

HUGE UPRISING SWEEPS NORTH ITALY

More Cutbacks, Layoffs Speeded By Government

With the virtual end of the war in Europe, the spreading war production cutbacks and mass unemployment will take on major scope and speed.

An intimation of what the workers face in the immediate future came last week with the ominous announcement of the impending shutdown of the huge Ford Willow Run bomber plant by August. This one layoff, spreading through numerous feeder plants, will ultimately affect several hundred thousands.

Company Retreats After Two Strikes At Kelsey-Hayes

DETROIT, April 29.—After the second strike within two weeks of over 5,500 Kelsey-Hayes workers at three plants here, the company agreed to reinstate 13 fired workers, including six committeemen and a chief steward, on orders of the regional WLB.

An unprecedented WLB ruling directing the company to rehire the six committeemen and steward, whose discharge precipitated the original nine-day walk-out, ended the first strike on April 18. Once the workers were back in the plants, the company fired 13, provoking the second strike on April 24.

A meeting of the strikers, members of Local 174, CIO United Automobile Workers, today voted to end their strike. This followed announcement of the second WLB order for reinstatement of the discharged workers and the company's statement that it would accept the order "under protest" and "only in the interest of war production."

Fears that the determined and militant stand of the Kelsey-Hayes workers might touch off a walkout in the company's 12 other plants and ignite the present explosive auto labor situation here forced the WLB to move.

IN THE NEWS

Their "Post-War Plan"

Speaking on April 18 before a meeting of the Commerce and Industry Association of New York, Inc., War Surplus Property Board Chairman Guy M. Gillette stated that certain big industry groups have urged his board to take "surplus" government goods "into the middle of the ocean and dump them" to maintain scarcity and high prices.

Hurrah! — We're Unemployed

Commenting on a previously published United Press dispatch about the closing of the Ford Willow Run bomber plant, the New York Daily, PM, April 20, explains: "Stories of the 'happiness' of the bomber workers over the projected closing of the plant were the result of interviews rigged, it appears, by the Ford Co. news bureau. Not realizing this, PM on Wednesday ran the United Press story of the interviews."

Too Hot to Handle

An NLRB collective bargaining election at Famous-Barr, biggest department store in St. Louis and fourth largest in the world, was set aside because of company interference, reports Midwest Labor World, April 11. "The NLRB found in the election case that the company ACTUALLY TOOK OVER AN NLRB ELECTION AND RAN IT, DESPITE PROTESTS FROM THE BOARD ITSELF." The union paper adds that this "first-rate news story" was not even reported in the St. Louis papers. "The biggest advertiser was the culprit, and so the story was too hot to handle."

Health Note

Multi-millionaire Gerard Swope, former president of the General Electric trust, issued a statement the other day against making public the huge salaries received by the heads of the big business concerns. Publishing such information, said Swope, "only produces envy and heartburn."

Italian Masses Settle Accounts With Mussolini



A grim warning to all fascist murderers and enemies of the workers—the bodies of Mussolini, his mistress Clara Petacci and 12 other fascists, tried and executed by Italian Partisans, lie in the dirt in the Piazza Loreto at Milan, the industrial center where the fascists committed their worst atrocities against the Italian working class.

Conference At San Francisco Will Not Ensure Future Peace For The People

By Li Fu-jen

At the San Francisco conference of the "United Nations" which opened last week with pious speeches on the need for world peace, the statesmen of the imperialist powers, together with the representatives of the Kremlin, are carrying a stage further their plans for division of the world and domination of its peoples.

With unbounded hypocrisy and cynicism, scribblers of every political hue are busy "selling" the conference to the war-weary people as a bright hope of future peace. Neither the delegates nor the reporters believe this.

Reporter Jonathan Stout, writing in the April 28 Social-Democratic New Leader, stated that "on three occasions within the first two days after we arrived, I heard with amazement delegates make the most optimistic statements about the future of the conference, and then, in private, and off the record, have had them tell me that they were hoping against hope the conference would not lay an egg."

