has been that in Local 6 the rank-and-file will have a greater opportunity to act in their own self-interest. The job now remains for the rank-and-file to take this action.

The functioning body of rank-and-file control of the local should be committees formed by the workers in each section of the plant. These committees, taking active part in discussing their daily problems, can

formulate a program which may be brought to the floor of the local union meetings.

Following through in its tradition of vicious anti-union practices, which date all the way back to the 1800's and the Haymarket Riot, the Harvester Company is cracking the whip in the most ugly speed-up in the automotive manufacturing industry. This company will take every advantage of formal and legalistic delays. There is only one way to beat it and that is by the immediate organization of the rank-and-file for stringent, forceful measures against this monstrous outfit. Every grievance against the company

## THREE F.E. OFFICIALS SLUG LONE WORKER AT PLANT GATE

Last Tuesday at one of the parking-lot gates three hoodlums from the FE office drove up in their shiney car and attacked one man who was distributing LABOR VIEWS. They hopped out and, not satisfied with ordinary slugging, threw stones as big as grapefruit and yelled, "We'll kill you!" They threatened to run the worker down on the road.

It was seven o'clock AM and, of course, workers were not yet coming through the gate.

should be relentlessly pursued without delay. Every department should work out its new wage scales and wage demands and the entire organization should mobilize itself now against the vicious PIECE-WORK SYSTEM in the plant.

None of this program can be accomplished without a painstaking and vigorous organization among the rank-and-file of Local 6 with an eye to strike action. Aside from any other formalities, this action by the rank-and-file in the local will determine whether the Harvester workers win or lose.

The Harvester Company will not wait for formalities to increase speed-up; prices have not waited for formalities to take-off to the sky. A thousand workers strong need not waste any more time. Organize for action now!

The three goons took the LABOR VIEWS man's brief-case, and it was necessary for him to get the county police to go with him to the FE office to get this case back.

It is certain that the 200-odd workers who voted FE last Tuesday are disgusted with these hoodlum tactics on the part of those who wanted to be their "leaders".

Harry Mayz and UAW workers in the local 6 office deplored this shameful behavior.