

THE MILITANT

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Burmese Demand Full Independence

See Page 3 —

Judge Reverses Original Ruling On Portal Claim

Supreme Court Provides Legal Technicality For Dismissing Back-Pay Suits As "Trifles"

Federal Judge Frank A. Picard's reversal on Feb. 8 of his previous decision in the now historic Mt. Clemens Pottery Co. portal-pay case strikingly confirms the old axiom: A capitalist judge never intentionally rules against the fundamental interests of the Big Business class.

It is obvious, as the Feb. 9 N. Y. Times admitted editorially, that Judge Picard did not realize when he made his original award to the Mt. Clemens Pottery workers that he "would let a multi-billion dollar genie out of the bottle." But, the Times added, he "did his best yesterday to put the genie back."

Whenever any capitalist-selected judge accidentally rules in favor of the workers, he is soon "straightened out." In Judge Picard's case, the whole capitalist class, its entire government apparatus, its press and radio poured the heat on him.

ACE OUT OF SLEEVE

Senators threatened him with impeachment. The Department of Justice and Treasury Department, even President Truman himself, presented briefs as "friends of the court" on behalf of the billionaire corporations.

He did not lack for legal technicalities to help him "get out from under." The U. S. Supreme Court slipped him an ace from its black judicial sleeves. It instructed him to apply the doctrine of "de minimis non curat lex" (The law does not concern itself with trifles).

After going through a lot of hocus-pocus of timing the walk-

ing-distance on company property and preparation-time, the Judge "impartially" ruled that the 14 minutes a day overtime claimed by the Mt. Clemens Pottery workers was "narrow, picayunish, meager" and that even 20 to 25 minutes of a worker's time is a "trifle."

Why not make the corporations pay this "trifle"? Their howls and pressure show they don't consider it so "picayunish." Accumulated over a year, such "trifles" amount to scores of dollars per worker—more than 5 billion dollars added to capitalist profits since 1938. It is from just such "trifles" that the capitalists amass huge extra profits.

Behind the ferocious Big Business attack on portal pay claims there is a further sinister aim. The Congressional reactionaries are attempting to gut the whole Fair Labor Standards Act (Wage and Hours) on the pretext of outlawing portal pay suits.

The principal bill to revise the Fair Labor Standards Act has been introduced in the House by Representative Gwynne of Iowa. CIO attorney Lee Pressman last week told the House Judiciary sub-committee that Gwynne's bill is designed to "tear the heart out of the act itself."

Stalinists Forced To Dissolve Fake Maritime "Unity" Body

By C. Thomas

After less than one year of existence, the Stalinist maritime "unity" bubble burst when the executive board of the Committee for Maritime Unity voted this week to dissolve the organization.

The resignation in December of CMU co-chairman Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union, proved fatal to the Stalinist scheme of controlling the affiliated unions through the apparatus of CMU.

This was admitted in a statement by the executive board which declared "that Curran's resignation has rendered the CMU ineffective for all practical purposes."

STALINISTS LOSE

The action of the CMU executive was tacit recognition that the Stalinists in the NMU had lost the support of the membership in their fight against the Curran group. Curran had carried the fight to the membership when the Stalinist majority on the NMU National Council refused to submit the question of continued CMU affiliation to a referendum.

The short-lived Committee for Maritime Unity was established at a conference held in May 1946. The original groups in the CMU consisted of the CIO unions in maritime plus the independent Marine Firemen's Union. Viewed as a hostile formation by the AFL unions in the industry, it led immediately to formation of the AFL Maritime Trades Department.

OPEN WARFARE

From that moment jurisdictional bitterness and strife increased on the waterfront. Through the CMU, every local dispute tended to assume a national character. Instead of leading to "unity," it led to a condition bordering on open warfare. In addition, the organization setup was so devised that the Stalinists were assured of an automatic majority on the executive board.