Stout then told this revealing story: "A writer of a nationally-known syndicated column was more plain-spoken. He said he had not yet seen anything to lighten, but a great deal to deepen, his pessimism as to any really effective postwar peace organization. 'Is that the story you've written?' I asked. 'Oh no,' he replied, 'I don't dare write that story. Why not?' 'Because,' he answered, 'the people don't want to hear that story. The people so desperately want to hear that the San Francisco conference has succeeded that I cannot tell them how badly things have begun.'"

AIM TO DECEIVE

The columnist would have been accurate had he stated that he was writing as he did BECAUSE THE IMPERIALIST MANAGERS OF THE CONFERENCE WANT TO DECEIVE THE PEOPLE INTO BELIEVING THAT THEY ARE REALLY WORKING FOR PEACE AND THAT PEACE IS POSSIBLE UNDER CAPITALISM. Also, that he was writing as he did because the big-business controlled press, which deceives the people day in and day out, demands it.

The world security organization which is expected to result from the San Francisco conference can be nothing more than a revamped League of Nations. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals which the conference is expected to adopt envisage the creation, not of an organization to preserve peace, but of a political instrument of the Big Powers. Its purpose, like that of the League of Nations, will be to confirm the victorious powers in the spoils of war and to impose "peace by force" (Roosevelt's formula) on the rest of the world.

The unspoken slogan of the statesmen dominating the San Francisco conference is "Peace on Earth!" but "Woe to the Conquered!" They are bent on dismembering Germany, destroying its economic life, enslaving its people. They intend to Balkanize Europe and fasten the chains of servitude on the teeming multitudes of Asia. They plan to wage bloody war on any people who like the Greeks rise against capitalist oppression and exploitation.

As two terrible world wars have by now amply demonstrated, peace is impossible in a world of imperialist rivalries. At best, it is an uneasy interlude between wars, an interlude marked by a series of little wars.

More wars followed in quick succession. Britain, France and the United States carried on un-declared war against the Bolshevik regime in Russia. Poland and Spain fought the Riffs in North Africa. Japan invaded Manchuria. The Italian imperialists conquered Abyssinia. Japan moved into China.

This was the "peace" that exploited the people day in and day out, demands it.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The League of Nations did everything but preserve peace. During the 31 years between the close of World War I and the outbreak of World War II, more than a dozen wars were fought. In each instance the imperialist powers were the prime movers.

The League of Nations was instigated by Britain after the close of World War I, to further British policy in the Near East. The "peace-loving" British imperialists meanwhile warred on the people of Iraq and the tribes of India's northwest frontier.

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Partisans Drive Out Nazis, Execute Dictator Mussolini

Committees of National Liberation Hand Power to Allied Puppet Government in Rome

By Harry Martell

In a mighty demonstration of power the masses of northern Italy last week rose in insurrection and wiped out the remnants of the Fascist regime in its last stronghold. With Partisan fighters as the shock troops, the workers seized control of the great industrial cities in the Lombardy plain. Mussolini and his Fascist aides met the end deserved by all hated tyrants. After a summary trial they were put to death by a firing squad.

Strong Protest Wins Release of Negro Officers

The 162 Negro flying officers arrested at Freeman Field, Ind. early in April for protesting against Army segregation policies were freed on April 26, according to Leslie Perry, Washington representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Mass arrests of Negro officers of the 477th Bombardment Group followed upon their refusals to sign an endorsement of the Jim Crow plan for separate clubs for white and colored officers at Freeman Field.

Demands that charges be dropped against three Negro officers who were arrested at this same field for "jostling" a provost marshal are also being pressed by the NAACP. The charges were made after the Negro officers attempted to enter an officers' club, which had been "reserved" for white officers.

Further demands of the NAACP are that the War Department remove Major General Frank Hunter and Colonel Robert Selway from their posts and that a thorough investigation—"not a white wash" be made of the Jim Crow set-up at Freeman Field.

According to the April 28 Pittsburgh Courier, Major General Hunter was expected this week to reveal the status of the War Department's investigations into the arrests of the Negro flying officers. Because of the vigorous nation-wide protests against this Jim Crow outrage, "it was generally felt that Colonel Selway would be relieved entirely of command of the 477th."

