

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

Vol. XII — No. 18

NEW YORK, N. Y., MONDAY, MAY 3, 1948

PRICE: FIVE CENTS

Randolph's Proposals And the War Question

— See Page 3 —

KANSAS OUTRAGE--A WARNING TO LABOR!

Union - Busting Cops Told to 'Crack Skulls'

Forty-five union men and women were brutally clubbed to the ground and the union hall of the CIO United Packinghouse Workers in Kansas City, Kansas, was invaded and wrecked on April 23 by blood-crazed police under orders to "crack skulls."

This unprovoked assault on the Kansas City packinghouse strikers is the most savage outburst of police violence against labor since the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre against the Little Steel strikers.

The Kansas City police attack was premeditated. Prior to the assault more than 100 police massed near strike pickets at the Cudahy plant's main gate were called together by Police Captain Eli Dahlin, who commanded them:

"CRACK SKULLS"

"You are to crack skulls if they ask for it, no matter who they are. That means strike leaders and all, even a member of the city's legal staff if he interferes."

The latter reference was to James H. Barnes, Assistant City Attorney and also union legal representative, who had previously protested police violations of the rights of pickets.

Without warning, the police charged in a body on the defenseless pickets, mercilessly flailing them. In a few moments, 45 persons, streaming blood from scalp and face wounds, lay on the ground. More than a hundred strikers suffered blows. Ten were sent to the hospital. Even news photographers, attempting to take pictures of the attack, were beaten and one sent to the hospital.

As the sadistic cops belabored fallen workers with their clubs, they screamed: "Go back to work and get off the streets." Pickets ran toward the union hall, diagonally across from the Cudahy gate, with police in pursuit.

DEMOLISHED HALL

At the hall, the police broke in the door and began to smash up everything breakable, including the heads of workers. The latter, among them screaming women, jumped from windows to escape the murderous police clubs. The walls were soon spattered with blood, glass strewn all over, chairs reduced to kindling.

Police later claimed they found "six weapons" in the hall—a sawed-off billiard cue, a broom stick with a nail, an iron bolt, a mallet and a three-foot stick. Ralph M. Baker, UPWA district director, said that police claims about strikers' "resistance" and "weapons" were "absolutely false" and a "cover-up for acts that would make Hitler's Gestapo and Stalin's GPU look like Boy Scouts."

The legal pretext for the attack was a local ordinance against mass picketing. After the attack, the District court issued an injunction against "illegal" picketing. Police cleared the streets of