As a result the non-Stalinist union, officials rebelled. The first of the original founders to come out against CMU was the head of the Marine Firemen, V. J. Malone. Later, Curran resigned, charging the CMU with fostering jurisdictional warfare, outright strikebreaking and attempting to control the NMU.

A few weeks ago, the CIO Marine Engineers meeting in convention, rejected affiliation to

SLIDING SCALE PROTECTS OIL WORKERS' REAL WAGE

New York SWP Hits Move For 10-Cent Fare

NEW YORK, Feb. 10 — George Clarke, Organizer of the Socialist Workers Party, New York Local, will appear at the public hearing before the Board of Estimate, which began here today at the City Hall, in order to protest the proposed subway fare-increase swindle.

"The move to inaugurate a 10-cent fare," Clarke declared today, "is a carefully manipulated move by the banks and real estate interests to saddle New Yorkers with a new tax which will not bring transit improvements of any kind."

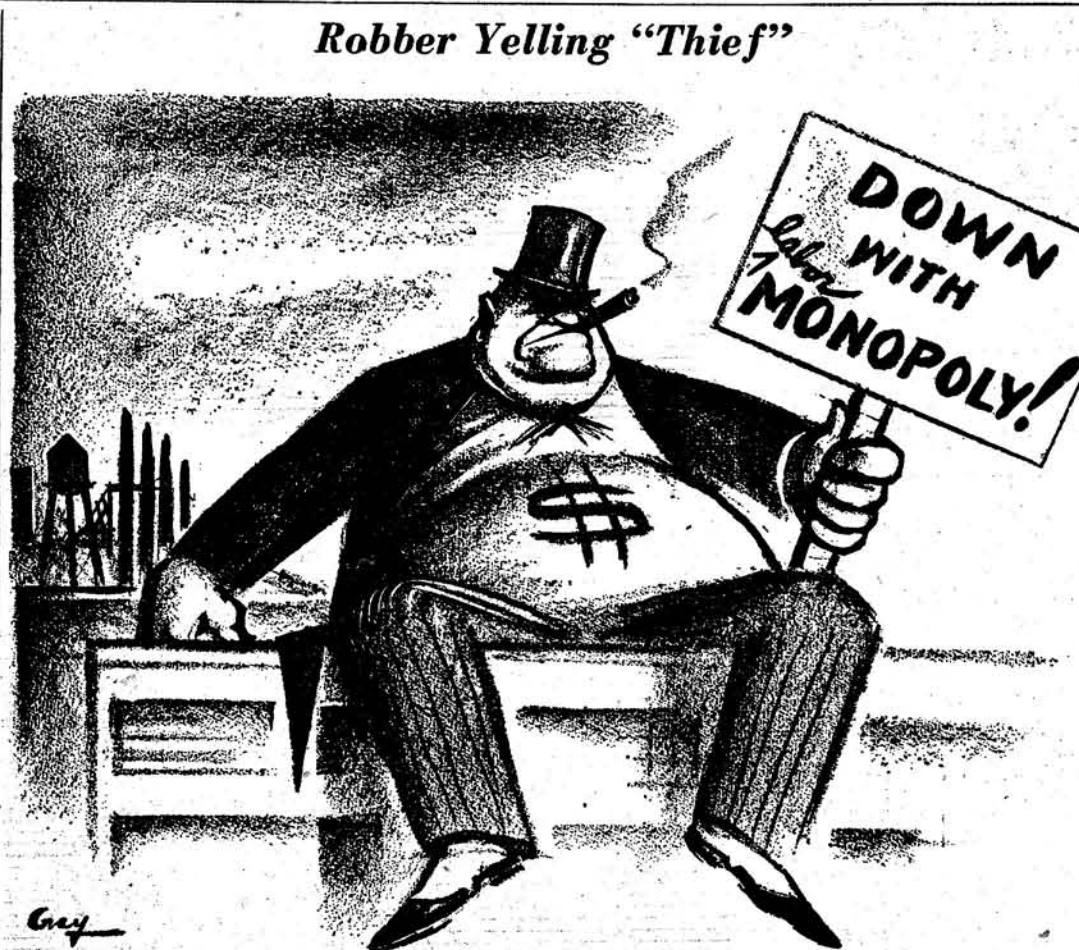
"This is the latest act in a terrible swindle perpetrated by financial interests over a period of years," he continued. "Proceeds from the transit system, supplemented by huge subsidies from the city treasury, have gone to pay interest and amortization on a tremendous debt. No improvement has been made in the subway system for years. Conditions in the transit system have steadily worsened."