From here on events followed a familiar pattern. The Committee of National Liberation, consisting of Stalinists, "Socialists" and Liberals, received the power which the insurgent masses had wrenched from the hands of the Fascists and Nazis—and promptly handed it over to the bankrupt Bonomi government which rules in Rome by the grace of Allied bayonets.

BIG AIRCRAFT LAYOFFS HIT BUFFALO WORKERS

By Bill Gray

BUFFALO, April 23.—This city which for several years has had mass layoffs running up to several thousand workers in the past few months. Louis J. Mayer, President of the I.A.M. District 888-AFL, recently stated that Curtiss-Wright executives had informed him that a one-third reduction in production resulting in discharge of many additional thousands of workers would go into effect any time now. The company has refused to reveal the extent of the contemplated reduction!

Numerous smaller plants making airplane parts, engines and other war products have already

declining steadily since June 1943 which marked the peak of wartime jobs in this area. Workers laid off have either left town or through the controlled Referral Plan forced to take undesirable jobs at lower wages.

2. The aircraft industry, the principal industry in this city, has already dismissed thousands of its employees and this is only the beginning. Bell Aircraft which in the summer of 1943 employed 30,000 now has less than half that number on the payroll. This corporation which in 1939 employed only a couple of thousand workers is strictly a wartime industry. Bell is now planning to close its Buffalo Plants and confine its production to the smaller Niagara Falls plant. It is not unlikely that this corporation will cease production entirely when Germany falls.

The Curtiss-Wright Corpora-

tion, the larger of the two airplane manufacturers in this area, has had mass layoffs running up to several thousand workers in the past few months. Louis J. Mayer, President of the I.A.M. District 888-AFL, recently stated that Curtiss-Wright executives had informed him that a one-third reduction in production resulting in discharge of many additional thousands of workers would go into effect any time now. The company has refused to reveal the extent of the contemplated reduction!

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Real Aim Of Campaign Around Atrocities

Now that the Allied armies have occupied large parts of Germany, the full story of the crimes and abominations of the Nazi regime is coming to light. They are being revealed in a torrent of reports and pictures in the press. Grosseome pictorial evidence of Nazi atrocities is being unreel before movie audiences.

Nazism, which rescued German capitalism from the revolutionary wrath of the German masses, now stands exposed in all its monstrous infamy. The captured Nazi concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau, Belsen and elsewhere have yielded up their ghastly secrets.

The nauseating cruelty of the Nazi barbarians has been a matter of public knowledge ever since Hitler seized power twelve years ago. Torture and death were the lot of the Jews and of all the known German workingclass opponents and other critics of Hitler and his gangsters. Victims who managed to escape abroad spread the truth. But there were many horrendous deeds not known until now.

VICTIMS OF NAZISM For long years, the "democratic" imperialist leaders were indifferent to Nazi atrocities. They treated them as an exclusively German concern — until German imperialism challenged THEIR interests. Some of them, such as Churchill, openly proclaimed their admiration for Hitler's regime. The same Churchill just as ardently praised Mussolini for "saving" Europe from Bolshevism. The American imperialists, by

means of loans and cartel agreements, helped the Nazis to consolidate their brutish rule against the German people.

Now — today — with final German defeat in sight, Nazi atrocities are being publicized with great fanfare. The Allied victors

The British Government "Discovers" Atrocities

— See Page 5 —

are exploiting the horror revelations of the concentration camps in a frenzied campaign to whip up popular hatred, not just against the Nazis, but against the German people as a whole. If the people of the "democratic" countries can be made to believe that the Germans are a nation of

sadistic beasts, they may acquiesce in the robber peace, the super-Versailles, planned for Germany. So calculate the Allied leaders.

IMPERIALIST DESIGNS These self-styled champions of democracy have openly proclaimed their intention to dismember Germany, to destroy what remains of its principal industries, to place the country under lengthy military operation. Their purpose is two-fold:

1. To make it impossible for German imperialism again to challenge its victorious rivals either in commercial competition, or in war, which is the end result of such competition.

