



News Letter

Local 28, United Federal Workers of America (C.I.O.)

Vol. 2, No. 5

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

May 1940

BILL INTRODUCED FOR 5-DAY, 35-HOUR WEEK

UFWA Working for Saturday off Without
Lengthened Day or Reduction in Pay

Federal employees' chances of getting a 5-day, 35-hour week — at least during the summer months — are taking definite shape. Over 40,000 Government workers have signed petitions circulated by UFWA locals in support of the Mead-McCormack Bill, permitting the establishment of 5-day working weeks for the whole year, or any part of it, in federal departments. Introduced by Senator Mead of New York, the bill provides that the President by executive order may establish the 5-day week in agencies where no extra cost to the taxpayer is involved. It would mean Saturdays off without any increase of hours on the other five days or decrease in pay for workers on an hourly basis.

Studies by industrial psychologists have shown that improved morale and better physical condition enable workers to turn out as much work in five days as they formerly did in six. In industry the five-day week has meant a considerable cut in maintenance costs. Even Washington department stores close on Saturdays throughout the summer.

Finally, the five-day week has already demonstrated its efficiency in the Government Printing Office, the local Navy Yard and several agencies in the field.

Success of UFWA efforts now depends largely upon the support of federal workers in the attempt to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. Mr. MacLeish has given permission for petitions in support of the Mead-McCormack Bill to be circulated in the Library. We urge all employees to sign promptly and to write their Congressmen soliciting support of the measure.

A strong union protects your living.

THE IRRESPONSIBLES

by Archibald MacLeish

(From The Nation, May 18, 1940)

History will have one question to ask of our generation: Why did the scholars and the writers of our generation in this country, witnesses as they were to the destruction of writing and of scholarship in great areas of Europe and to the exile and the imprisonment and the murder of men whose crime was scholarship and writing — witnesses also to the rise in their own country of the same destructive forces ... fail to oppose those forces while they could — while there was still time to oppose them with the arms of scholarship and writing?

The historians will discover ... that the scholars and the writers of our generation in this country had been warned of danger as men were rarely warned before... And it will seem to them strange that the great mass of American scholars and American writers made no effort to defend either themselves or the world by which they lived ... And they will ask their question: Why did we who had been warned of our danger ... not fight this danger while the weapons we used best — the weapons of words and ideas — could still be used against it?

The scholar digs his ivory cellar in the ruins of the past and lets the present sicken as it will.

WALL STREET'S CURE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

"Ten million potential workers and a total of possibly 30,000,000 people are outside the circle of work, production and income. They are not only a burden — they are an economic loss. To speak with grim realism, the country would be relatively prosperous if they were annihilated." — Magazine of Wall Street, March 16, 1935, page 649.

CIO WINS VICTORIES DESPITE HARD TIMES

UNION ACTION SAVES WORKERS \$1,830,000

When the story of American labor during The Great Depression is written, one of its outstanding features will be the success of the CIO not only in blocking the lowering of working conditions that usually occurs at such times, but in winning notable victories over some of the bitterest enemies of labor.

Foremost among these demonstrations of the militant spirit and inherent power of industrial unionism, as compared with medieval craft "divisionism," will stand the triumphant outcome of the epic strike of the Newspaper Guild against Hearst's two Chicago newspapers. After 17 months of heroic struggle, in which the violence and corruption resorted to by the Hearst machine were met by an inspiring wall of labor solidarity from coast to coast, the management capitulated last month and signed a contract with the union, reinstating 115 of the strikers and giving a "separation allowance" averaging \$500 apiece to those whose jobs had been abolished by the merger of the two newspapers.

This victory led immediately to another of even wider significance. On May 16 negotiations were started in New York looking to a blanket agreement with the CIO union covering all the Hearst papers in the country. This is the first time that a publisher has sought a contract for an entire chain of newspapers.

Another "first" was chalked up when the Guild obtained from the Associated Press the first union contract that that powerful organization has ever consented to sign covering its editorial staff. The newspaper men are showing other white-collar workers how to do it. Given the right structure and tactics, labor solidarity is bound to win.

The UAW election in 59 General Motors plants in 11 states last month brought another signal victory for the CIO, which received 63 percent of the 138,027 votes cast and won control of 48 plants.