"Despite his pretended impartiality, Mayor O'Dwyer is the instigator of the 10-cent fare maneuver. The facts about the financial status of the transit system have long been available to him. He called the hearings for the sole purpose of preparing for the increase."

Clarke called on the workers of New York to resist the rise. "We warn the workers that an attempt may be made to put over the increase without a referendum. We also warn that O'Dwyer may use the fallacious argument of 'subway improvement' as a ruse for a compromise for a six or seven-cent fare. This would only pave the way for a 10-cent fare later."

"As long as the mill-stone of debt to banks and bondholders is tied to the city's neck, the five-cent fare will be in danger. Even a 10-cent fare will not lead to needed improvements. It is only a new means of extracting money for interest out of New York workers."

"A 10-cent fare must not only be defeated," Clarke concluded, "we must cancel any further payments to the Wall Street bondholders." (See Page 6 on Subway Steal)



Robber Yelling "Thief"

Monopolists Hurl Venom At Labor In Hearings On Anti-Union Bills

For two weeks the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee has been firing heavy guns at the union movement in its public hearings. On February 5 the House Education and Labor Committee joined in the barrage at the first of its scheduled hearings, on the most savage anti-labor proposals Wall Street has demanded in decades.

Representative Clare E. Hoffman, Republican of Michigan, called for outright repeal of the Wagner Act. This political representative of the auto monopolists cross-examined himself, responding to his own questions with the bitter anti-labor testimony he wanted in the record, and plugging his own bill, HR 880. "My bill doesn't take away the right to strike. But if a man strikes, he's fired. Let him find another job if he doesn't like the one he has."

The next day a Democrat, Howard W. Smith of Virginia, co-author of the Smith-Connally wartime strike-breaking law, followed up with another blast. A member of the powerful House

exercise of the right to strike.

Ex-Governor Stassen of Minnesota, the Republican who appointed anti-labor specialist Joseph H. Ball to the Senate, took the witness stand Feb. 7. An avowed candidate for President of the United States in 1948, Stassen donned a "liberal" mantle, telling Ball he thought outlawing the closed shop was going too far. But his anti-labor proposals differed from those of Ball only in degree.

Stassen demanded the Wagner Act be re-written along lines Wall Street is now demanding; he called for a federal law against mass picketing; demanded unions file financial statements with the government; advocated interference in union election of officers; opposed foremen's unions; and insisted that boycotts and jurisdiction strikes be outlawed.

Charles E. Wilson, president of General Motors, took the stand Feb. 5. The head of the world's largest industrial corporation, controlling 50% of automotive production, called unions "monopolistic" and said, "I'll never sign a closed shop agreement. When it gets around to that they can make a farmer out of me." Venting all his vitriolic hatred of labor, the monopolist compared maintenance of union membership provisions with "requirement for membership in the Nazi party."

Wilson wanted to stamp out the unions with a series of laws that would ban everything from the closed shop to the free ex-

Sinclair Men Get Automatic Cost-Of-Living Boost In Pay

By Art Preis

The CIO Oil Workers International Union has just given a dollars-and-cents demonstration of the value of the sliding scale of wages that provides automatic pay rises to meet rises in living costs.

Under an escalator clause in the contract with Sinclair Oil Company, some 7,000 OWIU-

received an automatic seven-cent an hour wage boost, retroactive to Jan. 1 and effective until March 1 when the cost-of-living index will be reviewed again.