2. To head off, and if need be crush by force of arms, any attempt of the German working class to take its destiny into its

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# A Review Of The UAW Referendum

Characterizing the recent UAW referendum on the no-strike pledge as a "mess" in which "less than one-sixth of the membership voted to support the International," an editorial in the April issue of "Hi-Flyer," official publication of UAW-CIO Local 6, Melrose Park, Ill., goes on to explain what the pledge has done to hamstringing the auto workers. We reprint the editorial below.

## LOOKING OVER THE REFERENDUM

The recent referendum on the no-strike pledge, conducted by the UAW-CIO, was one glorious mess. Final "official" figures were 63.4 per cent for retention, 35.3 per cent against and 1.3 per cent of the ballots were void.

How many thousands of those ballots were phoney, no one knows. The ballots were sent out to people on the subscription list of the United Automobile Worker, the International paper, rather than to the lists of the membership. As a result quite a few people got two, three and even five ballots, while many others got none. People who had left the UAW-CIO a year or two ago were still sent ballots. Many employers, who regularly get the paper, had ballots mailed to them, like the head of the Olds Company in Lansing, Mich. The no-strike pledge never was given a "for or against" wording, either at the convention last summer or on the ballot. The referendum committee was divided according to the Auto Worker, into three positions on the question. What three positions? If there were three positions, why wasn't the ballot so worded?

Less than one-sixth of the membership,—even if you concede everything was on the up-and-up, which is conceding a lot, voted to support the International policy of collective bargaining! Most of the other million members just showed their disgust. They're disgusted with the long run-arounds on grievances through the present government set-up; disgusted waiting for the War Labor Board to do something about raises.

Everyone knows what the attitude of the membership is on the no-strike pledge. A lot of members couldn't reconcile their feelings about the war by voting against the pledge, but at the same time they refused to vote for the no-strike pledge either. Look at the thousands of "quickie strikes" taking place throughout the country! The membership in the older locals know that you can't beg anything from General Motors, Ford or Chrysler. They've had too much experience with these babies—back in 1936, 1937 and 1939—to forget that. They knew too that the WLB is stacked 100 per cent against us. It's O.K. for instance, to bounce a guy out of a plant without asking the WLB for permission, but if a worker is fired and he wants to appeal the case he has to hold his breath for two years while the WLB or the umpire "investigates."

## The UAW Membership Want Action

If Thomas and Reuther really wanted to know what the membership thinks, the referendum proved it to the hilt. The membership is sick of the WLB, sick of the lies about "equality of sacrifice." It wants action. It needs action. Thousands of people are already being laid off in the shipyards and elsewhere. Hours are being shortened and will be shortened considerably when VE day comes around. Take-home pay is bound to fall.

And once there are a large number of unemployed, the employers, and the WLB will just sit back and thumb their noses at us. "Quit if you want to," they will say, "there's plenty more where you came from, Buddy."

That's where the no-strike policy has led us. Even the WLB admits that we've taken a licking. They claim that there's been a rise in the cost of living of some 30 per cent, but a rise in wages of only 20 per cent. Doesn't that mean we've taken a 10 per cent wage cut? Why should we have taken such a cut when the profits of the big corporations are four times as large as they were four years ago? Where's that "equality of sacrifice"? Everyone knows, of course, that the cost of living has gone up more than 30 per cent. Try to wear a pair of \$10 shoes one-half the time you used to wear one of those old Tom McAn's. Try that quality on all merchandise. And remember the black market and much higher taxes. The cost of living has probably doubled. But wages have gone up only 20 per cent. That's where the no-strike pledge took us. We took a CUT IN PAY.

The no-strike pledge is responsible for such fascist measures as "work or jail"; it is responsible for the dictatorial freeze of jobs and all the other monkeyshines we've been given under the lying excuse of "war emergency."

We'll never get anywhere on the policy of begging—except possibly begging on the breadline or selling apples in the street. The rank and file of our local and all other locals must work together to see that we go back to some good old-fashioned union militancy and union collective BARGAINING (not begging).

No-strike means no wages and no decent conditions. Let's rescind the no-strike pledge at the next convention, or better yet, this coming year—that's still the best advice we workers can take.

## Workers Answer Provocations By Five Strikes In Allentown

ALLENTOWN, Pa., April 27—Five strikes in the last four days is the answer of the union workers here to the stalling and chiseling tactics of some of the leading Allentown employers.