MEAT BARONS USE VIOLENCE AGAINST STRIKERS

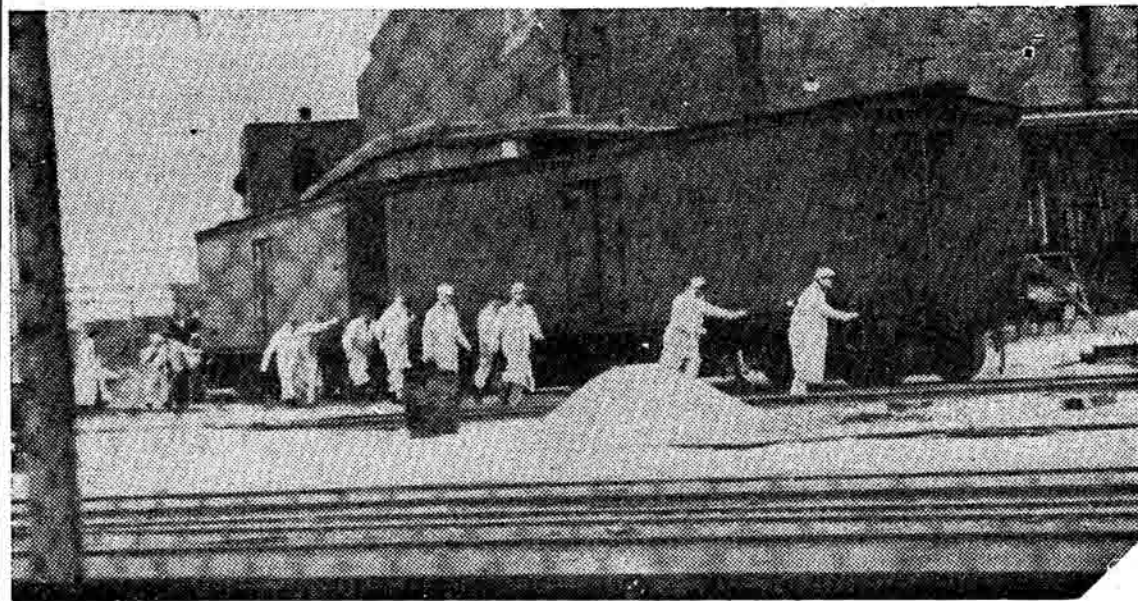
— See story on page 4 —

persons for two blocks. Even business places were entered and all customers driven out.

The Kansas City outrage clinches a growing wave of violence by police and company strike-breakers in the packinghouse centers. In Chicago last week, a striker was murdered by a strike-breaker who ran him down with an Armour truck. These assaults accompanied company moves to operate plants after Truman's "fact-finding" committee said meat trust offers of 9-cents an hour were "substantial."

Ralph Helstein, UPWA president, has appealed to Attorney General Clark for an investigation into the "brutal and wanton beating" of the Kansas City strikers and invasion of their hall. At this writing, four days after the outrage, the CIO national headquarters has not said a word.

Scab Squad



A Kansas City strike-breaking crew shoves meat-loaded freight cars across picket lines after railway terminal workers refused to do the job. The CIO United Packinghouse Workers report, however, that the packers' back-to-work movement has been a flop. Federated Pictures

Big Steel Leads Attack On CIO Wage Demands

By Art Preis

Acting on the basis of a unified strategy, America's most powerful corporations have almost simultaneously rejected the "third round" wage demands of the biggest CIO unions.

U.S. Steel Corporation sounded the general offensive of Big Business on April 22. Benjamin Fairless, head of the largest steel combine, announced that it would not grant any wage increases to the steel workers.

The leading corporations in the steel, auto, electrical equipment, meat packing and maritime industries have turned thumbs down on wage raises or withdrawn previous offers of small increases. The first indication of the Big Business plans to challenge the

CIO's wage demands came on March 3, when General Electric announced it would deny all wage requests of the CIO electrical workers.

At that time, The Militant sharply warned that this heralded a general "Get Tough" policy by the major corporations. We attacked the false and deceptive rumors emanating from CIO top circles, and particularly Murray's steel union headquarters, that the corporations were ready to make "concessions."

The wage situation in the major CIO-organized industries is as follows:

STEEL: U.S. Steel, generally considered the pace-setter in Big Business industrial policy on April 22 issued a public declaration in the

midst of recently-opened union negotiations, to the effect that wage raises are denied and price cuts amounting to 25 million dollars annually would begin May 1.

Since Fairless had admitted to a Senate committee in February that a price increase then put into effect by U.S. Steel would boost profits \$28,433,190, the new reductions still would not offset the previous price advance. Actually, a 25 million dollar price cut equals only 1.2% of the 1947 sales volume of 2.1 billion dollars.

This "picayune" price cut, as Murray termed it, was obviously advanced as a gesture to cover the wage turn-down. Increased volume, through war production, is expected to boost steel profits far beyond what the temporary price cut might cost.

Murray promptly called the top steel union officials together. They deplored the fact that U.S. Steel was not acting in "good faith" and pointed to the company's huge 1947 net profits of 153 million dollars.

ON THE CHIN

Their only answer, however, to the contemptuous action of the steel barons was to renew a pledge to "live up to the current two-year, no-strike contract," which expires next April, and to leave the wage issue up to "the forum of public opinion." That means, to leave the steel workers to take it on the chin for another year.