This seven-cent raise is based on the 7.4-point rise in the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics living-costs index for the last three months of 1946. The cost-of-living raise is in addition to a flat wage increase of 18-cents an hour secured in the contract signed on Nov. 15, 1946.

Thus, the total wage gain in a period of three months has been 25 cents an hour, bringing average Sinclair hourly rates up to \$1.65. If the index should rise another three points by March 1, the Sinclair workers will get still another corresponding wage raise.

PRESERVES REAL WAGES

If, on the other hand, the cost of living declines, the basic wage rate, including the flat 18-cent increase, remains as the minimum. It stands as an outright wage gain. The escalator clause serves merely to preserve real wages when prices are continuously soaring upward.

The OWIU-CIO is now negotiating with other major oil companies for a similar cost-of-living escalator clause. However, the union is now demanding a total 25-cent an hour rise from the hold-out companies to bring their wage-rates in line with the wage gains won from Sinclair in November.

Had the other CIO unions demanded and won escalator clauses when the OWIU won its Sinclair contract, it would have meant tens of millions of dollars since in increased purchasing power for CIO workers. Had they fought for and won

such a contract clause before the war, when the Socialist Workers Party and The Militant warned of the coming inflation and first advanced the sliding scale of wages slogan, wage rates would now be double what they are in terms of the cost of living.

Right now the employers are putting out false propaganda about the cost of living declining. This is timed to counteract demands for higher wages. The unions should meet this propaganda with the demand for escalator clauses retroactive to last June, at least, which would provide wage raises of 30 to 35% right now.

Instead of relying on reassuring propaganda, the unions should insist on tangible protection from the effects of any further inflation. As the OWIU has proved, that protection is the sliding scale of wages. With such a clause, the workers will feel that their basic wage gains are protected and that any further fight they make for higher wage rates will not simply be a chase after rising prices. It will be a fight for an outright increase in real purchasing power and improved living standards.

Oil Workers Vote On Western Strike

West Coast CIO oil workers are voting 4 to 1 to strike if the western companies fail to accept demands for a 25-cent an hour wage increase, equal to the gains won by the Sinclair workers in their escalator clause contract.

The preliminary returns covering 5,000 workers were announced on Feb. 8. Another 12,000 votes were yet to be tallied. If called, the strike is expected to begin Feb. 15 when the current union contract expires.

SWP Candidates Speak In Chicago Broadcast

By Robert L. Birchman

CHICAGO, Feb. 10—In the first of a series of radio broadcasts by the Trotskyist candidates in Chicago, Michael Bartell, Socialist Workers Party write-in candidate for Mayor, and Homer Lewis, SWP candidate for Alderman in the Third Ward, tonight addressed the city's voters over Station WJJD.

The SWP mayoralty candidate declared that the "all-out drive of Big Business to cripple and destroy organized labor" must be met by "mobilizing labor's millions for a smashing counter-offensive." Congress' "ferocious onslaught on labor," he said, must be answered by "unity in action of all sections of labor."

"A great National Congress of Labor must be assembled in Washington, with delegates from every trade union local in the country. Confront the Congress of capital with a Congress of Labor. Let this Labor Congress serve notice on the stooges of Wall Street that labor will never submit to their program of enslavement."

"Labor has shown that it is more than a match for the bosses on the economic front. But the failure of labor to build an equally powerful political party of its own is the chief cause of the

present crisis." The policy of depending on "so-called friends of labor in the two capitalist parties is now reaping bitter fruits," Bartell said. A Labor Party "would boldly champion the cause of the working men and women of the nation."

Bartell proposed that labor break the Chicago employers' "monopoly in the field of politics" by launching a local independent Labor Party in Chicago. "A vote for the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party is a vote for labor and for a socialist society of equality, peace and plenty."

Homer Lewis, in his radio address, scored the broken promises of the Republicans and Democrats. "How many Republicans and Democrats have promised us a clean and decent city—only to leave things exactly as before?"