In Macy's huge department store in New York, the 2500 warehouse, receiving and delivery employees, who had the good sense last year to form a CIO union, have just secured a renewal of their contract, with a \$250,000 wage increase and provision for the closed shop.

What can be done for government workers by a vigorous local union backed by nearly four million industrial workers was clearly shown last month when the pay of Veterans working at Veterans Administration facilities was in effect raised \$15 per month by the reduction of compulsory GSE charges. This action was the result of a long drive by the UAWA to eliminate abuses connected with compulsory deductions for "GSE" - quarters, subsistence and laundry.

Veterans employed at various Administration facilities are permitted to live off the station, but heretofore have had to pay for three meals a day at \$10.50 a month. By an order effective May 1, the number of compulsory meals was reduced to one, at \$7.50 a month. About \$1,830,000 annually will thus be added to the pay of these employees.

The UAWA drive is behalf of the Head-Smash-Bell abolishing compulsory GSE is credited with having decided Gen Hines, the Veterans administrator, to issue the order. The same union had already won the 8-hour day for these workers.

Encouraged by this success, the UAWA is working with redoubled determination to obtain the same two concessions for marine hospital employees, for whom it has already won notable improvements in working conditions.

WELCOME TO THE RECREATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Local 28 hails the formation of the LC Recreational Association as a heartening indication of the growth of an esprit de corps that can be traced to the revitalizing influence of the present liberation. Any undertaking that tends to develop a feeling of solidarity and a realization of our common interests cannot fail to be of benefit to the staff and to the institution. Too long has the library profession been cursed with the tradition of narrow individualism. As fellow workers in a common enterprise, we have everything to gain from working together on any sound basis. In union of every sort there is strength.

"The cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy."

LC HAS PROMISE TOO

As July 1 approaches - the date when, it is hoped, 130 added positions on the LC staff will become available - there is growing concern as to how thoroughly the principle of promotions from within will be followed in filling these positions. This principle has been heartily endorsed by Mr. Macleish in his conferences with the union and is recognized by all authorities on personnel management as one of the indispensable bases of a sound personnel policy.

Notwithstanding the Librarian's endorsement of this method of filling vacancies, however, there have been a number of disappointing indications that his enlightened attitude on this basic question is not as yet shared by all those under him. We have in mind especially one large division, where several positions have been filled recently in utter disregard of the right of those already on the staff to be considered. We sincerely hope that Mr. Macleish will take the necessary precautions to ensure that this shortsighted and unfair practice is discontinued and that his progressive views on the matter are accepted as the rule in LC employment policy.

In cases where there is no member of the staff qualified for a position, or who could be trained to it with a little supervisory instruction, there can be no objection to the job going to an outsider, but to bring in people from outside and jump them over the heads of workers entitled to promotion breeds discontent and adds to the labor turnover. Many of the desk attendants, for example, were given to understand, in apology for the inadequate salaries offered them, that they could look forward to promotion but many of them have become weary of waiting for the promise to be made good, and not a few of them have seen outsiders put in above them or newcomers jumped over their heads.

If handled in accord with the policy of promotions from within, the 130 new positions might well mean advancement for more than that number of present employees through saving up all down the line. This would serve as an incentive in the lower ranks, where encouragement is most needed.

UNION MEMBERS GET COST OF LIFE INSURANCE

Important advantages in the purchase of life insurance have been secured for members of UPWA through the bargaining power of the large membership of the union. With the assistance of experts, a policy has been drawn up which Congress Union declares to be the best buy on the market. There is no discrimination on account of race or sex, and no medical examination is required of applicants under 45 for policies not over \$5,000.

UPWA policies are based on the principle that it is best to buy only insurance from an insurance company and to keep one's savings in a savings institution. The increased cost of the savings features of the usual policy is generally a waste of money, since only the face of the policy is paid at death. Had the money been put in a savings bank, it would have accumulated and been available for the benefit of the survivors.

UPWA life insurance offers a choice of two types of policy, "Natural Premium" and "Dollar a Month." Under the former, the cost, starting at \$7.83 per \$1,000 at 21 years of age, rises a few cents each year, at the same time as earning power presumably increases. These rates are far below those of the ordinary type of policy.