Promptly following the action of Big Steel, the key Little Steel companies, Bethlehem, Republic, Youngstown Sheet & Tube and Jones & Laughlin, proclaimed a similar no-wage-increase policy.

AUTO: Chrysler Corporation, which had previously met the demand of the CIO United Auto Workers for a 30-cent raise with a 6-cent counter-offer, withdrew even this insulting offer on the announcement of U.S. Steel's wage policy. General Motors, largest auto corporation, has refused to make the union any offer at all. To frighten its workers, GM announced one-week layoffs for 200,000 workers.

Chrysler officials had said that the auto workers did not need raises in view of recent tax reductions. It is estimated that Chrysler's rate of profit on investments would be 14 1/2% annually even after granting a 30-cent an hour wage increase.

STRIKE VOTE

A delegated conference of UAW Chrysler locals has voted for strike action if the company does not meet their demands. The UAW International executive board has sanctioned this action.

The UAW national officers on April 23 declared: "We want to remind employees who might be tempted to take comfort from the steel negotiations that automobiles are not made by steel workers. They are made by auto workers and auto workers are

(Continued on page 4)

Watchword for Unions Must Be: United Action

By The Editors

The labor movement is face to face with the greatest threat to its existence since the establishment of the CIO. This is the plain unvarnished truth and everyone should wake up to it.

The present offensive of Big Business—hand in hand with all the agencies and divisions of the government—the courts, the police, right up to the Chief Executive himself—threatens nothing less than a return to the "good old days," the pre-CIO dark ages of union-busting, strike-breaking and the open shop.

The Wall Street plutocracy has grown so bold and so swollen with arrogance, it dares use large scale violence against the unions for the first time since the Little Steel Strike of 1937.

This violence has gone to unheard of lengths. The unions' very right to existence is challenged when Kansas City cops, under orders to "crack skulls," can get away with an armed invasion of the CIO Packinghouse Workers' headquarters.

The Kansas City outrage is no passing or isolated incident. It climaxes the premeditated, planned and growing nation-wide assault on the unions. It is part of the pattern of a merciless class war organized by capital to beat down and crush labor.

CORPORATIONS AND THEIR SERVANTS

This war, constantly increasing in ferocity and broadening in its scope, was conceived and organized by the billionaire corporations. It is being spearheaded by the federal government itself, which is bombarding the unions with the Taft-Hartley Law. It is aided and abetted by the courts which are handing out strike-breaking injunctions right and left. It is being enforced by the police who are out in full force "cracking skulls" and inviting scabs and strikebreakers to walk through the picket lines.

Small wonder that under these circumstances the profit-bloated corporations, led by U.S. Steel, General Motors, Chrysler, Westinghouse, General Electric, contemptuously toss the CIO's wage demands into the waste basket. Acting in open concert, they spit upon the biggest unions in the land.

This is a far cry from two years ago. Then the workers were on the picket lines millions strong. THEN THE CORPORATIONS HAD TO EAT HUMBLE PIE AND MAKE SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS. Then the cops had to talk politely to pickets. Then Washington had to tread easily and mouth conciliatory phrases.

What has changed since then? Are the unions smaller, weaker, their ranks dismembered, their treasuries insolvent? Not at all. Has a feeble breed of union men and women replaced the fighters of two years ago? Nothing of the kind. The magnificent combative qualities of the American working class remains unimpaired, as shown by the miners, packinghouse workers, typographical workers, and even the Wall Street white collar strikers, who have spilled their blood on the very steps of the Stock Exchange.

RETREAT, APPEASEMENT, SURRENDER

The unrestrained and savagery of the present anti-labor offensive is the pay-off of the union leaders' policy of retreat, appeasement, and surrender. It is the price the workers are paying because their leaders have run to cover ever since Truman smashed the railroad strike and opened war on the miners in June 1946. These leaders gave up the wage fight in the spring of 1947 for a few crumbs.