On Monday, April 23, the entire No. 4 assembly plant of the Mack Truck Manufacturing Corporation went on strike when the company refused to settle a seven-week old grievance. The next day some 3,000 members of Local 677, CIO United Automobile Workers, at eight Mack plants, three warehouses and two maintenance shops were out in solidarity and in protest against the WLB-company delays on classification grievances and contracts.

Members of Local 2806, CIO United Steel Workers, went on strike at the J. F. Grammes & Sons plant against payment of substandard wages. Protesting a contract sent to the WLB containing no agreement on wages and vacations, Local 2806 President Andrievich reported present starting rates of 45 cents for women and 50 cents for men. The company provides only one week's vacation for those with less than 10 years' seniority and two weeks for over ten years' seniority.

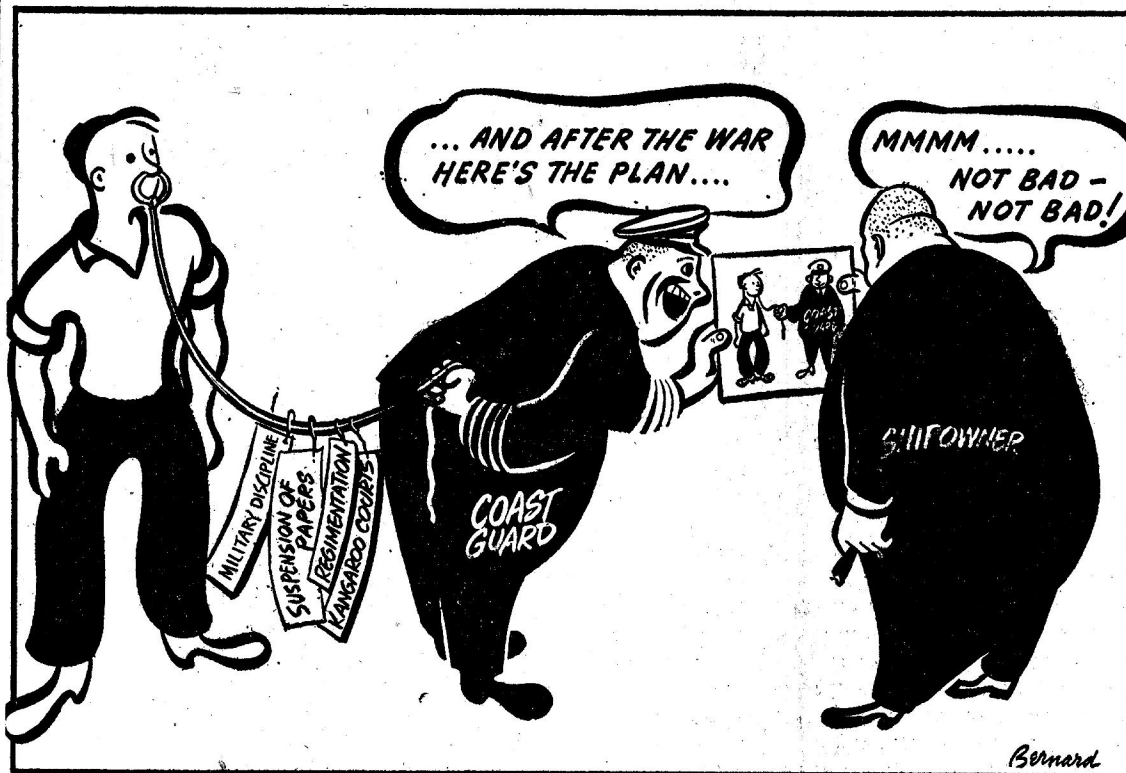
The workers at all General Ribbon mills are out. The strike was called when the company refused to recognize the CIO Textile Workers as their bargaining agency, and continued to deal with a company union, the Central Shipping Employees Organization. The TWU on December 8, 1944 won an NLRB collective bargaining election by a 51 to one majority.