"Why is this? The answer is simple. Wealthy landlords own these ancient firetraps—but they don't live in them. Coupon clipper own the Toonerville Trolleys—but they don't ride on them. Big Businessmen run the School Board—but they send their children to private schools."

Truman And Congress Cooking Up Deal To Put Through Rent Boost

President Truman and Congress are reported to be cooking up a deal to boost rents 10% — and soon. He is said to be willing to sign such a measure provided Congress retains the formal structure of "rent control" under cover of which rents could actually be raised.

The United Press on Feb. 3 reported that "Truman was represented by informed sources today as willing to sign a bill granting a 10% increase in rents if Congress would

relief" to another million landlords "in the coming weeks."

Meanwhile, the OTC has insufficient funds and personnel to enforce existing rent ceilings. It's too busy granting increases to landlords whose incomes have nearly doubled in the past six years, from 2.3 billion to 4.3 billion dollars.

The new Murray-Wagner Senate Bill, which has little Congressional support, would continue rent control another year without a blanket increase. But it would not prevent the OTC from raising rents piecemeal under "hardship" loopholes, etc. It is in no sense a rent-freezing bill, the only type of measure that would afford real protection from rent-goings.

Last week swarms of real estate and landlord lobbyists appeared before Senate Banking and Currency Committee hearings on rents. They literally howled and shrieked for an end to all rent regulations. A few spokesmen of veterans, labor and consumer groups demanded retention of rent controls and opposed any rent increases.

Only militant mass action by workers, veterans and other tenants will block the maneuver to raising "rent control." Such rent decontrol must be countered with the demand: Freeze All Rents!

Rubber Workers Urge Labor Party In Akron

AKRON, O.—Inspired by reports of the local CIO-sponsored labor party movement in Flint, Mich., progressive CIO rubber workers here have raised the slogan, "For A Genuine Labor Party In Akron."

The last issue of the Goodrich Local 5 Air Bag featured an editorial appeal with that slogan as its title. It states: "It is high time for the labor movement in Akron, CIO, AFL and Independent, to gather together and begin the building of a genuine labor party. Such a movement has begun in Flint, Michigan, under the sponsorship of the local CIO; we should not lag far behind."

"The old policy of seeking favors from the two old parties has

extend federal controls for a year."

Three days earlier Truman at the last moment rescinded a 10% boost order his Office of Temporary Controls was about to issue. Although he denied previous knowledge of the order, it is believed, according to the Feb. 9 N. Y. Times, that the whole action was "a political maneuver wherein the Administration, going only to the verge, subtly invited the Republican majority in Congress to plunge in and raise rents."

Other Democrats, in Congress, are proposing to "thaw out rent control" by local boards which would speed up individual landlord applications claiming "hardship."

Such decontrol is already well advanced. The OTC has been granting individual rent increases at the rate of 30,000 a month — a million total so far. After Feb. 15, these will be greatly speeded up under new "liberalized" provisions for landlord "hardship" cases.

The N. Y. Times said this was "in line with the President's thinking" and would bring "re-

run its course; today it is useless and has ended in failure," says the Local 5 paper. "Labor must rise to political manhood. We must do it now, before it is too late. And as with charity, it is best to begin at home."

A labor party, it says, "would be built on the same foundations as the union itself. The stewards and committeemen who have been tested for years, who have honestly represented the workers in battle with the big corporations, would be the foundations of such a labor party."

"If these men and women can lead us in the economic fight against the shrewd high paid Wall Street agents who run the rubber plants, they can also do a job for us politically."

WORKERS' FORUM

The Workers' Forum columns are open to the opinions of the readers of "The Militant". Letters are welcome on any subject of interest to the workers. Keep them short and include your name and address. Indicate if you do not want your name printed.

Greetings From Trieste

Editor: At the New Year's dawn I send all my best wishes for the revolutionary efficiency of the only conscious and true socialist movement, and to you, its militants.

Likes Militant And Trial Pamphlets

Editor: I have read The Militant for some time and I know it is telling the truth more than any other paper I know, and I read practically all of them.