SWP in Flint Surpasses Quota On Petitions

By Emmett Moore

FLINT, April 26—The Flint Socialist Workers Party terminated its petition campaign this week after successfully obtaining its quota of 5,000 signatures. Signed petitions were also mailed in from Genesee, Bay and Saginaw Counties.

Operating under many handicaps, the comrades surmounted them by turning on extra heat in the last few days. In the latter part of the campaign, police in Saginaw and Flint attempted to intimidate circulators of petitions.

When questioned by Genora Dollinger, chairman of the Flint SWP, police and the city officials admitted there were no ordinances against obtaining of signatures. However, from time to time they placed handicaps in the SWP drive by picking up circulators and telling them to move from factory gates on grounds that they were "blocking traffic."

One radio broadcast falsely asserted that the SWP was obtaining signatures "under false pretenses." When police were questioned with regard to alleged complaints, the SWP representatives were informed that none had been lodged against the SWP. Obviously this was only a move to make it more difficult for a real workers' party to get on the ballot.

Although the SWP started late, it finished its campaign before the Wallaceites, and Communist, Socialist and Socialist Labor parties. Moreover, the SWP obtained several thousands more signatures than the other organizations.

Police Convert Reuther Case into Witch-Hunt

The Detroit police department, notoriously anti-union and anti-Negro, has converted its alleged search for the assassin of Walter Reuther, CIO Auto Workers president, into a witch-hunt against oppositionists inside the union, "reds" and Negro unionists.

Operating under many handicaps, the comrades surmounted them by turning on extra heat in the last few days. In the latter part of the campaign, police in Saginaw and Flint attempted to intimidate circulators of petitions.

When questioned by Genora Dollinger, chairman of the Flint SWP, police and the city officials admitted there were no ordinances against obtaining of signatures. However, from time to time they placed handicaps in the SWP drive by picking up circulators and telling them to move from factory gates on grounds that they were "blocking traffic."

One radio broadcast falsely asserted that the SWP was obtaining signatures "under false pretenses." When police were questioned with regard to alleged complaints, the SWP representatives were informed that none had been lodged against the SWP. Obviously this was only a move to make it more difficult for a real workers' party to get on the ballot.

Although the SWP started late, it finished its campaign before the Wallaceites, and Communist, Socialist and Socialist Labor parties. Moreover, the SWP obtained several thousands more signatures than the other organizations.

At the same time, the Board stated that it had "received no concrete information that would form the basis of charges and accusations." It said emphatically: "We discount the implications that this assault grew out of internal-union disputes." It added:

"We want also, with the greatest emphasis, to caution all of our members against permitting themselves to be led into any kind of hasty and ill-advised action

tion, have been hauled in by the police.

The most scandalous treatment was accorded Nelson Davis, a prominent Negro unionist in the Ford Local 600 and an acknowledged follower of the Communist (Stalinist) Party. The 52-year-old Negro worker was held for questioning for two days on an alleged "hot tip" which the police claimed they had received from a mysterious "Mr. X" whom the police refused to produce. They claimed their unnamed "informant" had heard Davis say he knew who was behind the shooting. Davis was at work when the attack occurred. He was finally released, under \$2,000 bond, through a writ of habeas corpus.

"TOLEDO INFORMER"

Another Negro UAW member, Frank van Hook, was arrested and held for hours and his home was entered and searched on the police claim that he had been picked out of line-up by an unidentified "Toledo informer" as the man who allegedly said he would "shoot Reuther on sight" at the UAW convention. Van Hook, the records show, voted for Reuther. Shelton Tappes and Hodges Mason, leading UAW Negroes, have also been grilled.

Police Commissioner Harry S. Toy, who is leading the witch-hunt, was police commissioner in 1932 when police perpetrated the massacre of Ford workers. Recently Toy said that "communists" should be "either shot, deported or jailed" in a lynch-inciting anti-Semitic radio speech.

Dozens of UAW members, particularly those associated with the wide-spread opposition to Reuther at the last UAW conven-

tion, have been hauled in by the police.

tion, have been hauled in by the police.



WALTER REUTHER