Dollar a Month policies provide \$1,000 of insurance for each dollar up to 34 years of age, \$950 up to 45 and \$800 up to fifty-one.

UPWA insurance is thoroughly protected by government supervision and full legal reserves. For further information, see Cogan Kelley, main reading room.

In recognition of her work in behalf of the staff luncheons, Mary Fae Costello, chairman of the committee on arrangements, was presented with a bouquet and an expression of appreciation at the luncheon on May 14th, at which Mrs. Kent Keller, chairman of the Committee on the Library, spoke after being introduced by Mr. Macleish. The luncheon series will be resumed when the cafeteria reopens at the end of the summer.

Chemists are now advising low-income families in this country to eat grass, which they claim is rich in vitamins.

LIFE AND WORKS OF...

LIFE AND LABOR IN LATIN AMERICA

Dr. SHANE was one of the sponsors of an "International Ball" given on May 11th by the Washington International Club.

Dr. A. V. HENDEL, chief of the Orientalia Division, lectured at George Washington University on May 8th on "The Far East and the Culture of the Future."

MILTON K. FLEISS, Jr., and HARRY FOLEY, both attendants, were among those present at the luncheon tendered to Mrs. Roosevelt May 14th by the faculty of the Federal Reserve School.

DAVID B. WALK, of the Cooperative Cataloging and Classification Service, led a remarkable discussion of the current best-seller, *Native Son*, by Richard Wright, at the Bookshop on May 8th.

Col. MARTIN, chief of the Map Division read a paper before the American Science Congress in Washington early this month, in which he reported on an old logbook discovered in the library, covering an American expedition to the Antarctic in 1839.

A paper by Dr. F. J. WILSON, of the Cataloging Division, on "A Narrative of the Discovery of Venezuela (1498)" in the Thomas Manuscript on Columbus and Early Portuguese Navigations" appeared in the *Proceedings of the Third Convention of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association*.

REYNOLD E. BROWN, of the Annex Reading room, who has never been west of the Potomac, defeated the sons and daughters of Puget Sound in a contest for a prize offered by a Seattle newspaper for the best essay on "Why I Want to Live in Seattle." (He says that working in a library feeds the imagination!)

Anyone compiling biographical notes on Mr. HOLMES (as we were him some of his admirers on the staff are doing) should consult, in the February *Harvard*, the account, by one of the nine journalists who sat under him, of his work as caretaker of the Nixon Foundation at Harvard just prior to coming to LL. In arranging the weekly dinners, he "was able, through his extensive friendships and well known name, to secure an impressive assemblage of editors, publishers, columnists and correspondents, and presided over our debates with skill and distinction." (We can well believe it.)

As guest speaker at the staff luncheon on May 7th, Dr. Ernesto Galarza, chief of the Division of Labor and Social Information of the Pan American Union, described in an illuminating manner the status of the labor movement in the various Latin American republics and outlined some of the major problems facing organized labor in this hemisphere. He told of some of the efforts of the past 25 years to develop inter-American workingclass solidarity, the need of which is made more urgent than ever by the outbreak of war in Europe.

Established at the beginning of this year, the Division of which Dr. Galarza is chief has been charged with the responsibility of gathering information on matters relating to social welfare and the status of labor in the American republics, such as labor legislation, social security, relief, unemployment, co-operatives, housing, labor education, industrial safety, and hygiene, cost of living, immigration, youth problems. Dr. Galarza represented the Pan American Union at the labor conference of American states held in Havana last November.

SAVE AMERICA FIRST

by John L. Lewis

If it is our mission to save western civilization, then let us begin by saving it right here in our own country.

There is an ancient and disconcerting formula, well known to the practitioners of politics through all the centuries of recorded history, which teaches that the failure to solve domestic problems can often be obscured by the excitement of a foreign war. Somehow it is easier to interest the rich and powerful in assailing other people's sons to Hernan than in providing jobs and education for other people's children. Some politicians tire too quickly of wrestling with the knotty questions attendant upon getting full employment and decent security for our people... Now much easier it is for them to mount a reviewing stand and wave a silk hat while other people's sons march off to the sound of a military band—John L. Lewis, April 26, 1940.