I have read Socialism on Trial and in Defense of Socialism. To defend socialism in the capitalist court, knowing that there is no justice there, takes a lot of courage and fearlessness.

I appreciate very much what the defendants did to educate the workers to an understanding of their economic interests in an insane society. It is a hard and unthankful task, but some day the truth will win.

Student of Marx Asks Questions

Editor: We are studying Marx in one of my economic classes, but in my various readings I find different interpretations and criticisms of what Marx meant.

reconcilables which cannot be reconciled? How can harmony be established between two contradictory propositions unless you drop one overboard? Since profit comes from surplus value, how can the capitalist increase his wealth when surplus value diminishes with a cut in variable capital?

Minneapolis Worker Tells Off Senator Ball, "The Bosses' Man"

Editor: Enclosed you will find a copy of a letter I wrote to Senator Ball a few days ago telling him what I think of his anti-labor legislative program. This letter was inspired by a motion in a recent meeting of Local 292, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, that all of its members write letters of protest to Senator Ball.



BALL

Half-Way Mark Passed By Branches In \$20,000 National SWP Campaign

By William F. Warde NATIONAL FUND CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

The half-way mark was passed last week in the \$20,000 Emergency Fund Campaign for the Socialist Workers Party as fifteen branches sent in \$12,465.50. This brings up the national total to \$10,191.34, or 51 per cent of the goal.

The branches throughout the country are speeding up the tempo to meet the deadline. This week Newark joined the ranks of the One-Hundred-Plus Percenters, by sending in \$120 for a total of \$302, or one per cent above its quota.

The increasing tempo of the campaign is expressed strikingly by the fact that the number of branches who have reached the half-way mark or better has doubled in the last week. There are now eleven branches in this category.

At the same time three more branches—Allentown-Bethlehem, Baltimore and Bayonne—have removed themselves from the zero status. Baltimore which sent in half of its \$20 quota "hopes to have some more by Saturday," writes John Leavitt.

"This is our first payment of \$39 on our \$75 campaign quota," writes Regina Shoemaker from Allentown and adds that the branch expects to finish "our quota by March 15."

This awareness by the branches of the need to keep up with the campaign schedule is the best guarantee of its successful termination. From Flint Genora Dollinger assures us: "You can count on our quota being in by March 1."

Cleveland has pulled up its payments to the half-way mark. "The comrades here all understand the necessity of the campaign and are confident we will make our quota on time," writes Alameda Kingsley.

From Milwaukee Carol Andrews writes that "we sincerely want to over-subscribe our pledge." Milwaukee is now past the three-fourth mark and expects to go over the top by March 1. So do Minneapolis and several other branches.

Another highly auspicious sign is the increasing volume of donations from sympathizers and readers of The Militant. Several branches, among them Baltimore and Flint, report an excellent response.