A strike of Local 2442, CIO Steel Workers, was precipitated by the Aldrich Pump Company over the issue of vacations for returned veterans, according to the union's president, Martin S. Fullenback. The company has refused the union's demand for vacations to veterans who have not worked at least 60 per cent of the year ending June 1.

The maintenance workers at the Allentown plant of Consolidated Vultee are also on strike. None of the daily papers here has so far printed a line about this strike. It is evident the employers and their press are anxious to suppress all information about this strike and its issues.

This strike was precipitated when the company transferred 10 workers seven weeks ago from the assembly line to experimental work on commercial buses in a different plant. Instead of put-

## Preparing 'Post-War Plan' for Seamen



Reprinted by courtesy of "Seafarers' Log".

## Shipowners Plan Post-War Military Control of Seamen

By Art Sharon

Brass hats of the United States Coast Guard are determined to extend their domination over the merchant seamen. Given jurisdiction for the duration through an executive order, they and their shipowner sponsors have now begun a campaign to maintain their military stranglehold in the "post-war" period.

Last week the Coast Guard called a public hearing on their proposal to transfer all functions of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation from the Department of Commerce to the U. S. Coast Guard. Present at this hearing were "Blackie" Meyers and Joe Stack, Stalinist spokesmen for the National Maritime Union, Winocur of the Radio Operators, John Hawk of the Seafarers International Union and several shipowners' representatives.

As expected, the Stalinist finks and shipowners went into raptures over the Coast Guard proposals. Only Hawk, representative of the SIU, fulfilled the elementary obligation of a union representative to oppose this ominous plan. The SIU served notice on the Coast Guard and the shipowners that if they went ahead with this plan and attempted to get Congress to make it law the SIU would call upon the entire labor movement for support in "smashing a military plot."

## COAST GUARD "GESTAPO"

The shipowners want military control as one more weapon in their hands against militant unionism. The Stalinist support it for essentially the same reason. Rank and file seamen of all unions have had a bellyful of military control during the war, of "kangaroo courts," arbitrary suspension of their seamen's papers, and other "Gestapo" methods.

The Coast Guard has waged a continuous campaign to break down the elementary solidarity existing between shipmates. Coming aboard ship when it docks, they pass quietly around picking up all loose gossip of possible "friction" between departments or between men and their officers. They induce young and inexperienced seamen to relate all that takes place on the trip in an effort to carry out their snooping function.

Needless to add they put their weight behind many a bucko mate or labor-hating skipper. The Coast Guard "Gestapo" has earned the hatred of union seamen everywhere.

## Chicago Buick Local 6 Votes For Strike Poll

By Mike Bartell

CHICAGO, April 17.—At a huge protest mass meeting at the Lion's hall here yesterday noon, 5,000 members of Buick Local 6, CIO United Automobile Workers, voted overwhelmingly by secret ballot to petition for an NLRB strike vote under the Smith-Connelly Act. Over 87 per cent of the ballots favored strike action.

The plant management expressed "surprise" in a press statement about the "unusual" amount of "absenteeism" on the day of the mass meeting — when 5,000 of the 6,000 workers on the day shift failed to report for work. But the workers—and the company—knew why they were "absent."

They were at the greatest labor protest demonstration in this city since Pearl Harbor. Buick workers were jammed into every square inch of space at the meeting hall to prepare a program of militant action against the company's repeated deliberate provocations. These provocations were climaxed by the firing of a union district committeeman. This finally touched off the explosive protest.

## COMPANY MOVES

At Buick, as throughout the automotive industry, the company in the past months has adopted a "tough" policy designed to beat down and undermine the union. The management contemptuously refused to settle the grievances pouring into the union's shop committee at an unprecedented rate. Only two out of 100 grievances were settled satisfactorily.

To all intents and purposes the contractual seniority and upgrading provisions have been voided. The company finally "bargained" with the shop committee by sending in only "office boys" without authority except to say "no" to all the committee's demands.

The company then made its next move—the firing of a committeeman on the pretext that he had refused to accept an arbitrary transfer into another plant district at pay below the scale for the job. He accepted the transfer the first day. But as the elected representative of the workers in his district, he justifiably refused on the second day to leave his own district. He was laid off a day, and then fired on the third day. The whole company action was clearly premeditated.

But the workers didn't just fold up under this blow. At the protest meeting yesterday, the aisles were jammed from the platform to the back walls. Workers were hanging in through the windows and thousands listened to the speeches over the sound truck outside. So aroused and defiant were the rank and file, that not even the finky Stalinists dared voice opposition to a strike vote. No one mentioned the no-strike pledge. No one waved the flag. The representatives of the International union were very conspicuous by their absence—this potato was a bit too hot for them to handle.

The solidarity between the Negro and white workers was inspiring. It was demonstrated when a report came in that a restaurant in the building was discriminating against the colored brothers. A roar of protest greeted this and a motion to boycott the restaurant was passed unanimously.

Only one sour note crept into this militant demonstration. The local leaders weakened under company pressure, despite their profession of a progressive program at the union's last elections. They posted bulletins throughout the plant at the last moment, late Saturday afternoon, which gave the impression that the workers were not to meet in a body at Monday noon as already announced, but would dribble into the meeting hall all afternoon and evening after their shifts. This caused considerable confusion, but the demonstration was a tremendous success in spite of it.

Events at Chicago Buick follow the pattern of the offensive against the auto locals everywhere. It is part of a conspiracy to smash the giant UAW. But Local 6 has a militant and progressive tradition. This was most recently shown when it unanimously rejected the new General Motors contract which contained no basic gains.

## It Pays to Advertise

General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, the Big Three of the automotive industry, have fought against giving so much as a penny wage increase to their workers.

But last year although they had no consumer's goods to sell the combined advertising outlay of these three corporations was \$20,000,000. In 1942 it was only \$8,000,000.

These advertising sums are charged off against business expenses and are deductible from federal taxes. That's like spending \$20,000,000 to propagandize monopoly "free enterprise" out of the pockets of the tax-paying consumers.

Among the most recent advertising expenditures of General Motors were full page ads in all the leading newspapers attacking the WLB decision granting collective bargaining rights to foremen.

on the UAW executive board to withdraw its members immediately from the WLB, and keep off all similar boards in the future. It called on the union's GM Council to petition for an NLRB strike poll in all GM plants to win a satisfactory contract.

## Cleveland Diesel Local 207 Turns Down GM Contract

By B. Kingsley

CLEVELAND, April 15 — The Cleveland Diesel workers today voted unanimously against ratification of the new General Motors contract which Walter Reuther, CIO United Automobile Workers vice-president and director of the union's vast GM division, had termed a "substantial victory."

This action was taken at a special membership meeting of all three shifts of Diesel Local 207. This contract, presented to the GM workers after two years of negotiations and WLB hearings, was opposed because it contains no wage increases and only a few pittance contractual concessions designed to help pacify the increasingly rebellious rank and file.

## REASONS FOR REJECTION

The action of the Cleveland Diesel local was in line with the similar decision of Electro-Motive Division Local 719, Chicago, Ill., which in a statement sent here and to all other GM locals reported it had completely rejected the contract. Reflecting the views of the GM workers here, the Local 719 letter declared:

"1. A contract without a wage increase in a period of inflated living costs is incomplete and only half a contract; and

"2. The changes in the WLB directive order on the new contract still leave the document heavily weighted in the interests of the corporation and leaves the union in a woefully weak position."

Another resolution, received from Buick Local 6, Chicago, calls on the UAW international executive board for an "immediate strike vote." It further demands "that the International Executive Board quit stalling and withdraw its members from the WLB im-

## Diary of a STEEL WORKER

By Theodore Kovalesky

Spring has come to the steel plants. It has also come to the Loop, Park Ave., and Lake Placid, but that's a different story.

All winter long, we have shivered in our freezing sweat up on the furnace floors, wondering if it would ever end. We have gotten up long before dawn and trudged to work through the drifted snow, elbowed our way through the moaning, shrieking winds that lacerated our faces and numbed our hands and feet. We have sat in stuffy, dim-lighted buses that struggled and bumped over the snowy roads in the darkness of early morning. And we have worked for an hour or two at the beginning of each day shift before the cold gray morning light grew strong enough for us to see.