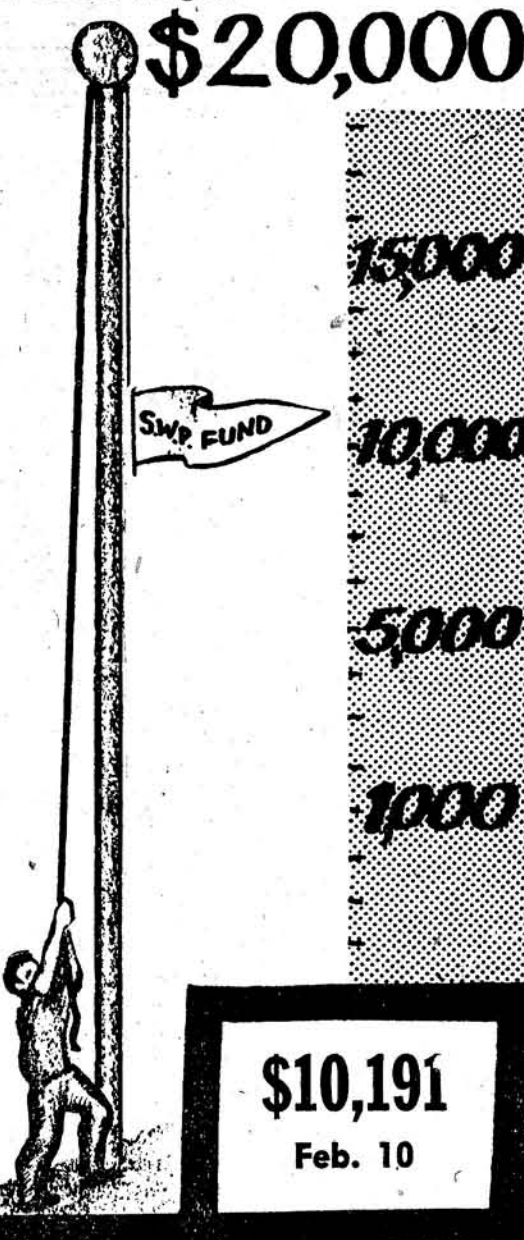
"Here in Flint," she writes, "we have been pleasantly surprised at their immediate response. One working couple, husband and wife, we asked for the first time to aid us in our drive for additional finances. Both of them responded by collecting a total of \$12.50 from their shopmates and friends."

Unfortunately, Minnesota laws contain no provisions for a recall of its elected legislative representatives, so in view of this fact, together with your complete failure to serve the interests of Minnesota wage earners, like myself, I can only ask you to resign your post.

This is confirmed by our mail in which we received today a contribution of \$2 from A. S. and Family of New York. Enclosed was the following warm message of solidarity:

"I am a button-hole worker who feels as thousands of other working men and women that there is something wrong in the world today. You people have the right idea. Keep up the fighting spirit of Eugene Debs."

The Chicago Youth is still pacing all the other youth groups, and is steadily increasing its lead with another \$2 on its quota.



SCOREBOARD

Table with columns: Branch, Quota, Paid, Percent. Lists various branches and their contributions towards the \$20,000 goal.

THE MILITANT ARMY

Nine SWP Branches Top "Militant" Goals

Nine branches of the Socialist Workers Party reached the January goals they set for subs to The Militant. This is an improvement over December when only 5 branches reached their goal.

Table listing nine branches that exceeded their goals, with columns for Subscribers and Percent of Goal.



DETROIT Negro Conference and Memorial for Frederick Douglass (Negro Emancipator) Sunday, Feb. 16, 3 p.m., 6108 Linwood Ave.

Come and meet other 'Militant' Readers At these Local Activities of The Socialist Workers Party

AKRON—2nd floor, 8 S. Howard St. Open daily except Sunday, 2 to 4 p.m. Saturdays, 7 p.m. Public Speaking class.

Friday, 8 p.m. — Militant Workers Forum, 466 E. Vernon SAN PEDRO, Militant Publishing Assn., — 1008 S. Pacific, Room 214.

daily. Friday forum, 8 p.m. Phone Stevenson 5820. PITTSBURGH—1418 Fifth Ave., 2nd floor. Office hours: Tues. and Thurs. 7 to 9 p.m.; Sat. and Sun. 2 to 9 p.m. Tel. Court 6060.

Pioneer Notes

Pioneer Publishers literature is being used successfully by two Socialist Workers Party branches which have entered candidates in spring elections.

Youth Activities

AKRON.—Socialist Youth Club meets Sunday afternoon, 2 p.m. Followed by refreshments, dancing, 8 South Howard St., 2nd floor.

Where You Can Buy 'Fourth International'

AKRON—Militant Bookshop, 8 So. Howard St. BAITMORE—Newsstand at N. Liberty & Baltimore, Calvert & Fayette.

AKRON 'The Negro Struggle For Equality' SAMUEL T. KELLY, NAACP ELVIN BROWN, Editor MILTON GENECIN, SWP Sun., Feb. 23 8 P.M. 8 So. Howard St.