And all winter long, there have been new men from time to time on the furnace gangs, taking the places of workers who lay home in their beds with pneumonia. Sometimes the new men stayed on the jobs. We thought it could never end.

Then, somehow or other, it came. The snow in the yard began to melt. The yard was no longer white with black tracks cut into it where the engines pulled the lades in and out. The yard became reddish-brown once more, and the sun dried up the pools of dirty water and began to bake the red-brown mud into a hard crust that scuffed up when you walked on it and powdered your shoes. The bitterness sifted out of the wind, and life became good for a little time.

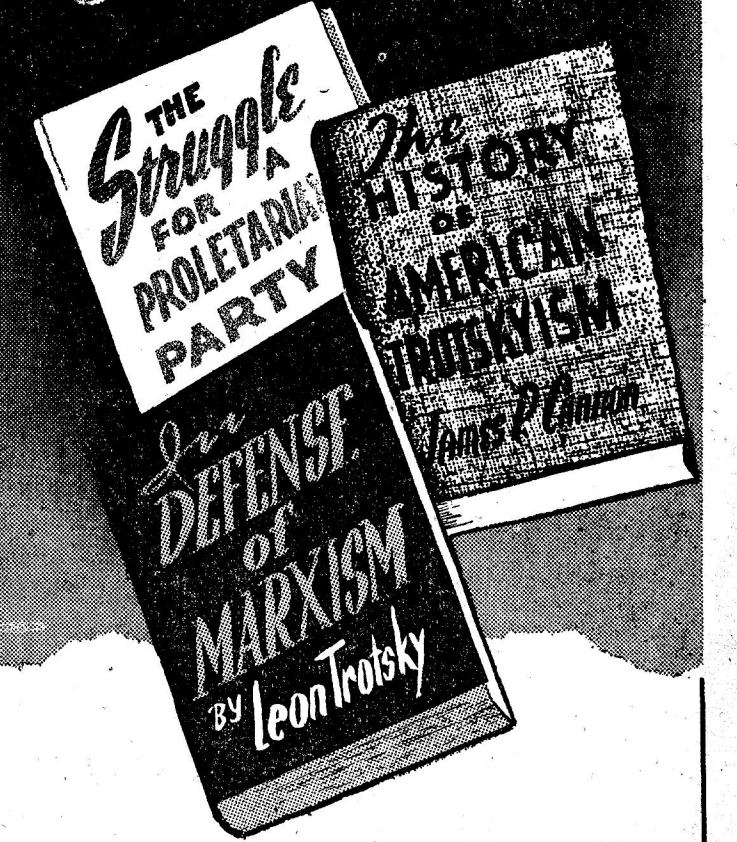
On the first clear, warm day of this spring, you could see the shore line of the lake for miles as it curved around past the steel plant. I watched it out of the bus window as we sped along toward the smoky haze and spotty flares of the plant. Far, far away I saw what looked like thick green forests covering the hills. In the vagueness of the distance, I thought I could see cliffs that swooped down into the breakers of the lake. And suddenly an overwhelming discontent swept over me, and I was filled with a longing that said, "Don't go. Don't get off the bus at the steel mill. Go on, far away into the distance where the forest is green and the sunlight flutters down through the shifting leaves and dances on the warm earth. In the forest there is a deep, green pool where the stream widens in the rocks, and the fish are biting. The sun is warm on the hill, and the breeze is soft. Don't go to work on the furnace on such a day as this."

## A Worker's Longing for Freedom

The bus sped down the concrete highway. Number 1 furnace slipped and fogged the bright air with great clouds of flue dust. Over at the coke oven the little clusters of orange-yellow fire jerked angrily. A locomotive hooted as we drew near. The men standing in the aisles lurched against each other as the bus slowed down and stopped at the gate. I got up scowling and left the bus. As I walked through the gate, the breeze fanned my face, and again I felt the longing for the hills and the trees, the longing for freedom from the everlasting grind. But I kept on going over the tracks, up the road to the locker room and the furnace.

I thought of the Loop and Park Ave. and Lake Placid. And I knew that there were people there who could know the spring-time as I never could; because when spring's longing came upon them, they could go out into the forests . . . while I went to work on the furnace.

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